

English Literature

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INTRODUCTION

The Development of English Literature (Periodization).

Its Place in the World Literature.

English literature is a component part of the world literature. Its best national traditions have played an important role in enriching and development of the world literature. English literature consists of poetry, prose, and drama written in the English language by authors in England, Scotland, and Wales. These lands have produced many outstanding writers.

English literature is a rich literature. It includes masterpieces in many forms, particularly a novel, a short story, an epic and lyric poetry, an essay, literary criticism, and drama. English literature is also one of the oldest national literatures in the world. The masters of English literature from the turn of the XIV century to the present rank among the world's greatest literary figures. Such names as Geoffrey Chaucer, William Shakespeare, Christopher Marlowe, Daniel Defoe, Jonathan Swift, George Gordon Byron, Charles Dickens, Bernard Shaw, John Galsworthy and many others are famous all over the world. Their way of writing has influenced a great number of writers, poets and playwrights from other countries.

National literature is the reflection of the history and national peculiarities of people. Each national literature has much in common with the world literary progress, but at the same time has its own specific features as well. One of the characteristic features of the English authors is that they have always been deeply interested in political and social environment of their time. They are parts of the real world, which dramatically influences what and how they write. What takes place in the writer's study is crucial, but it also emphasizes the importance of what takes place in the larger world.

The world Book Encyclopedia gives the following outline of English Literature:

I. Old English literature (500-1100)

- A. Old English Poetry. B. Old English Prose.
- II. Middle English literature (1100-1485)
 - A. The development of English romances.
 - B. The age of Chaucer. C. Early English drama.
- III. The beginning of Modern English literature (1485-1603)
 - A. Elizabethan poetry.
 - B. Elizabethan drama. C. Elizabethan fiction.
- IV. The Stuarts and Puritans (1603-1660)
 - A. Metaphysical and Cavalier poets. C. Prose writing.
 - B. Jacobian drama. D. John Milton.
- V. Restoration literature (1660-1700).
 - A. John Dryden. C. Restoration prose.
 - B. Restoration drama.
- VI. The Augustan Age (1700-1750)
 - A. Swift and Pope. C. The rise of the novel.
 - B. Addison and Steele.
- VII. The Age of Johnson (1750-1784)
 - A. Samuel Johnson. B. The Johnson circle.
- VIII. Romantic literature (1784-1832)
 - A. The pre-romantics. C. Romantic prose.
 - B. Romantic poetry.
- IX. Victorian literature (1832-1901).
 - A. Early Victorian literature.
 - B. Later Victorian literature.
- X. The 1900's.
 - A. Literature before World War I.
 - B. Poetry between the wars.
 - C. Fiction between the wars.
 - D. Literature after World War II.
 - E. English literature today.

Having studied the outline given above, and the periodizations presented in other books on English literature, and taking into consideration the general objectives of the course and the number of academic hours in the curriculum, we decided to focus on more issues and divided this book into nine units according to the following outline:

1. Old English Literature.
2. Middle English Literature.
3. The Renaissance.
4. English literature in the Seventeenth Century.
5. The Eighteenth Century. (The Age of Reason or Enlightenment).
6. The Romantic Age.
7. The Victorian Age.
8. English Literature at the end of the 19th and the beginning of the 20th century.
9. English Literature in the Twentieth Century.

Each period is a step in the development of English literature, and each gave the world genuine works with their own flavour and individuality.

UNIT 1. OLD ENGLISH LITERATURE (500-1100)

For the first eleven hundred years of its recorded history, the island of Britain suffered a series of invasions. The southern part of the island, washed by the warm waters of the Gulf Stream, was attractive to outsiders with its mild climate and rich soil. Each invasion brought bloodshed and sorrow, but each also brought new people with new culture and those different peoples created a nation.

250,000 years ago the island was inhabited by cave dwellers. Invaders from the Iberian peninsula (Modern Spain and Portugal) overcame their culture about 2000 B.C., erecting Stonehenge - the circle of huge upright stones. Then a new group, the Celts, appeared. Migrating from East, the Celtic people spread throughout Europe before reaching the British Isles around 600 B.C. They used bronze and later iron tools and grew crops. Some Celtic tribes, each with its own King, warred with each other, and erected timber and stone fortresses. Their priests - called druids - made sacrifices in forest shrines. The people who lived in Britain at that time were called the Britons.

In the 1st century before our era the powerful State of Rome conquered Britain. The Romans were practical men. They were very clever at making hard roads and building bridges and fine tall houses. The Romans taught Britons many things. But at the end of the 4th century they had to leave Britain because they were needed to defend their own country invaded by barbaric people.

As soon as Romans left, Britain had to defend the country from Germanic tribes called Angles, Saxons and Jutes. The Anglo-Saxons were advanced people and by the time they conquered Britain, they already had their own letters called "runes", but still no written literature existed yet, and the stories and poems they made up passed from one generation to another verbally. Songs and tales composed by people when at work or at war, or for amusement (folk-lore) became widespread. There were also professional singers called "bards". They composed songs about events they wanted to be remembered. Their songs were about wonderful battles and exploits of brave warriors. These songs were handed down to their

children and grandchildren and finally reached the times when certain people who were called “scribes” wrote them down. (The word “scribe” comes from the Latin “scribere”-“to write”).

Many old English poems glorified a real or imaginary hero and tried to teach the values of bravery and generosity. Poets used alliteration (words that begin with the same sound) and kennings (elaborate descriptive phrases). They also used internal rhyme, in which a word within a line rhymes with a word at the end of the line.

The first major work of English literature is the epic poem “Beowulf”.

“Beowulf”

The beautiful Anglo-Saxon poem “Beowulf” may be called the foundation-stone of all British poetry. It tells of times long before the Angles and Saxons came to Britain. There is no mention of England in it. The poem was composed around 700 by an unknown author. This was about seventy years after the death of Mohammed and in the same age as the beginning of the great Tang Dynasty in China. Three hundred years later, about the year 1000, the manuscript, which still survives, was written down by an unknown scribe. The poem presents the legendary history of the Anglo-Saxons, and its author might have been descended from the original tribes of Angles, Saxons, and Jutes who invaded Britain from the European continent in the fifth century. Those people spoke Germanic language in which the poem is written. “Beowulf” is 3182 lines long, approximately 80 or 90 pages in book length. The narrative itself falls into two halves: the first part takes place in Denmark where, coming to the aid of King Hrothgar, Beowulf fights the monster Grendel and Grendel’s mother. The second part is set in Southern Sweden where, after the death of King Hygelac and his son, Heardred, Beowulf has ruled in peace and prosperity for 50 years before being called upon to combat a dragon that is terrorizing the country after having its treasure hoard looted. “Beowulf” blends a fairy-tale narrative with considerable historical material. (Swedish and Danish kings really ruled in the VI century).

The manuscript of “Beowulf” is in the British Museum, in London. It is impossible for a non-specialist to read it in the original, so it was translated into modern English language in the 20th century.

The story of Beowulf:

Once upon a time, many-many centuries ago, there lived a king of Danes named Hrothgar. He had won many battles and gained great wealth. He built a large and beautiful palace (Heorot) and he presented costly gifts to his warriors and gave splendid banquets. But the joy of the king didn't last long. In the dark fens nearby there lived a fierce sea-monster Grendel. He wanted to destroy the palace Heorot as he disliked noise. Grendel looked like a man but was much bigger, and his whole body was covered with long hair, so thick and tough that no weapon could harm him.

One night when the warriors in Heorot were asleep, Grendel rushed in, seized thirty men and devoured them. The next night the monster appeared again. The men defended themselves bravely, but their swords could not even hurt the monster. From that time no one dared to come to Heorot. For twelve years the palace stood deserted. The news of the disaster reached Beowulf, nephew of Hygelac, king of the Jutes. Beowulf was the strongest and the bravest of all the warriors. He was said to have the strength of thirty men. He decided to help Hrothgar. With fourteen chosen companions he set sail for the country of the Danes. Hrothgar gladly welcomed Beowulf and gave a banquet in his honour. Late at night, when the feast was over, all went to sleep except Beowulf. Beowulf knew that no weapon could kill Grendel and decided to fight bare-handed.

Suddenly the man-eater rushed into the hall. He seized and devoured one of the sleeping warriors, and then approached Beowulf. A desperate hand-to-hand fight began. At first Beowulf's courage fled:

The demon delayed not, but quickly clutched
A sleeping thane in his swift assault,
Gulped the blood, and gobbled the flesh,
Greedily gorged on the lifeless corpse,
The hands and the feet. Then the fiend stepped nearer,
Sprang on the Sea-Geat lying outstretched,
Glaspig him close with his monstrous clow.
But Beowulf grappled and gripped him hard,
Struggled up on his elbow; the shepherd of sins
Soon found that never before had he felt
In any man other in all the earth
A mightier hand-grip; his mood was humbled,
His courage fled; but he found no escape!

But soon, remembering the boast he had made at the banquet and his glorious duty, Beowulf regained his courage, sprang to his feet and went on fighting. It was so terrible that the walls of the palace shook. Beowulf managed to tear off Grendel's arm, and the monster retreated to his den howling and roaring with pain and fury. He was fatally wounded and soon died:

Each loathed the other while life should last!
There Grendel suffered a grievous hurt,
A wound in the shoulder, gaping and wide;
Sinews snapped and bone-joints broke,
And Beowulf gained the glory of battle.
Grendel, fated, fled to the fens,
To his joyless dwelling, sick unto death.
He knew in his heart that his hours were numbered
His days at an end. For all the Danes
Their wish was fulfilled in the fall of Grendel.

The stranger from far, the stalwart and strong,
Had purged of evil the hall of Hrothgar,
And cleansed of crime; the heart of the hero
Joyed in the deed his daring had done.

The next night Grendel's mother, a water-witch, came to Heorot to avenge her son's death. While Beowulf was asleep she snatched away one of Hrothgar's favourite warriors. Beowulf decided to kill the water-witch too. He plunged into the water and found the water-witch in her den beside the dead body of her son. A desperate fight began. At first Beowulf was nearly overcome, as his sword had no power against the monster. But fortunately his glance fell upon a huge magic sword hanging on the wall. Beowulf killed the monster with its help. Then he cut off the heads of Grendel and of the water-witch and carried them to the surface. Heorot was freed forever.

Hrothgar poured treasures into Beowulf's hands.

At last the day came for Beowulf to sail home. Everybody regretted his departure. When Beowulf arrived in his own land, he gave all the treasures he had brought to Hygelac and the people. Beowulf was admired and honoured by everybody. After the death of Hygelac, Beowulf became the king of the Jutes.

For fifty years he ruled his country wisely and well until one day a great disaster befell the happy land: every night there appeared a fire-breathing dragon who came and destroyed the villages. Remembering his glorious youth, Beowulf decided to fight and save his people, but of all his earls only Wiglaf, a brave warrior and heir to the kingdom, had the courage to help him. In a fierce battle the dragon was killed, but his flames burnt Beowulf.

Beowulf ordered Wiglaf to take as much treasure as he could carry and give it to the Jutes. In his last hour he thought only of his people, for whose happiness he had sacrificed his life. Beowulf's victory over the monsters symbolized the triumph of a man over the powers of darkness and evil.

The Literature of the 7th - 11th Centuries

Anglo-Saxon Literature. The culture of the early Britons greatly changed under the influence of Christianity, which penetrated into the British Isles in the 3rd century. That was the time when many Christians escaped from Roman persecution to Britain and Gaul (France), which were colonies of the Roman Empire at that period.

At the end of the 6th century the head of the Roman church at that time Pope Gregory decided to spread his influence over England by converting people to Christianity and sent monks to the island. They landed in Kent and built the first church in the town of Canterbury.

Now the Roman civilization poured into the country again, Latin words once more entered the language of the Anglo-Saxons, because the religious books were all written in Latin. The monasteries, where reading and writing were practiced, became the centre of learning and education in the country. Poets and writers of that period imitated Latin books about the early Christians, and also made up stories of their own, about saints. The names of only two of those early poets have reached our days. They were Caedmon and Cynewulf.

Caedmon lived in the 7th century. He was a shepherd at Whitby, a famous abbey in Yorkshire. He composed his poetry in his native language, in the Northumbrian dialect of Anglo-Saxon. He composed hymns and a poem "Paraphrase". This poem retells fragments from the Bible in alliterative verse. Many other monks took part in the work but their names are unknown.

Cynewulf was a monk who lived at the end of the 8th century. His name was not forgotten, as he signed his name in runes in the last line of his works. Two of his poems, "Elene" and "Juliana" are notable because they are the first Anglo-Saxon works to introduce women characters.

Along with religious poetry, folk-tales about worldly affairs were written down at the monasteries and put into verse by poets. These were wedding-songs, songs to be sung at feasts, war-songs, death-songs, and also ploughing-songs, and even riddles.

Thus, the spread of Christianity was crucial for the development of Anglo-Saxon culture. The Church brought contact with the distant and ancient Mediterranean world. To the illiterate Germanic tribes it brought the essential skill for advanced culture - writing. Soon Anglo-Saxon monasteries were copying books from Rome and beginning to produce manuscripts. The church also served as a force for unity and peace, trying to teach new values to these warrior-kings - compassion and cooperation, instead of arrogance and violence.

Written literature did not exist in the British Isles until about the year 700. It first comes to our attention in the work of the most famous of the Anglo-Saxon monks, the Venerable Bede.

The Venerable Bede (673-735)

The Venerable Bede is considered the father of English history, as he was the author of the most important history of early England. During his lifetime he was the most learned scholar in all of Western Europe. He was born in the Anglo-Saxon kingdom of Northumbria in 673. He was orphaned when he was only seven and his relatives put him under the supervision of monks at Wearmouth Abbey. Two years later, in 682, he was sent to the newly built abbey of Jarrow, where he was to spend the rest of his life.

From boyhood Bede studied in the library of Jarrow. Then in 703, the year of the ordination to the priesthood, Bede began to write. During 28 years he completed forty books: commentaries on the Bible; lives of abbots, martyrs, and saints; books on philosophy and poetry.

Bede's masterpiece, completed in 731, when he was 51 years old, is his "The Ecclesiastical History of the English Race", which describes the growth of the Christian church in England from the attack of Julius Caesar in 55 B.C. to Bede's own days. Although Bede was Anglo-Saxon, he wrote the work in Latin, the language he spoke and wrote. Late in the ninth century, scholars at the court of King Alfred translated it into Anglo-Saxon. "The Ecclesiastical History of the English Race" seemed to them one of the central works of their culture, worthy of reproduction into a language more people could read.

Alfred the Great (849 - 901)

The beginning of the 9th century was a troubled time for England. Danish pirates, called Northmen kept coming from overseas for plunder. Each year their number increased. When Alfred was made king in 871, England's danger was the greatest. Nevertheless, in a great battle fought by Alfred at Maldon in 891, the Northmen were defeated, and Alfred decided to make peace with them. The greater portion of England was given up to the new-comers. The only part of the kingdom left in possession of Alfred was Wessex.

Alfred was a Latin scholar. He is famous not only for having built the first navy, but for trying to enlighten his people. He drew up a code of laws and translated the Church-history of Bede from Latin into Anglo-Saxon, the native language of his people, and a part of the Bible as well. He created the first history of England, the first prose in English literature, the famous "Anglo-Saxon Chronicle".

The literature of the early Middle Ages and the church taught that man was an evil being and his life on earth was a sinful life. As man was subordinated to God he had to prepare himself for the after-life by subduing his passions and disregarding all earthly cares.

UNIT 2. MIDDLE ENGLISH LITERATURE (1100-1485)

The Literature of the Norman Period (12th - 13th centuries).

When King Alfred died, the account of the wars with the Danes showed how many suffered in that age, how bitter, insecure, and cruel life was. Parties of the Northmen sailed round Scotland and over to Ireland. Others sailed south across the channel to France. They conquered the north of France and settled there. In the next hundred years they came to be called Normans, and their country Normandy.

In the middle of the 11th century the internal feuds among the Anglo-Saxon earls weakened the country. The Normans did not miss their chance and in 1066, William, Duke of Normandy, defeated the English troops at Hastings in a great battle. Within five years William the Conqueror became complete master of the whole England.

The lands of most of the Anglo-Saxon aristocracy were given to the Norman barons, and they introduced their feudal laws to compel the peasants to work for them. The English became an oppressed nation.

William the Conqueror could not speak a word of English. He and his barons spoke the Norman dialect of the French language; but the Anglo-Saxon dialect was not suppressed. During the following 200 years communication went on in three languages: 1) Latin at the monasteries; 2) Norman-French at court and in official institutions; 3) The common people held firmly to their mother tongue.

In the 13th century the first universities in Oxford and Cambridge were founded. So, during the Anglo-Norman period feudal culture was at its height.

By about 1300 English had again become the chief national language but in altered form called Middle English. Middle English included elements of French, Latin, Old English, and local dialects.

Tales in verse and lyrical poems appeared praising the bravery and gallantry of noble knights, their heroic deeds and chivalrous attitude towards ladies. At first they were all in Norman-French. Many of the stories came from old French sources, the language of which was a Romanic dialect, and for that reason these

works were called “romances”. They were brought to England by medieval poets called “trouweres” (finders), who came from France with the Norman conquerors. Later in England such poets were called minstrels and their art of composing romances and ballads and singing them was called the art of minstrelsy.

A number of romances were based on Celtic legends, especially those about King Arthur and the knights. The heroes of these romances, unlike the characters of church literature, were human beings who loved, hated and suffered. Their worship of fair ladies motivated the plots of the stories.

In the 15th century Sir Thomas Malory (1395? -1471) collected the romances of King Arthur and arranged them in a series of stories in prose, intelligible to any modern reader. The words in Malory’s sentences have a beauty of movement, which cannot escape unnoticed. The stories began with the birth of Arthur and how he became king, then related all the adventures of King Arthur and his noble knights and ended in the death of these knights and of Arthur himself.

The work was published in 1485 by Caxton, the first English printer, at Westminster (London), under the title of “Sir Thomas Malory’s Book of King Arthur and of His Noble Knights of Round Table”. The book was more widely known as “Morte d’Arthur” (old French for “Death of Arthur”).

This epic in twenty-one books reflects the evolution of feudal society, its ideals, beliefs and tragedies. Malory’s romance is the most complete English version of stories about King Arthur.

Supplement

The Medieval Romance

In the medieval period the term “romance” meant a long narrative in verse or prose telling of the adventures of a hero. These stories of adventure usually include knights, ladies in distress, kings, and villains. The material for the medieval romance in English was mainly drawn from the stories of King Arthur and the Knights of the Round Table. This subject matter is sometimes called the “Matter of Britain”.

Central to the medieval romance was the code of chivalry, the rules and customs connected with knighthood. Originally chivalry (from the French word “chevalier”, which means “knight” or “horseman”) referred to the practice of training knights for the purpose of fighting. The qualities of the ideal courtly knight in the Middle Ages were bravery, honor, courtesy, protection of the weak, respect for women, generosity, and fairness to enemies. An important element in the code of chivalry was the ideal of courtly love. This concept required a knight to serve a virtuous noblewoman (often married) and perform brave deeds to prove his devotion while she remained chaste and unattainable.

The code of chivalry and the ideal of courtly love were still in evidence during the Renaissance as well. Knights and courtiers who wrote on courtly themes included the Earl of Surrey, Sir Thomas Wyatt, and Sir Walter Raleigh. Edmund Spenser and Sir Philip Sidney wrote highly formalized portraits of ideal love.

Medieval romance and its attendant codes of chivalry and courtly love faded in the Age of Reason during the XVIII century, but in the nineteenth century, Romanticism brought back the ideals of chivalry.

Treatment of the romance themes of chivalry and courtly love are still the topics of literature. Historical fiction often attempts to recreate the world of the Middle Ages.

Fable and Fabliau

In urban literature fables and fabliaux were also popular. Fable is a short tale or prolonged personification with animal characters intended to convey a moral truth; it's a myth, a fiction, a falsehood. It's a short story about supernatural or extraordinary persons or incidents. Fabliaux are funny metrical short stories about cunning humbugs and the unfaithful wives of rich merchants. These tales were popular in medieval France. These stories were told in the dialects of Middle English. They were usually comic, frankly coarse and often cynical. The urban literature did not idealize characters as the romances did. The fabliaux show a practical attitude to life.

Pre-Renaissance Period in English Literature

In the 14th century the Norman kings made London their residence. It became the most inhabited and busy town in England. (The London dialect was the central dialect, and could be understood throughout the country). Even peasants who wished to get free of their masters went to London. But the life in the country was miserable especially with the so-called Hundred Years' War flamed by king Edward against France. There was another burden on people's shoulders – rich foreign bishops of the Catholic Church, who did not care of people's sufferings. The protest against the Catholic Church and the growth of national feeling during the first years of the War found the reflection in literature. There appeared poor priests who wandered from one village to another and talked to the people. They protested not only against rich bishops but also against churchmen who were ignorant and could not teach people anything. Among poor priests were then acknowledged poets William Langland and John Wyclif.

William Langland (1332?-1400?) was a poor priest. His parents were poor but free peasants. He denounced the rich churchmen and said that everybody was obliged to work. His name is remembered for a poem he wrote, "The Visions of William Concerning Piers the Ploughman" (Piers -Peter). Nowadays the poem is called "Piers Plowman".

"Piers Plowman" is an allegorical poem. In it Vice and Virtue are spoken of as if they were human beings. Truth is a young maiden, Greed is an old witch. The poem was very popular in the Middle Ages. It begins with a vision which the poet William had on the Malvern Hills. In a long and complicated succession of scenes Langland portrays almost every side of fourteenth-century life. In his dream the poet sees Piers the Ploughman, a peasant. Piers tells him about the hard life of the people. He sees the corruption of wealth, and the inadequacies of government. To him, the only salvation lies in honest labour and in the service of Christ. If Langland were not a mystic, he would have been a revolutionary. He is the nearest approach to Dante in English poetry, for despite his roughness, and the bleak

atmosphere of much of his work, he has written the greatest poem in English devoted to the Christian way of life.

But modern poetry begins with one of the most prominent people of the Middle English period – Geoffrey Chaucer, diplomat, soldier and scholar.

Geoffrey Chaucer (1340 - 1400)

Geoffrey Chaucer is listed by most scholars as one of the three greatest poets in English literature (along with William Shakespeare and John Milton). He was born in London. His father, John Chaucer, was a wine merchant. In 1357 Geoffrey was listed as a page in the household of the wife of Prince Lionel, a son of Edward III. His service in that household indicates that his family had sufficient social status for him to receive a courtly education. Throughout the rest of his lifetime, Chaucer was in some way connected with members of the royal family. In 1366 Chaucer married Philippa Roet, a lady-in-waiting to the Queen. Chaucer rose socially through his marriage. In 1368 he became one of the King's esquires, which in those days meant that he worked in the administrative department of the King's government. One of his duties was to act as a government envoy on foreign Diplomatic missions. Chaucer's diplomatic missions took him first to France and later to Italy.

Chaucer's poetry is generally divided into three periods.

The French period. While in France Geoffrey Chaucer came in contact with French literature, his earliest poems were written in imitation of the French romances. He translated from French a famous allegorical poem of the 13th century, "The Romance of the Rose".

The Italian period. In 1372 Chaucer was sent to Genoa to arrange a commercial treaty. In Italy he became acquainted with Italian life and culture, with the classical authors and with the newer Italian works of Dante and Petrarch, with the tales of Boccaccio. In Chaucer's own writing, the French models of his earliest years gave way to this Italian influence. To the Italian period can be assigned "The House of Fame", a didactic poem; "The Parliament of Fowls" (birds), an allegorical poem satirizing Parliament; "Troilus and Criseyda", which is

considered to be the predecessor of the psychological novel in England, and “The Legend of Good Women”, a dream-poem.

The English, period. After his return to London, Chaucer became a customs official at the port of London. He gave up his job in 1386, and began composing his masterpiece “The Canterbury Tales”, but it remained unfinished.

He died in 1400 and was buried in Westminster Abbey in a section, which later became established as the Poet’s Corner. Chaucer was the last English writer of the Middle Ages and the first of the Renaissance.

“The Canterbury Tales”

“The Canterbury Tales”, for which Chaucer’s name is best remembered, is a long poem with a general introduction (“The Prologue”), the clearest picture of late medieval life existent anywhere. The framework, which serves to connect twenty-four stories, told in verse, is a pilgrimage from London to Canterbury. In the prologue thirty men and women from all ranks of society pass before the readers’ eyes. Chaucer draws a rapid portrait of each traveller, thus showing his character. Chaucer himself and a certain Harry Bailly, the host (owner) of a London inn are among them. Harry Bailly proposes the following plan: each pilgrim was to tell two stories on the way to the shrine and two on the way back. The host would be their guide and would judge their stories. He who told the best story was to have a fine supper at the expense of the others.

Chaucer planned to include 120 stories, but he managed only twenty-four, some of them were not completed. The individual stories are of many kinds: religious stories, legends, fables, fairy tales, sermons, and courtly romances. Short story writers in the following centuries learned much about their craft from Geoffrey Chaucer.

As it was already mentioned, Chaucer introduces each of his pilgrims in the prologue, and then he lets us know about them through stories they tell. His quick, sure strokes portray the pilgrims at once as types and individuals true of their own age and, still more, representative of humanity in general. He keeps the whole poem alive by interspersing the tales themselves with the talk, the quarrels, and the

opinions of the pilgrims. The passage below is a part from the prologue, where the author introduces a plowman:

There was a Plowman with him there, his brother
Many a load of dung one time or other
He must have carted through the morning dew.
He was an honest worker, good and true,
Living in peace and perfect charity,
And, as the gospel bade him, so did he,
Loving God best with all his heart and mind
And then his neighbour as himself, repined
At no misfortune, slacked for no content,
For steadily about his work he went
To thrash his corn, to dig or to manure
Or make a ditch; and he would help the poor
For love of Christ and never take a penny
If he could help it, and, as prompt as any,
He paid his tithes and full when they were due
On what he owned, and on his earning too
He wore a tabard smock and rode a mare.

In “Canterbury Tales” Chaucer introduced a rhythmic pattern called iambic pentameter into English poetry. This pattern, or meter, consists of 10 syllables alternately unaccented and accented in each line. The lines may or may not rhyme. Iambic pentameter became a widely used meter in English poetry.

Chaucer’s contribution to English literature is usually explained by the following:

1. “The Canterbury Tales” sum up all types of stories that existed in the Middle Ages.

2. He managed to show different types of people that lived during his time and through these people he showed a true picture of the life of the 14th century. (The pilgrims range in rank from a knight to a poor plowman. Only the very highest and lowest ranks - the nobility and the serfs - are missing.)

3. In Chaucer’s age the English language was still divided by dialects, though London was rapidly making East Midland into a standard language. Chaucer was the creator of a new literary language. He chose to write in English, the popular language of common people, though aristocracy of his time read and spoke French. Chaucer was the true founder of English literature.

4. Chaucer was by learning a man of the Middle Ages, but his attitude towards mankind was so broad-minded that his work is timeless. He is the earliest English poet who may still be read for pleasure today.

Literature of the 15th century

Chaucer as a poet is so good that he makes the fifteenth century appear dull. His death was a great blow to English poetry. Almost two centuries passed before a poet equal to him was born. But folk poetry flourished in England and Scotland in the 15th century. The most interesting examples of folk poetry were ballads. Ballads and songs expressed the sentiments and thoughts of people. They were handed down orally from generation to generation. The art of printing did not stop the creation of folk-songs and ballads. They were still composed at the dawn of the 18th century.

The original authors of ballads are unknown; in fact, a given ballad may exist in several versions, because many different people told and revised the ballad as it traveled from village to village. But when a version seemed just right, its teller would be urged to recite the story again and again without changing a thing.

Folk Ballads

A folk ballad is a popular literary form. It comes from unlettered people rather than from professional minstrels or scholarly poets. That is why the ballad tends to express its meaning in simple language. (But the centuries-old dialect of many folk ballads may seem to readers complex). The ballad stanza consists of four lines (a quatrain), rhyming abcb, with four accented syllables within the first and third lines and three in the second and fourth lines.

There 'lived a 'wife at 'Usher's 'Well, a
And a 'wealthy 'was 'she; b
She had 'three 'stout and 'stalwart 'sons, c
And 'sent them 'o'er the 'sea. b

Some folk ballads make use of refrains, repetitions of a line or lines in every stanza without variation. Refrains add emphasis and a note of continuity to the ballads.

As regards to content, the ballads are usually divided into three groups: historical, heroic, and romantic ballads. Historical ballads were based on a historical fact, while heroic ballads were about people who were persecuted by the law or by their own families. Among the most popular ones were those about Robin Hood, who was an outlaw.

Robin Hood Ballads

The Robin Hood ballads, numbering some forty separate ballads, were written down at various times not earlier than the 14th and 15th centuries. Robin Hood is a partly historical, partly legendary character. Most probably he lived in

the second half of the 12th century, during the reign of Henry II and his son Richard, the Lion Heart. The older ballads tell us much about the Saxon yeomen, who were famous archers and keen hunters. Being ill treated by the Norman robber-barons, they longed to live free in the forest with Robin as their leader. Robin Hood always helped the country folk in their troubles. Though sheriff put a big price on Robin's head, Saxons didn't betray him.

Thus, Robin was an outlaw and lived in Sherwood Forest. He was smart and clever "with a twinkle in the eye". Whenever the Sheriff or the king sent out a party of men to catch him, Robin fought with so much vigour that his enemies, amazed at his bravery, confessed themselves beaten and stayed with him in the forest. They became "the merry men of Robin Hood".

In the 16th century many new episodes were introduced into the ballads. They were arranged in series, the most popular of which was "The Jolly Life of Robin Hood and His Men in Sherwood".

UNIT 3. RENAISSANCE

Renaissance was a great cultural movement that began in Italy during the early 1330's. It spread to England, France, Germany, the Netherlands, Spain, and other countries in the late 1400's and ended about 1600.

The word "Renaissance" comes from the Latin word "rinascere" and means rebirth. The Renaissance was the period when European culture was at its height. At that time great importance was assigned to intellect, experience, scientific experiment. The new ideology proclaimed the value of human individuality. This new outlook was called Humanism. The humanists were scholars and artists who studied subjects that they believed would help them better understand the problems of humanity. These subjects included literature and philosophy. The humanists considered that the civilizations of ancient Greece and Rome had excelled in such subjects and could serve as models.

During the Middle Ages the most important branch of learning was theology. Renaissance thinkers paid greater attention to the study of humanity.

The Renaissance In England

During the Renaissance period (particularly 1485-1603) Middle English began to develop into Modern English. By the late 1500's the English people were speaking and writing English in a form much like that used today.

The Renaissance in England is usually studied by dividing it into three parts: the rise of the Renaissance under the early Tudor monarchs (1500-1558), the height of the Renaissance under Elizabeth I (1558-1603), and the decline of the Renaissance under the Stuart monarchs (1603-1649).

The Rise of the Renaissance

The invention of printing press and improved methods of manufacturing paper made possible the rapid spread of knowledge. In 1476, during the Wars of the Roses, William Caxton set up the first printing press in London. Before that time, books and other literary works were slowly and laboriously copied by hand. Printing made it possible to produce far more books at lower costs. By 1640 Caxton's and other presses had printed more than 216,000 different works and editions. It is estimated that by 1530 more than half the population of England was literate. Learning at that time flourished not only at Oxford and Cambridge, but at the lower educational levels too.

At that period new types of literature were imported from the European continent. Chief among these were the sonnet, imported by Wyatt and Surrey from Italy, where it had been perfected by Francis Petrarch; and the essay, imported by Sir Francis Bacon from France. Other verse forms were also borrowed from the Italian and the French. The native drama continued to develop and gain popularity.

The Height of the Renaissance

Under the reign of Elizabeth I (1558-1603), order was restored, and England entered upon her most glorious age. Elizabeth was only twenty-five when she assumed the throne, never married, and ruled wisely and well for forty-five years.

Interested in education, Queen Elizabeth established one hundred free grammar schools in all parts of the country. These schools were open to both sexes of all ranks. In 1579, Gresham College was founded in London to cater to the needs of the middle class. Unlike the classical curriculum offered by Oxford and Cambridge, its curriculum included law, medicine and other practical courses. As the children of the middle class grew better educated, the middle class itself grew in power.

During Elizabeth's reign, England began to gain supremacy on the seas. The Elizabethan Age is an age of poetry. Except perhaps for the essayist Francis Bacon and the critic Christopher Marlowe, people were not yet writing prose of literary quality. Some Elizabethan writers dealt exclusively in lyric poetry, but many were also playwrights writing their plays in verse.

The Elizabethan period was golden age of English drama. In 1576, James Burbage built England's first playhouse, called The Theatre, in a suburb of London. Until this time, drama had been performed in the streets, in homes and palaces, and at English universities. After Burbage built The Theatre, other playhouses were constructed, which rapidly increased the popularity of drama.

A group of leading Elizabethan playwrights was known as the "University Wits" because they had attended the famous English universities at Oxford or Cambridge. These playwrights included Robert Greene, Christopher Marlowe, and George Peele. Marlowe was the most important dramatist among the Wits.

William Shakespeare, Ben Jonson and other more than a dozen first-rate playwrights also created their skillful dramas at that period. Blank verse, introduced into the language by Surrey, became the main form for writing tragedies and comedies.

In 1600, when the new century began, Elizabeth was an aging queen not in the best of health. She was childless. After her death, in 1603, King James of Scotland, the son of Mary Queen of Scots, became the king of England.

The Decline of the Renaissance

James I, the first Stuart king, had little first-hand knowledge of England. Elizabeth had managed to maintain religious balance between Protestants and Catholics, but under the Stuarts that balance was lost. Religious and political unrest was growing.

At that period a number of young Cavaliers, loyal to the king, wrote about love and loyalty, but even in the love poems it is evident that the freshness of the Elizabethan era had passed. Among the best of these poets were Richard Lovelace and Robert Herrick.

Drama continued to flourish in England under the Stuarts. Shakespeare's great tragedies were written during the reign of King James, and Shakespeare's acting company, taken under the patronage of the king, became known as the King's Men. The theatre in fact remained a popular form of entertainment until the puritan government closed all playhouses in 1649.

The greatest of the Puritan poets, and one of the greatest English poets was John Milton, Latin secretary to the Puritan Commonwealth. While in this position his sight began to fail ; eventually he became blind. He composed "Paradise Lost", his greatest work and the most successful English epic, sightless.

Supplement

Three chief forms of poetry flourished during the Elizabethan Age. They were the lyric, the sonnet, and narrative poetry.

The lyric is a short poem that expresses a poet's personal emotions and thoughts in a songlike style.

The sonnet is a 14-line poem with a certain pattern of rhyme and rhythm. Elizabethan poets wrote two types of sonnets, the Italian sonnet and the English sonnet. The two types differed in the arrangement of the rhymes. Sir Thomas Wyatt introduced the sonnet from Italy into English literature in the early 1500's. William Shakespeare and Edmund Spenser wrote sonnet sequences. A sonnet sequence is a group of sonnets based on a single theme or about one person.

Narrative poetry. A narrative poem tells a story. Shakespeare's "Venus and Adonis" and Spenser's "The Faerie Queene" are the examples of narrative poetry.

Sir Thomas More (1478-1535)

One of the outstanding representatives of the English Renaissance was Sir Thomas More. He was a great English author, statesman, and scholar. More was born in London, probably in 1477 or 1478. He studied at Oxford. More began his career as a lawyer in 1494, and became an undersheriff of London in 1510, and then held various high positions. He served as Lord Chancellor, the highest judicial official in England, from 1529 to 1532. But More resigned because he opposed King Henry VIII's plan to divorce his queen. He was beheaded in 1535 for refusing to accept the king as the head of the English church. More has since become an example of the individual who places conscience above the claims of authority. The Roman Catholic Church declared him a saint in 1935.

More published his famous work "Utopia" at the age of thirty-eight. It was written in Latin. "Utopia" is an account of an ideal society, with justice and equality for all citizens. This masterpiece gave the word "utopia" to many languages of the world. "Utopia" is divided into two books.

Book I contains a conversation between More himself, the Flemish humanist Petrus Aegidius, and a philosophical sailor Raphael Hythloday. Their conversation deals with social and economic conditions in Europe and in England.

Book II is dedicated to Hythloday's description of the island of Utopia (meaning Nowhere), which he visited during one of his journeys. It is a state that has achieved absolute social and economic harmony.

In "Utopia" the author criticizes the social system of England. He advances the proposal that education should be provided for everybody, men and women. He advocates tolerance for every form of religion. Wars and Warriors are abolished in Utopia. Kings are also attacked in this book. More writes "The people choose the king for their own sakes and not for his". Many of More's reforms have been built into the modern world.

The book is interesting because it reflects the Renaissance, its learning, its enthusiasm for new ideas. "Utopia" was read in Latin by every humanist in Europe all over the continent. More became the most shining example of the New Learning

in England. He brought the Renaissance, the modern way of thinking into English literature. "Utopia" was famous in its contemporary days but it still remains as a most suggestive discussion of the ills of the human society.

Thomas More is also well-known in world literature for his prose and poetry, written in English and Latin. He wrote his fine English work "A Dialogue of Comfort Against Tribulation" while he was in prison. His other works include "The History of King Richard III", written in English in 1513 and a series of writings in Latin in which he defended the church against Protestant attacks.

Sir Francis Bacon (1561-1626)

Francis Bacon was born in London. His father was a government minister in Queen Elizabeth's court. In 1573, when he was only twelve, Bacon entered Trinity College, Cambridge. In 1576 he was admitted to Gray's Inn to study law. When he was sixteen, he travelled to France, Italy and Spain. At that time such European tours were typical for promising young men of good families.

In 1579 his father, who was Lord Keeper of the Great Seal to Queen Elizabeth, died and Bacon was recalled to England. In 1584 he was elected to Parliament and began his political career. He was re-elected to this position a number of times. Then he rose rapidly: he was knighted in 1603, became Solicitor General in 1607, Attorney General in 1613, a member of the Privy council in 1616, Lord Keeper of the Great Seal in 1617, Lord Chancellor in 1618 and so on.

Bacon's political career ended that same year, when he was charged with misconduct in office, admitted his guilt and was fined. Retiring to the family estate, Bacon continued the writing and scientific experiments he had begun much earlier in life. In 1626, while he was conducting an experiment to determine whether stuffing a chicken with snow would prevent it from spoiling, he caught cold that developed into bronchitis, from which he died.

Although Bacon won fame in his day as a philosopher and scientist, he receives most attention today as an author, particularly an essayist. He introduced the essay form into English literature, and from 1597 to 1625 he published, in three collections, a total of fifty-eight essays. His essays were short, treated a

variety of subjects of universal interest, and contained sentences so memorable that many of them are still quoted today.

Bacon is known also for other works, among them “The New Atlantis” (1626) which might be considered an early example of science fiction, in which he describes an ideal state. In 1620 “Novum Organum” (“The New Instrument”), written in Latin, was published. It influenced future scientific research with its inductive method of inquiry. Thus, scientists today owe their reliance on the inductive method of reasoning to Bacon. That is, he promoted the idea that generalizations should be made only after careful consideration of facts. This idea is obvious to us but it was revolutionary during Bacon’s lifetime, when scholars preferred deductive reasoning - moving from generalizations to specifics.

The passage given below is from Bacon’s essay “Of Studies”. The sentences of this essay are often quoted and they are an example of how much thought Bacon could include in a short piece of writing.

Of Studies (An extract)

Studies serve for delight, for ornament, and for ability. Their chief use for delight is in privateness and retiring; for ornament, is in discourse; and for ability, is in the judgment and disposition of business; for expert men can execute, and perhaps judge of particulars, one by one; but the general counsels, and the plots and marshaling of affairs come best from those that are learned. To spend too much time in studies is sloth; to use them too much for ornament is affectation; to make judgment wholly by their rules is the humor of a scholar. They perfect nature, and perfected by experience; for natural abilities are like natural plants, that need pruning by study; and studies themselves do give forth directions too much at large, except they be bound in by experience. Crafty men contemn studies, simple men admire them, and wise men use them; for they teach not their own use; but that is a wisdom without them and above them, won by observation.

Read not to contradict and confute, nor to believe and take for granted, nor to find talk and discourse, but to weigh and consider. Some books are to be tasted, others to be swallowed, and some few to be chewed and digested; that is, some

books are to be read only in parts; others to be read but not curiously, and some few to be read wholly, and with diligence and attention. Some books also may be read by deputy, and extracts made of them by others; but that would be only in the less important arguments and the meaner sort of books; else distilled books are, like common distilled waters, flashy things.

Reading maketh a full man; conference a ready man; and writing an exact man. And, therefore, if a man write little, he had need have a great memory; if he confer little, he had need have a present wit; and if he read little, he had need have much cunning, to seem to know what he doth not. Histories make men wise; poets, witty; the mathematics, subtle; natural philosophy, deep; moral, grave; logic and rhetoric, able to contend: *Abeunt studia in mores!* ...

Edmund Spenser (1552 - 1599)

Known as the “prince of poets” in his time, Edmund Spenser is generally regarded as the greatest non-dramatic poet of the Elizabethan age. He was born in London to a poor family and was educated at Cambridge on a scholarship. He studied philosophy, rhetoric, Italian, French, Latin, and Greek. Spenser is sometimes called “the poet’s poet” because many later English poets learned the art of versification from his works. He created a sonnet form of his own, the Spenserian sonnet. He is the author of the poems “Shepherd’s Calendar” (1579), “The Faerie Queene” (The Fairy Queen, 1595), the sonnet cycle “Amoretti” (1594) and beautiful marriage hymns “Epithalamion” (1594), “Prothalamion” (1595).

Spenser’s “Shepherd’s Calendar” was dedicated to Sir Philip Sidney. In the work the author comments on contemporary affairs, some lines of it are didactic or satirical. This work consists of 12 eclogues, or dialogues, between shepherds (one for each month of the year). The most important of these is “October” which deals with the problem of poetry in contemporary life and the responsibility of the poet.

The poet’s huge poem “The Faerie Queene” (only six books out of the planned twelve were completed) describes nature, or picturesque allegorical scenes. The stanza of the work was constructed by Spenser and is called the

Spenserian stanza after him. Many other poets, e.g. Burns, Byron, Shelley, used Spenserian stanzas in some of their poems. Spenser, like all great artists, felt the form and pressure of his time conditioning his writing. He was aware of a desire to make English a fine language, full of magnificent words, with its roots in the older and popular traditions of the native tongue. He had the ambition to write (in English) poems, which would be great and revered as the classical epics had been. His mind looked out beyond the Court to the people, to their superstitions and faiths. In him the medieval and Renaissance meet, the modern and the classical, the courtly and popular.

The title of his sonnet cycle “Amoretti” means “little love stories”. The cycle is dedicated to Elizabeth Boyle. At that time Spenser was in love with her and his sonnets tell the story of their romance. His sonnets are melodious and expressive. One of the sonnets from “Amoretti” is given below:

Sonnet 75

One day I wrote her name upon the strand,
But came the waves and washed it away:
Again I wrote it with a second hand,
But came the tide and made my pains his prey.
“Vain man,” said she, “that dost in vain assay
A mortal thing so immortalize,
For I myself shall like to this decay,
And eke my name be wiped out likewise.”
“Not so,” quoth I, “let bazer things devize
To die in dust, but you shall live in fame;
My verse your virtues rare shall eternize,
And in the heavens write your glorious name.
Where, whenas death shall all the world subdue,
Our love shall live, and later life renew.”

Sir Philip Sidney (1554 - 1586)

Sir Philip Sidney was a poet, scholar, courtier and soldier. He became famous for his literary criticism, prose fiction and poetry.

Sidney was born in Penshurst in Kent. He was of high birth and received an education that accorded with his background: studied at Shrewsbury School, followed in 1568 by Christ Church College, Oxford, which he left in 1571 without taking his degree, because of an outbreak of plague. For several years he travelled in France, Germany, Hungary, Italy, and the Netherlands, managing to study music and astronomy along the way.

In 1575 Sidney returned to England and to Elizabeth's court. He accompanied Elizabeth on a visit to the estate of the Earl of Essex, where he met the Earl's thirteen-year-old daughter, Penelope. Later he immortalized her as Stella of his sonnet cycle "Astrophel and Stella". It was published in 1591, and consisted of 108 sonnets and 11 songs, and usually regarded as his greatest literary achievement.

Philip Sidney is also the author of the prose fiction "Arcadia". Some critics consider "Arcadia" the most important original work of English prose written before the 18th century. This book was published in 1590, in revised form, as "The Countess of Pembroke's Arcadia". Though written chiefly in prose, it contained some poems. Lost for more than three hundred years, two manuscript copies of Sydney's original "Arcadia" were finally found in 1907.

Sidney's third major literary achievement was a pamphlet titled "Apology for Poetry", published in 1595. In it the author polemized with those who denied poetry, and its right to exist. Sidney proclaimed the great importance of poetry because of its power to teach and delight at the same time. The pamphlet is usually considered the single most outstanding work of Elizabethan literary theory and criticism.

In 1583 Sidney was knighted and married Frances Walsingham, the daughter of Sir Francis Walsingham, Elizabeth's Secretary of State. In 1585 Queen Elizabeth sent him to the Netherlands to join the Protestant forces there. In

September 1586, in a minor skirmish, Sydney received a bullet wound in the left thigh. Medical care of that time was still primitive, and Sidney died of his wound twenty-six days later.

All the works of Sidney were published some years after his death. His works had a great influence on English literature of the time.

Christopher Marlowe (1564 - 1593)

Christopher Marlowe was one of the greatest dramatists of his time. He was the first Elizabethan writer of tragedy.

Marlowe was born in Canterbury and studied at Cambridge. Born in the same year as Shakespeare, he was killed in a brawl when he was only twenty-nine. If Shakespeare died at twenty-nine, his greatest plays would have remained unwritten, and we would scarcely know his name. Yet, Marlow, by the time of his death had already established himself as a powerful dramatist, earning the title "father of English tragedy". He wrote the tragedies: "Dido, Queen of Carthage", "Tamburlaine the Great", "The Jew of Malta", "The Tragical History of Dr. Faustus", a chronicle history play "Edward II".

Marlowe's literary activity lasted a few years, but he created an immortal place for himself in English drama and poetry. Marlowe established his theatrical reputation with "Tamburlaine the Great" written about 1587. In this tragedy Marlowe wrote about the great conqueror, Tamburlaine.

In "Tamburlaine the Great" the author tells how a Scythian shepherd rises from his lowly birth, and by the power of his personality becomes conqueror of the world. Elizabethan spectators found a keen pleasure in watching a brave but ruthless hero struggle against titanic forces on his way to the success. The story of Tamburlaine seemed to them an idealization of the lives of adventurers.

As we know, an outstanding feature of Renaissance ideology was the belief in man, himself the master and creator of his destiny. Marlowe's tragedies portray heroes who passionately seek power - the power of absolute rule (Tamburlaine), the power of money (Barabas, the Jew of Malta), the power of knowledge (Faustus). Marlowe delights in the might and the strong will of his heroes.

Marlowe's major achievement lay in adapting blank verse to the stage. Ben Jonson expressed admiration when he referred to "Marlowe's mighty line". Marlowe's ability to compress thought, image and idea into superb lines of blank verse paved the way for Shakespeare and later practitioners of the art.

In addition to his plays, Marlowe wrote one of the most famous of Elizabethan lyric poems, "The Passionate Shepherd to His Love." This carpe diem poem is an invitation to the pastoral life, the happy peaceful life of country shepherds.

Supplement

Carpe Diem Poetry

Among the new types of literature imported into England during the Renaissance was carpe diem poetry. Carpe diem is Latin for "seize (take advantage of) the day" and this poetry dealt with the swift passage of time and transiency of youth. Usually the speaker of such a poem was a young man, and usually he was urging a young woman to take advantage of life and love while she was still young and attractive. The carpe diem theme, which goes back to Horace and other Roman poets who wrote verses in Latin, achieved great popularity in Renaissance England. The reasons of it are explained by the fact that life spans were really shorter at that time. Illness, accident, war, and the executioner's axe killed men and women in their prime. The biographers of the English authors illustrate it by the point that Bacon was 65 when he died of bronchitis; Marlowe was 29 when he was killed; Spenser died at 47; Sidney died because of a battle wound at 32; Shakespeare lived only 52 years. Their average age at death was 45. Obviously, it was necessary to "seize the day" at an early age, for life was indeed short. The most famous carpe diem poem is Marlowe's "The Passionate Shepherd to His Love". Below some stanzas from this poem are given:

The Passionate Shepherd to His Love
Come live with me and be my love'
And we will all the pleasures prove
That hills and valleys, dales and fields,
Or woods, or steepy mountain yields.
And we will sit upon the rocks,
Seeing the shepherds feed their flocks,
By Shallow rivers to whose falls
Melodious birds sing madrigals.
And I will make thee beds of roses
And a thousand fragrant posies,
A cap of flowers, and a kirtle
Embroidered all with leaves of myrtle;
A belt of straw and ivy buds,
With coral clasps and amber studs -
And if these pleasures may thee move,
Come live with me and be my love.

Here the Shepherd tempts his love with exaggerated and high-flown pictures of the joys of pastoral life. This poem has generated many responses, and many parodies. The best and the most famous of them was "The Nymph's Reply to the Shepherd". (In Greek and Roman mythology, a nymph was one of the lesser goddesses of nature, who lived in seas, rivers, fountains, springs, hills, woods, or trees. The word came to be applied to any beautiful or graceful young woman.)

The Nymph's Reply to the Shepherd
If all the world and love were young,
And truth in every shepherd's tongue,
These pretty pleasures might me move
To live with thee and be thy love.

Thy gowns, thy shoes, thy bed of roses,
Thy cap, thy kirtle, and thy posies,
Soon break, soon wither, soon forgotten,
In folly ripe, in reason rotten.

Thy bed of straw and ivy buds,
Thy coral clasps and amber studs,
All these in me no means can move
To come to thee and be thy love.
But could youth last and love still breed,
Had joys no date nor age no need,
Then these delights my mind might move
To live with thee and be thy love.

Later John Donne (1572-1631) parodied Marlowe in "The Bait". The following lines may show how well he succeeded in doing it: The Bait

Come live with me, and be my love,
And we will some new pleasures prove
Of golden sands, and crystal brooks
With silken lines, and silver hooks.
There will the river whispering run
Warmed by thy eyes, more than the sun.
And there th' enamoured fish will stay,
Begging themselves they may betray.
When thou wilt swim in that live bath,
Each fish, which every channel hath,
Will amorously to thee swim,
Gladder to catch thee, than thou him.
If thou, to be so seen, be'st loath,
By sun, or moon, thou darkenest both,

And if myself have leave to see,
I need not their light, having thee.
For thee, thou need'st no such deceit,
For thou thyself art thine own bait;
That fish, that is not caught thereby,
Alas, is wiser far than I.

Each new movement in poetry altered the basic carpe diem theme to suit its own style and philosophy. Among the cavalier poets Robert Herrick (1591-1674), also a member of the clergy, wrote a carpe diem poem "To the Virgins, to Make Much of Time". But he does not attempt seduction; instead he advises girls to marry while they are young, or else there may be no takers:

To the Virgins, to Make Much of Time
Gather ye rosebuds while ye may,
Old time is still a-flying;
And this same flower that smiles today,
Tomorrow will be dying.
The glorious lamp of heaven, the sun,
The higher he's a-getting,
The sooner will his race be run,
And nearer he's to setting.
Then be not coy, but use your time,
And, while ye may, go marry;
For, having lost but once your prime,
You may forever tarry.

John Milton, a Puritan, the 17th century poet, also wrote on the *carpe diem* theme, but he followed another approach. In the sonnet “On His Having Arrived at the Age of Twenty-Three” he frets over not having accomplished anything important by that point in his life, but he ends by placing his faith in heaven.

The concern with time that is major aspect of the *carpe diem* theme continues to appear in literature through the years up to the present.

Ben Jonson (1572 - 1637)

Ben Jonson was reared to the bricklayer’s trade and had no benefit of a formal university education. But, by force of will, became a great scholar of the classics and consequently affected English literature for nearly two hundred years.

Jonson’s major contribution to poetry was to adapt the poetic forms that had been used by the classic writers of ancient Rome. Jonson was influenced by poets who had composed centuries before in Latin. He introduced to English specific and strong language, great order and balance. He is considered the forerunner of English neoclassicism.

Ben Jonson is the author of the best English satirical comedies. Among his best works are: “*Volpone, or the Fox*”(1606), “*The Silent Woman*”, “*The Alchemist*”(1610), “*Bartholomew Fair*”. His hostility to tyrants was expressed in his tragedies “*Sejanus His Fall*” (*Sejunus’s Fall*), and “*Catiline His Conspiracy*” (*Catiline’s Conspiracy*).

Ben Jonson was also a fine lyric poet. His minor poems and the songs in many of his plays are true masterpieces. But it was in the genre of satirical comedies that Ben Jonson became leader and excelled all other dramatists. Jonson’s comic manner of depicting characters typical of contemporary life influenced the whole English literature. He was friendly with Shakespeare. King James made him poet laureate. A number of young poets of his time, including Herrick and Lovelace respecting Jonson’s talents, called themselves the “*Sons of Ben*”. Among his followers we may list the novelists of the enlightenment and such writers of later periods as Charles Dickens, Bernard Shaw and John Boynton Priestly.

William Shakespeare (1564 - 1616)

A poet and playwright William Shakespeare is the favorite author of millions of readers all over the world. No other writer's plays have been produced so often and read so widely in so many different countries. He had a greater influence on the world literature than any other author.

William Shakespeare was born in 1564, on April 23 in Stratford-on-Avon, in England. His father, John Shakespeare, was a prosperous glove maker of Stratford who, after holding minor municipal offices, was elected high bailiff (the equivalent of mayor) of Stratford. Shakespeare's mother, Mary Arden, came from a family of landowners.

In his childhood Shakespeare attended the Stratford Grammar School.

Shakespeare's contemporaries first admired him for his long narrative poems "Venus and Adonis" (1593) and "The Rape of Lucrece" (1594).

In 1599 the best-known of Elizabethan theatres, the Globe, was built and Shakespeare became a leading shareholder and the principal playwright to the theatre company. He was also an actor, but not a first-rate one: the parts he played were the old servant Adam in "As You like It" and the Ghost in "Hamlet".

In 1613, after the Globe had been destroyed by fire during a performance of "Henry VIII" he retired and stopped writing. By then he was very ill. He died on April 23, 1616 and was buried in the Holy Trinity church in Stratford where he was christened.

Although some of Shakespeare's plays were published during his life-time, not until his death was any attempt made to collect them in a single volume. The first edition of Shakespeare's collected plays appeared in 1623.

Shakespeare's works are truly immortal, and will retain their immortality as long as the human race exists. He is a true classic; every new generation finds something new and unperceived in his works. His popularity all over the world grows from year to year. More than four hundred years after his birth the plays of Shakespeare are performed even more often than they were during his lifetime.

They are performed on the stage, in the movies, and on television. They are read by millions of people all over the world.

Shakespeare's Plays

Most scholars agree that there exist 37 plays written by Shakespeare. Traditionally, Shakespeare's plays have been divided into three groups: comedies, histories, and tragedies. All of the works of the great playwright are written in four periods of his literary career. Each of these periods reflects a general phase of Shakespeare's artistic development.

The first period includes all the plays written in 1590-1594. His comedies "The Comedy of Errors", "The Taming of the Shrew", "The Two Gentlemen of Verona", the histories "Henry VI" (Parts I, II, and III), "Richard III", "King John", and the tragedy "Titus Andronicus" were written during this period. They belong to different genres, but they have much in common. The plots of these plays follow their sources more mechanically than do the plots of Shakespeare's later works. Besides, these plays generally emphasize events more than the portrayal of characters.

During the second period (1595-1600) Shakespeare brought historical drama and Elizabethan romantic comedy to near perfection. The comedies "A Midsummer Night's Dream", "Love's Labour's Lost", "The Merchant of Venice", "As You Like It", "Much Ado About Nothing", "Twelfth Night", "The Merry Wives of Windsor", the tragedies "Romeo and Juliet", "Julius Caesar" and the histories "Richard II", "Henry IV" (Parts I and II), "Henry V" were written at this period, and in them the great playwright demonstrated his genius for weaving various dramatic actions into a unified plot, showed his gift for characterization.

During the third period (1601-1608) Shakespeare wrote his great tragedies ("Hamlet", "Troilus and Cressida", "Othello", "King Lear", "Mac-beth", "Timon of Athens", "Anthony and Cleopatra", "Coriolanus"), which made him truly immortal. Every play of this period, except for "Pericles", shows Shakespeare's awareness of the tragic side of life. Even the two comedies of the period "All's Well That Ends Well" and "Measure for Measure" are more disturbing than

amusing. That is why they are often called “problem” comedies or “bitter” comedies. “Pericles” represents Shakespeare’s first romance - a drama, which is generally serious in tone but with a happy ending.

Shakespeare’s sonnets were also written during the third period of his literary career.

The fourth period (1609-1613). During this final period Shakespeare wrote three comedies (“Cymbeline”, “The Winter’s Tale”, “The Tempest”) and the history “Henry VIII”. (Some critics state, that the History “Henry VIII” is written together with John Fletcher).

The last years of Shakespeare’s career as a playwright are characterized by a considerable change in the style of drama. Beaumont and Fletcher became the most popular dramatists of that time, and the plays of Shakespeare written during the fourth period are modeled after their dramatic technique. All of them are written around a dramatic conflict, but the tension in them is not so great as in the tragedies, all of them have happy endings

Chronology of Shakespeare’s plays

One of the main problems in the study of Shakespeare was that of the chronology of his plays. A famous Shakespearian scholar, Sir Edmund K. Chambers, solved it in 1930. His chronological table is considered the most convincing one. The double dates in it indicate the theatrical season during which the particular play was first performed.

1590-1591. Henry VI, Part II

Henry VI, Part III

1591-1592. Henry VI, Part I

1592-1593. Richard III

The Comedy of Errors

1593-1594. Titus Andronicus

The Taming of the Shrew

1594-1595. The Two Gentlemen of Verona.

Love’s Labour’s Lost.

Romeo and Juliet.
1595-1596. Richard II.
A Midsummer Night's Dream.
1596-1597. King John.
The Merchant of Venice.
1597-1598. Henry IV, Part I.
Henry IV, Part II.
1598-1599. Much Ado About Nothing.
Henry V.
1599-1600. Julius Caesar.
As You Like It.
Twelfth Night.
1600-1601. Hamlet.
The Merry Wives of Windsor.
1601-1602. Troilus and Cressida.
1603-1604. All's Well That Ends Well.
1604-1605. Measure for Measure.
Othello.
1605-1606. King Lear.
Macbeth.
1606-1607. Antony and Cleopatra.
1607-1608. Coriolanus.
Timon of Athens.
1608-1609. Pericles.
1609-1610. Cymbeline.
1610-1611. The Winter's Tale.
1611-1612. The Tempest.
1612-1613. Henry VIII.
"Romeo and Juliet"

“Romeo and Juliet” is a tragedy based on “Romeus and Juliet”, a poem by the English author Arthur Brooke. It was first published in 1597 and first performed in 1596.

Romeo and Juliet is a story of love and hate. It deals with two teen-aged lovers in Verona, Italy, who are caught in a bitter feud between their families, the Montagues and the Capulets. It is a story of two young people who fall in love at first sight, marry secretly because their families are bitter enemies, and die because each cannot bear to live without the other. It is also a story of two families whose hatred for each other drives a son and daughter to destruction. Only after they have lost their children the parents learn the folly of hatred and agree to end their feud. Love eventually conquers hate, but at a terrible cost.

It is not a simple story of good and bad people, for all the major characters bear some responsibility for the disaster. Romeo and Juliet have little chance to preserve both their love and their lives in the hatred that surrounds them. They are driven to destruction by events they cannot control. Yet the final choice is theirs, and they choose to die together instead of living apart.

Shakespeare sets the scene of “Romeo and Juliet” in Verona, Italy, as earlier tellers of the story had done. The time of the action is vague, although it clearly takes place at some time before Shakespeare’s days.

Although he sometimes uses prose, Shakespeare has written most of his play in poetry, because that was the way plays were written during his lifetime. Some of the lines rhyme, but most of them are written in blank verse.

The tragedy blames the adults for their blind self-interest.

“H a m l e t, Prince of Denmark”

“Hamlet” is one of Shakespeare’s greatest creations, but it is also considered the hardest of his works to understand. Some critics count it even mysterious. The source of the plot can be found in a Danish chronicle written around 1200. The plot of the tragedy is following: a usurper Claudius murders his brother, the lawful king, and seizes the throne. The son of the murdered king and lawful heir to the

throne Hamlet, discovering the crime, struggles against usurper. But the struggle ends tragically for him too.

As you see, there is nothing mysterious in the plot of the tragedy, but mysterious is the complex character of Hamlet himself. First we see Hamlet plunged into despair: he is grieved by the death of his father, shocked and horrified by the inconstancy and immorality of his mother, filled with disgust and hatred for Claudius, and begins to be disgusted with life in general.

Later, after talking to the Ghost, he learns of the murder of his father. He sincerely wants to kill Claudius, and avenge for his father. The readers also want him to do so. But Hamlet delays and goes on delaying. He even rejects a chance to kill Claudius while he is on his knees in prayer. Why does he delay avenging his father's murder? Why can't he make up his mind? This is the mystery. Various explanations have been offered by a number of critics, but still they have not come to a conclusion, which could satisfy all the readers and investigators of Shakespeare.

Instead of Claudius Hamlet, by mistake, kills Polonius, Ophelia's father. It happens because Polonius, the king's adviser, decides to eavesdrop on Hamlet while the prince is visiting his mother in her sitting room. He hides behind a curtain, but Hamlet becomes aware that someone is there. Hamlet stabs Polonius through the curtain and kills him.

The king, Claudius, exiles Hamlet to England for the murder. He also sends secret orders that the prince be executed after he arrives in England. But Hamlet intercepts the orders and returns to Denmark safe and sound. He arrives in time and sees Ophelia's burial.

Ophelia is the daughter of Polonius and the girl whom Hamlet loves. She goes insane after her father's death and drowns herself. Laertes, Ophelia's brother, blames Hamlet for his sister's and father's death. He agrees to Claudius's plan to kill Hamlet with a poisoned sword in a fencing match. Laertes wounds Hamlet during the duel, and is wounded himself by the poisoned weapon. Hamlet's mother, watching the match, accidentally drinks from a cup of poisoned wine

prepared by Claudius for Hamlet. Dying from the wound, Hamlet kills Claudius. At the end of the play, Hamlet, his mother, Claudius, and Laertes all lie dead.

The role of Hamlet in this outstanding play is considered one of the greatest acting challenges of the theatre. Shakespeare focused the play on the deep conflict within thoughtful and idealistic Hamlet. Hamlet reveals this conflict in several famous monologues. The best known of them is his monologue on suicide, which begins with "To be, or not to be."

Hamlet

To be, or not to be - that is the question:
Whether 'tis nobler in the mind to suffer
The slings and arrows of outrageous fortune
Or to take arms against a sea of troubles,
And by opposing end them. To die - to sleep -
No more; and by a sleep to say we end
The heartache, and the thousand natural shocks
That flesh is heir to. 'Tis a consummation
Devoutly to be wish'd. To die - to sleep.
To sleep - perchance to dream: ay, there's the rub!
For in that sleep of death what dreams may come
When we have shuffled off this mortal coil,
Must give us pause. There's the respect
That makes calamity of so long life.
For who would bear the whips and scorns of time,
Th' oppressor's wrong, the proud man's contumely,
The pangs of despis'd love, the law's delay,
The insolence of office, and the spurns
That patient merit of th' unworthy takes,
When he himself might his quietus make
With a bare bodkin? Who would these fardels bear,

To grunt and sweat under a weary life,
But that the dread of something after death -
The undiscover'd country, from whose bourn
No traveler returns - puzzles the will,
And makes us rather bear those ills we have
Than fly to others that we know not of?
Thus conscience does make cowards of us all,
And thus the native hue of resolution
Is sicklied o'er with the pale cast of thought,
And enterprises of great pith and moment
With this regard their currents turn away
And lose the name of action. ...
(Act 3, Scene 1.)

Shakespeare's Comedies

Shakespeare's comedies did not establish a lasting tradition in the theatre, as did those written by Ben Jonson. Jonson's plays portray the everyday life of their time with the exaggerated satirical characters. Shakespeare's comedies are composed on opposite principles. The scenes of his comedies are usually set in some imaginary country, and the action is based on stories that are almost fairy-tails. But the characters placed in these non-realistic settings and plots, are true-to-life and are depicted with the deep knowledge of human psychology for which Shakespeare is famous. Each comedy has a main plot and one or two sub-plots, and sometimes sub-plots attract even more attention than the main plots. The comic characters of these plays always have English colouring, even if the scene is laid in other countries.

All these plays are written in easy-flowing verse and light, tripping prose. The text is full of jokes and puns, but some of the texts contain topical allusions, which are hard to understand for the readers of our time. All the comedies tell of love and harmony, at first disturbed, and finally restored. In them Shakespeare

supports the right of a human being to free choice in love, despite the existing conventions and customs. More often Shakespeare embodies this tendency in female characters. His typical comedy heroines are brave, noble, free in speech, and enthusiastic.

Another motif stressed in the comedies is the contrast between appearance and reality. Shakespeare makes his readers understand the importance of self-knowledge. In the complicated plots of Shakesperian comedies the heroes and heroines often select wrong partners because they have formed wrong opinions about their own characters, that is they do not know or understand their own self and feelings. But their mistakes are treated good-humourly and the comedies end happily, because at the end of the plays the characters understand themselves and those they love.

“Twelfth Night”

This comedy centres on the typical Shakesperian conflict between true and false emotion. Duke Orsino tries to convince himself that he is in love with Countess Olivia and grows more absorbed by his feelings after each rebuff received from her. But Olivia is in deep grief for her dead brother and renounces all joy of life.

The solution of the complicated plot is provided by the twin sister and brother, Viola and Sebastian. They become separated during a shipwreck. Finding herself stranded in the country of Illyria, Viola disguises herself as Cesario, a page, and enters the service of Duke Orsino. The duke sends the page to woo the countess Olivia for him. But Olivia falls in love with Caesario. The marriage of Orsino to Viola and Sebastian to Olivia brings the comedy to happy ending.

Shakespeare's Sonnets

In addition to his plays and two narrative poems, Shakespeare wrote a sequence of 154 sonnets. His sonnets were probably written in the 1590s but first published in 1609.

Shakespeare's sonnets occupy a unique place in the Shakespearian heritage, because they are his only lyrical pieces, the only things he has written about himself.

The three main characters in the sonnets are the poet, his friend and the dark lady. The poet expresses the warmest admiration for the friend. The dark lady is the beloved of the Poet; unlike the idealized ladies in the sonnets of Petrarch and his followers, she is false and vicious, but the poet, though aware of the fact, can't help loving her. And then comes the tragedy: the friend and the dark lady betray the poet and fall in love with each other.

By reading between the lines of the sonnets, we may see a tragedy in Shakespeare's life, a tragedy that he might not have fully understood himself. Despite the author's intention, we feel that the poet's friend, who is praised so warmly, is a shallow, cruel and petulant man; the dark lady is wicked and lying. Thus, in the sonnets we may see the great misfortune of a genius, who wasted his life and soul for the sake of persons unworthy of him.

There is a major theme running through the cycle: the theme of the implacability of Time. How can one triumph over it? The poet gives two answers: the first is: one lives forever in one's children, in one's posterity. The second is one may achieve immortality if one's features are preserved by art, and particularly in poetry.

Scholars and critics have made many attempts to discover all the mysteries of Shakespeare's sonnets, as they may shed light on his life, but generally to no avail. It is important to remember that Shakespeare's sonnets were written at a time when such sequences were fashionable, and thus the sonnets may be more an exercise in literary convention than in autobiography. Here is one of these sonnets:

LV

Not marble, nor the gilded monuments

Of princes, shall outlive this powerful rime;

But you shall shine more bright in these contents

Than unswept stone, besmear'd with sluttish time.
When wasteful war shall statues overturn,
And broils root out the work of masonry,
Nor Mars his sword nor war's quick fire shall burn
The living record of your memory.
'Gainst death and all-oblivious enmity
Shall you pace forth; your praise shall still find room
Even in the eyes of all posterity
That wear this world out to the ending doom.
So, till the judgment that yourself arise,
You live in this, and dwell in lovers' eyes.

The sonnets show how Shakespeare's poetic style was forged and perfected; to some extent they raise the veil over his private life, of which we know so little.

UNIT 4. ENGLISH LITERATURE IN THE 17TH CENTURY

General background

The seventeenth century is in many ways the century of transition into our modern world. The Civil Wars separated men from the older ways of living and the religious controversies killed much that had remained lively in the national imagination since the Middle Ages. Elizabeth I died in 1603 leaving no heir. Her cousin James VI of Scotland became King James I of England. In England James governed the two countries as separate kingdoms. He was a member of the House of Stuart, which ruled England for most of the period from 1603 to 1714. James was an arrogant and superstitious man who quarrelled often with Parliament. After James died in 1625, his son Charles I ascended to the throne.

Conflicts between the monarchy and Parliament worsened. Civil war broke out in 1642 between the king's followers, who were called Cavaliers, and Parliament's chief supporters called Puritans. Oliver Cromwell, a puritan member of Parliament, headed the Parliamentary army. He brought victory to the Parliamentary forces and temporarily ended the monarchy in 1649. Charles I was tried and beheaded in January 1649. The House of Lords was abolished, and a commonwealth (or Republic) was proclaimed. Later, frightened by the rising revolutionary spirit of the masses, Cromwell intensified his oppression and in 1653 imposed a military dictatorship on the country. It lasted till his death in 1658.

As neither the common people nor the upper classes were satisfied with the results of the Puritan Revolution, the monarchy was restored after Oliver Cromwell's death. Charles II, the son of the executed king, ascended the throne in 1660. Charles II's reign was followed by the brief reign of his brother James II, who came to the throne in 1685. The years between 1660 and 1688 are called the "Restoration".

By that time two main parties had been formed in Parliament, one representing the interests of businessmen, the other, the interests of the landowners and clergy. The two parties hated each other so much that the insulting

nicknames of “Whigs” for businessmen and “Tories” for landowners were invented. Later, these names came to be used officially.

In 1688 the Parliament worked out the Bill of Rights, according to which the royal power, the armed forces, and taxation were brought under the control of Parliament. King James fled to France, and in 1689 the crown was offered to his daughter Mary and her husband William of Holland. These events were called the “Glorious Revolution”, a revolution without violence or bloodshed. Thus constitutional monarchy was established, which marked the end of the whole revolutionary epoch of the 17th century.

The political struggle involving the broad masses of the English population led to the publication of pamphlets and laid the foundation of journalism and the periodical press. The English people took a tremendous interest in all the political events of the time. The greatest of all publicists during the Puritan Revolution was the poet John Milton. His pamphlets gave theoretical foundation to the struggle of the puritans against the monarchy.

In Elizabeth’s time verse was the dominant form of literature. Poetry dominated in the English literature of the early seventeenth century. The poet John Donne and his followers wrote what later was called metaphysical poetry, that is complex, highly intellectual verse filled with intricate and prolonged metaphors. Ben Jonson and his disciples, called “the sons of Ben” or “the tribe of Ben”, developed a second main style of poetry. They wrote in a more conservative, restrained fashion and on more limited subjects than the metaphysical poets. A great poet of the century, John Milton had a style of his own, and he remained outside both Donne’s and Jonson’s influence.

John Milton (1608 - 1674)

The greatest poet of the XVII century John Milton was born in London on December 9, 1608. Milton’s father was a prosperous scrivener in London. He was also an amateur composer.

From childhood Milton learned to love music and books; he read and studied so intensely that at the age of twelve he had already formed the habit of

working until midnight. At first Milton attended St. Paul's school. His progress in every department of knowledge was very rapid, and at the age of sixteen he went to the University of Cambridge. On graduating, Milton retired to his father's country place, Horton, in Buckinghamshire. There he gave himself up to study and poetry. Many of Milton's poems were written at Horton. These comprise the first period in his creative work.

Milton had long wished to complete his education by travelling, as it was the custom of the time. In 1638 he left England for a European tour. He visited France and Italy. He met the great Galileo, who was no longer a prisoner of the Inquisition, but was still watched by Catholic churchmen. Milton succeeded in getting into the house where Galileo was kept. His meeting with the great martyr of science is mentioned in "Paradise Lost" and in an article about the freedom of the press. In 1639 he returned to England, just when the struggle between the king and the Puritans began. For some time Milton had to do educational work, and the result of it was a treatise on education.

Milton kept a keen eye on the public affairs of the time. The years between 1640 and 1660, the second period in his literary work, were the years when he wrote militant revolutionary pamphlets. When the Republican Government under Cromwell was established in 1649, Milton was appointed Latin Secretary to the Council of State. The work consisted chiefly of translating diplomatic government papers into Latin and from Latin.

In his pamphlets, most of which were written in Latin, Milton supported the Parliamentary cause against the Royalists. During his years as Latin Secretary and journalist Milton wrote only a few sonnets.

Milton had weak eyes even as a child; in 1652 he lost his eyesight completely. With the restoration of the monarchy in 1660, Milton was discharged from office. All his famous pamphlets were burnt by the hangman. But the poet's military spirit was not crushed. He and his family moved to a small house not far from London, and Milton again began to write poetry. Milton's years of retirement became the third period in his literary work. During this period he created works

that made him one of the greatest poets of England. These were his great epic “Paradise Lost” completed by 1667, and then, the second epic “Paradise Regained” and a tragedy, “Samson Agonistes” both written by 1671.

The story of “Samson” is taken from the Bible. Samson, the great hero, is imprisoned and blinded, but manages to destroy his enemies, although he perishes himself. Some character features of the hero of the tragedy are identical with those of the author, Milton. In it Milton shows that he remained faithful to his ideals. It is considered his most powerful work.

Milton died on November 8, 1684 and was buried in London. Milton’s works form a bridge between the poetry of the Renaissance and the poetry of the classicists of a later period. Milton’s works are characterized by their duality (which means that two independent views go together). He chooses his themes from the Bible, but under his treatment they became revolutionary in spirit.

“Paradise Lost”

“Paradise Lost” is an epic, divided into twelve books, or chapters. The characters are God, three guardian angels - Raphael, Gabriel and Michael, Satan and his rebel angels, and the first man and woman - Adam and Eve. Satan, who revolts against God, draws his side many rebel-angels and is driven out of Heaven. They fall down into the fires of Hell. But Satan is not to be overcome. He hates God who rules the universe, autocratically. Though banished from Heaven, Satan is glad to have gained freedom. He pities the rebel-angels who have lost life in Heaven for his sake, and decides to go on with the war against God.

Adam and Eve are allowed by God to live, in Paradise, in the Garden of Eden, as long as do not eat the apple that grows on the Tree of the Knowledge of good and evil. Satan, who has been driven from the Garden of Eden by the guardian angels, returns at night in the form of a serpent. Next morning, the serpent persuades Eve to eat the forbidden fruit from the Tree of Knowledge and to take another one for Adam. Eve tells Adam what she has done. Adam’s reply is described in the following way:

Speechless he stood and pale, till thus at length
First to himself he inward silence broke: _-
O, fairest of Creation, last and best
Of all God's works, creature in whom excelled
Whatever can to sight or thought be formed,
Holy, divine, amiable or sweet!
How art thou lost!.....
..... . Some cursed fraud
Of enemy hath beguiled thee, yet unknown,
And me with thee hath ruined; for with thee
Certain my resolution is to die.
How can I live without thee? How forgo.
Thy sweet converse and love so dearly joined,
To live again in these wild woods forlorn?"

So Adam decides to eat the fruit for love of Eve. As a punishment, God banishes Adam and Eve to the newly created world, where they have to face a life of toil and woe. The angel Michael shows Adam a vision of the tyranny and lawlessness which are to befall mankind.

Milton's sympathies lie with Adam and Eve, and this shows his faith in man. His Adam and Eve are full of energy. They love each other and are ready to meet all hardships together. When they are driven out of Eden, Eve says to Adam:

“.....but now lead on;
In me is no delay; with thee to go
Is to stay here; without thee to stay
Is to go hence unwillingly; thou to me
Art all things under Heaven, all places thou
Who for my willful crime art banished hence”.

Thus, in his “Paradise Lost” John Milton had created the images of Adam and Eve, the first men and woman, who were faithful to their love.

John Dryden (1631-1700)

John Dryden was the outstanding English poet from the Restoration in 1660 to the end of the 17th century. He was born to a Puritan family in London and graduated from Cambridge University in 1654.

Dryden wrote verse in several forms: odes, poetic drama, biting satires, and translations of classic authors. His early poem “Heroic Stanzas on the Death of Cromwell“ was published in 1659. A year later it was followed by “Astraea Redux”, which celebrated the Restoration of the Stuart line to the throne.

In 1667 Dryden published “Annus Mirabilis”, a poem commemorating three events of the previous year: the end of the plague, the Great Fire of London, and the Dutch War. This is a most unusual feat in transferring almost immediately contemporary events into poetry.

Dryden wrote notable prose as well, including literary criticism of Shakespeare, Chaucer, and others. His venture into political satire began in 1681, with the publication of “Absalom and Achitophel”, written after an unsuccessful attempt by Charles’ illegitimate son, the Duke of Monmouth, to seize the throne. In 1682 he wrote another literary satire “Mac Flecknoe”.

Dryden was a talented translator too. His translation of Virgil’s “Aeneid”, published in 1697, was extremely popular. As a translator, he also rendered Juvenal, Ovid and Chaucer, and the best of his prose in the preface of 1700 to the “Fables”, in which, in the year of his death, he introduced some of his translations

to the public. His range cannot be estimated without a consideration of his criticism and his plays in verse.

UNIT 5. ENGLISH LITERATURE IN THE 18TH CENTURY (ENLIGHTENMENT IN ENGLAND)

General Background

The eighteenth-century philosophical impulse known as the Enlightenment rested on five general beliefs: the inevitability of progress; the perfectibility of man and his institutions; the efficacy of reason; the beneficence of God; and the plentitude and perfection of nature. It stressed the primacy of science over theology, skepticism over authority, reason over faith. The philosophers of the Enlightenment were convinced that it was within man's capacity, by applying reason to his problems, to discover those great laws by which all human and natural activity could be explained. Possessing such knowledge, men could then direct their efforts toward building a society in which progress was certain and continuous. The temper of the Enlightenment was orderly, progressive, hopeful. In the eighteenth century England achieved, politically and economically the position of a great power in Europe. Eighteenth century England was distinguished also in science and philosophy. (Isaac Newton, David Hume, Adam Smith). The most active sections of population at that time were the commercial classes that are the middle classes.

The writers and philosophers of this age reflected the ideology of the middle class. They protested against the survival of feudalism. They thought that vice was due to ignorance, so they started a public movement for enlightening the people. The enlighteners wanted to bring knowledge that is "light" to the people. To their understanding this would do away with all the evils of society, and social harmony would be achieved. The English Enlightenment was a relatively conservative compromise of new and old ideas with current conditions. Since the enlighteners believed in the power of reason, the period was also called the Age of Reason.

The century had many other titles. It has been called the Age of Classicism, because many writers and poets of that time were fascinated by ancient Greece and Rome. It has been called the Age of Elegance, for the display of elegant style of life among the upper classes.

Eighteenth-century literature reflects the ideas and interests of the Age of Reason, the Age of Classicism, the Age of Elegance. Works show a sense of order and moderation; writers display their “wit”, or cleverness. Prose is calm and logical; poems are carefully structured.

In the eighteenth century the subjects of study to which man applied himself became more numerous and more systematic, and it was the good fortune of England that prose in that age had become a pliant and serviceable medium. It was a century full of speculation and fierce questioning, a century with powerful minds that applied themselves to the problems of the nature of life, and set out solutions, which have been the basis of much later thought. It was a century, above all others, when England led Europe in philosophical speculation. The centre of interest was human experience, and what could be learned from it of the nature of life. Richardson and Fielding explored human experience in fiction. Historians were attempting, more ambitiously than before, to interpret the past of life, and philosophers to expound the nature of reality itself. It was natural that in such a century the orthodox teachings of the Church should be open to criticism. Writers widely accepted those literary forms, in particular, prose forms, which were understandable to the people as a whole. Manners, fashions, literature, stories, moral reflections, all took a turn as themes in brief papers, which were addressed consciously to a middle-class audience. The periodical essay was the eighteenth-century equivalent of the broadcast talk. Contact between writers and readers was established by famous English essayists Joseph Addison and Richard Steele. They started and directed several magazines for which they wrote pamphlets and essays. In 1709 Steele issued a magazine, “The Tatler”. It was followed by others: “The Spectator” (1711), “The Guardian” (1713), and “The Englishman”(1713). In the

latter political problems were discussed. Periodical newspapers also helped to spread information among the general public.

Joseph Addison (1672-1719) Richard Steele (1672-1729)

Drama of the 18th century continued traditions of Restoration play-wrights. Sentimental tragedies were popular with the growing audience. The interest in classical literature prompted many classical tragedies modeled on those of ancient Rome. The drama of the eighteenth century does not reach the same high level as the novel. One has to wait late in the century for Goldsmith and Sheridan, to find writers who make any permanent contribution to the English stage. Of a number of reasons which might be invented in explanation it is at least certain that the Licensing Act of 1737 restricted the freedom of expression by dramatists and drove a number of good men out of the theatre. Further, it was clear also that the middle-class commercial classes were gaining sufficient ascendancy to impose their obtuse views on the themes that would be acceptable in the theatre.

Outstanding in the early decades of the century is John Gay's "Beggar's Opera", a play with ballads (1728); Oliver Goldsmith's "She Stoops to Conquer", and Richard Brinsley Sheridan's "Rivals" and "School for Scandal". The play, with its moral emphasis and its melodramatic theme, made a wide and immediate appeal. It was recognized that a new element had entered into drama, even if the dramatist who introduced it was obviously not of the first rank. The innovation is far more important than the play, for this way leads, however indirectly, to the modern social and realistic drama.

The main literary trends of the age of the Enlightenment in England were classicism, realism, sentimentalism and early romanticism, out of which, sentimentalism is a very English phenomenon. Sentiment may be defined as feeling, and in the eighteenth century, against the background of its many crudities and barbarities, there developed both in life and in literature movements such as Methodism, in social life in an increasing realization of the hardships, which the majority of mankind had to suffer. Its dangers are obvious, for it leads to emotionalism instead of mysticism, and to charity instead of genuine reform. It

clouds the reason, substitutes pathos for tragedy, and obscures the harder issues of life in a mist of tenderness. In literature its effects were numerous, and, in comedies disastrous. An early exponent of sentimentalism was Richard Steele. The depths of sentimentalism were reached by some dramatists who showed how every human issue could be obscured in the welter of emotion. From such depths the drama was rescued by Oliver Goldsmith and Richard Sheridan. The XVIII century gave the world such brilliant English writers as Alexander Pope, Daniel Defoe, Jonathan Swift, Henry Fielding, Samuel Richardson, Tobias Smollet and famous dramatist Richard Brinsley Sheridan.

Eighteenth-century England is also often called the Augustan Age.

The term comes from the name given to the reign of the Roman emperor Augustus. During his reign, which lasted from 27 B.C. to 14 A.D. Latin literature reached its height with such great writers as Virgil, Horace, and Ovid. English authors tried to imitate or recapture many of the philosophic and literary ideals of this period of Roman history. Like the ancient Romans, they believed that life and literature should be guided by reason and common sense. They strove for balance and harmony in their writings. Augustan literature is sometimes divided into two periods, each named for its most influential man of letters - The Age of Pope, and after 1750, the Age of Johnson. Satire was one of the most common types of literature during the Augustan Age. The leading satirists of the period were Jonathan Swift in prose and Alexander Pope in poetry.

Thus, on the whole, the English literature of the period of Enlightenment may be characterized by the following features:

a) The rise of the political pamphlet and essay, but the leading genre of the Enlightenment became the novel. Poetry of the previous ages gave way to the prose age of the essayists and novelists. Poems were also created at this period, but the poets did not deal with strong human passions, they were more interested in the problems of everyday life, and discussed things in verse.

b) The heroes of the literary works were no longer kings and princes, but the representatives of the middle class.

c) Literature became instructive. The writers dealt with problems of good and evil. They tried to teach their readers what was good and what was bad from their own point of view.

Some literary critics divide the literature of the age of the Enlightenment into three periods:

The first period lasted from “The Glorious Revolution (1688) till the end of the 1730s. It is characterized by classicism in poetry. The greatest follower of the classic style was Alexander Pope. Alongside with this high style there appeared new prose literature, the essays of Steele and Addison and the first realistic novels written by Daniel Defoe and Jonathan Swift. Most of the writers of the time wrote political pamphlets.

The second period of the Enlightenment was the most mature period. It embraces the forties and the fifties of the 18th century. The realistic social novel of the time was represented by Samuel Richardson, Henry Fielding and Tobias Smollett.

The third period refers to the last decade of the 18th century. It is marked by the appearance of a new trend, sentimentalism, represented by the works of Oliver Goldsmith and Laurence Sterne. The realistic drama of the time was represented by Richard Brinsley Sheridan.

Alexander Pope (1688 - 1744)

One of the great names in English poetry of the early 18th century is that of Alexander Pope. Being a classicist he developed a taste for the art of ancient Greece and Rome. Classical forms suited the age, which tried to bring everything under the control of reason. The simplicity, proportion, and restrained emotion of the ancient Greek and Roman writers appealed to the English classicists. In 1715 Pope published a part of his translations of the “Iliad” and the “Odyssey” of Homer, which brought him fame.

Pope had a delicate sense of style, which he polished to the highest degree. Pope’s poems rapidly developed from the gentle lyrics of his earlier years into biting satires of English society and politics. Like his friend Jonathan Swift, he saw

the age as one badly in need of the correction that satire could offer. He considered that one should follow the strict rules in poetry if wanted to become a real poet. In 1709 he published his "Pastorals", written as an imitation of ancient authors. In 1711 his "An Essay on Criticism" was published. In the work the author had presented his aesthetic principles. In his satirical works "The Rape of the Lock"(1712), "The Dunciad" the poet ridiculed the vices of the society. Thus it was as a satirist that Pope was most effective. At his best, in "The Rape of the Lock", he was able to mock at the whole of the fashionable society of the eighteenth century, while showing that he had some passionate attachment to its elegance. "The Dunciad", in which he abused dullness in general, and the contemporary dunces in particular, is more ephemeral until one approaches the magnificent conclusion on Chaos, undoubtedly the most profound passage in Pope's work.

Pope, dealing with his favourite subject of vice and virtue in his famous poem the "Essay on Man" (1733- 1734), expresses a philosophy in verse, but rather as moral precepts than as a vision. Superficially his teaching may seem optimistic, but beneath the surface can be seen the alert mind, perceiving the pride of man, his high-vaunting ambitions, and, in contrast, the inadequacy of his faculties. In this work Pope advised readers to take the middle way - avoiding extremes - in all things. He perfected the heroic couplet the "Essay on Man".

Pope's philosophy was rationalism. Rationalism is a conviction that one should think and behave rationally - according to reason; it takes for granted the idea that the world is put together in such a way that the human mind can grasp it. To help an ordinary human mind grasp the structure of this world a poet should describe the universe in words - not completely, but well enough to be understood by a human being.

Much of Pope's genius lay in his use of the heroic couplet (two rhymed lines in iambic pentameter) that was basis of his poetry. The compact way in which he phrased old ideas into epigrams (brief philosophical sayings) makes him one of the

most frequently quoted poets today. Some epigrams, taken from Pope's poetry are given below:

T'is education forms the common mind:

Just as the twig is bent the tree's inclined.

(- Moral Essays, Epistle IV, lines 247-248.)

To err is human, to forgive divine.

(- Ibid., line 325.)

A little learning is a dangerous thing;

Drink deep, or taste not the Persian spring.

(- Essay on Criticism, Part II, lines 15-16.)

Be not the first by whom the new are tried,

Nor yet the last to lay the old aside.

(Ibid., lines 135-136.)

For fools rush in where angels fear to tread.

(- Ibid., Part III, line 66.)

Daniel Defoe (1660 - 1731)

Daniel Defoe is the founder of the early realistic novel (with all these earlier developments of the novel, it is left to the eighteenth century to consolidate fiction as a form of literature, and from that time onwards there has been no cessation in novel-writing). He was a journalist, and in many ways, the father of modern English periodicals. He founded and conducted the first English newspaper "The Review" (1704 - 1713).

Daniel Foe was born in 1660 in the family of James Foe, a London butcher. (When he was thirty-five years old he assumed the more high-sounding name Defoe). His father was wealthy enough to give his son a good education. Daniel was to become a priest, but when his training was completed, he decided to engage in business as a hosier. It was his cherished desire to become wealthy but his wish was never fulfilled. Defoe went bankrupt several times. He was always in debt. The

only branch of business in which he proved successful was journalism and literature.

When Defoe was about 23, he started writing pamphlets. In his "Essays on Projects" Defoe expressed his views on the greatest public improvements of modern times: higher education for women, the protection of seamen, the construction of highways, and the opening of saving-banks. He drove on the establishment of a special academy to study literature and languages.

In 1701 Defoe wrote a satire in verse, "The True-born Englishman". It was written against those, who declared that the English race should be kept pure. In the satire Defoe proved that true-born Englishmen did not exist, since the English nation consisted of Anglo-Saxons, Danes, Normans, and others.

In 1719, he tried his hand at another kind of literature - fiction, and wrote the novel "The Life and Adventures of Robinson Crusoe". After the book was published, Defoe became famous and rich. Now he wrote for four public magazines and received a regular sum of money from the government. Other novels which Defoe wrote were also very much talked about during his lifetime, but we do not hear much about them now. Defoe published "The Life of Captain Singleton" in 1720, a vivid tale with piracy and Africa as its background, "The Fortunes and Misfortunes of Moll Flanders" in 1722, the "female rogues", "A Journal of the Plague Year" in 1722, and "A History of the Lady Roxana" in 1724.

In 1729, while at work on a book, which was to be, entitled "The Complete English Gentleman", Defoe fell ill and in two years time he died.

"Robinson Crusoe"

The first quarter of the 18th century witnessed a rise of interest in books about voyages and new discoveries. A true story that was described in one of Steele's magazines, "The Englishman", attracted Defoe's attention. It was about Alexander Selkirk a Scottish sailor, who had quarrelled with his captain and was put ashore on a desert island near South America where he lived quite alone for four years and four months. In 1709 a passing vessel picked him up. Selkirk's story interested Defoe so much that he decided to use it for a book. However, he made

his hero, Robinson Crusoe, spend twenty-eight years on a desert island. Defoe regards the novel not as a work of the imagination, but as a “true relation”, and even when the element of fact decreases, he maintains the close realism of pseudo-fact. He writes with a knowledge of his audience, mainly the Puritan middle classes, and selects themes which will have an immediate appeal to them. Superficially, these two conditions would appear to detract from his originality, but there exists in him a talent for organizing his material into a well-conducted narrative, with an effective eye for detail, in a style ever simple and welcoming, but never obtrusive. The combination of these qualities has given “Robinson Crusoe” its specific attractiveness and continuous interest in the book.

At the beginning of the story the main character of the novel, Robinson Crusoe, is an unexperienced youth, a rather light-minded boy. Then he develops into a strong-willed man, able to fight against all the calamities of his unusual destiny. Being cast ashore on a desert island after the shipwreck, alone and defenseless, Crusoe tried to be reasonable in order to master his despondency. He knew that he should not give way to self-pity or fear, or spend time in mourning for his lost companions.

Robinson Crusoe’s most outstanding feature is his optimism. Some-times, especially during earthquakes or when he was ill, panic and anxiety overtook him, but never for long. He had confidence in himself and in man, and believed it was within the power of man to overcome all difficulties and hardships. Speaking of Crusoe’s other good qualities, which helped him overcome despair, was his ability to put his whole heart into everything he did. He was an enthusiastic toiler always hoping for the best. He began to keep a journal of his life on the island. It is another evidence of Crusoe’s courageous optimism.

But some critics consider the novel “Robinson Crusoe” to be an exaggeration of the possibilities of an individual man. According to Defoe, man can live by himself comfortably and make all the things he needs with no other hands to assist him. This individualism is characteristic of Defoe. He fails to see that Crusoe succeeds in making most of the things he possessed only thanks to

some tools he found on the ship. These tools are made by many other people. Besides, Robinson Crusoe was a representative of the 18th century and he had inherited the experience of the many generations who had lived on the earth before him.

There is another character in the book whose name is Friday. The author makes the reader like Friday, who is intelligent, brave, generous, and skilful. He performs all his tasks well. Crusoe teaches him to speak English and is astonished how quickly the man begins to understand the language. It is to Defoe's credit that he portrays the savage as an able, kind-hearted human being at a time when coloured people were treated very badly and were regarded only as a profitable article for trade.

Taking a common man as the key-character of his novel, Defoe uses the manner of speech of common people. The purpose of the author was to make his stories so life like that the reader's attention would be fixed only on the events. This is achieved by telling the story in the first person and by paying careful attention to details. Form, in its subtler sense, does not affect Defoe: his novels run on until, like an alarm clock, they run down; but while movement is there the attention is held.

There was no writer of the age who appealed to so wide a circle of readers as Defoe, - he appealed to all, who were able to read.

“The Education of Women”

(In this pamphlet Daniel Defoe aims at educational reform for the women of his day. The passage given below vividly shows the writer's attitude to this problem.)

I have often thought of it as one of the most barbarous customs in the world, considering us as a civilized and a Christian country, that we deny the advantages of learning to women. We reproach the sex every day with folly and impertinence, while I am confident, had they the advantage of education equal to us, they would be guilty of less than ourselves.

One would wonder, indeed, how it should happen that women are conversable¹ at all, since they are only beholding to natural parts² for all their knowledge. Their youth is spent to teach them to stitch and sew or make baubles. They are taught to read, indeed, and perhaps to write their names or so, and that is the height of women's education. And I would but ask any who slight the sex for their understanding, what is a man (a gentleman, I mean) good for that is taught no more? ...

The academy I propose would differ but little from public schools,³ wherein such ladies as were willing to study should have all the advantages of learning suitable to their genius.⁴ But since some severities of discipline more than ordinary would be absolutely necessary to preserve the reputation of the house, that persons of quality and fortune might not be afraid to venture their children thither, I shall venture to make a small scheme by way of essay.⁵

The house I would have built in a form by itself, as well as in place by itself...

In this house, the persons who enter should be taught all sorts of breeding suitable both to their genius and quality, and in particular, music and dancing, which it would be cruelty to bar the sex of, because they are their darlings; but besides this, they should be taught languages, as particularly French and Italian; and I would venture the injury of giving a woman more tongues than one. They should, as particular study, be taught all the graces of speech and all the necessary air of conversation, which our common education is so defective in that I need not expose it. They should be brought to read books, and especially history; and so to read as to make them understand the world and be able to know and judge of things when they hear of them. ...

Women, in my observation, have little or no difference in them, but as they are or are not distinguished by education. Tempers, indeed, may in some degree influence them, but the main distinguishing part is their breeding. ...

A woman well-bred and well taught, furnished with the additional accomplishments of knowledge and behavior, is a creature without comparison; her

society is the emblem of sublimer enjoyments; her person is angelic and her conversation heavenly; she is all softness and sweetness, peace, love, wit, and delight. She is every way suitable to the sublimest wish, and the man that has such a one to his portion has nothing to do but rejoice in her and be thankful.

Jonathan Swift (1667 - 1745)

Jonathan Swift was the greatest of English satirists. He is generally thought to be the greatest prose writer of the eighteenth century. He was a man whom many considered a misanthrope (one who hates humankind) because his writings were deeply critical of humanity. It was, however, his deep love for humanity that caused him to criticize it, and his great dream was to cure the ills of his age through humor.

Swift was born in Dublin, but he came from an English family. The writer's father, supervisor at the court building of Dublin, died at the age of 25, leaving his wife and daughter penniless. His son was born seven months after his death, on November 30, 1667. He was named Jonathan after his late father.

The boy knew little of his mother's care: she had to go back to her native town of Leicester and Jonathan hardly ever saw her during his childhood. He was supported by his uncle Godwin.

At the age of six he was sent to school and at the age of fourteen he entered Trinity College in Dublin. He got his Bachelor's degree in 1686. After many years he once again saw his mother in Leicester. She helped Jonathan to become a private secretary and account-keeper to sir William Temple. Sir William Temple's estate was at Moor Park, not far from London. Sir William was a retired diplomat and writer. At Moor Park Swift made friends with Esther Johnson, the daughter of the housekeeper. Their friendship lasted all his life.

Having improved his education at Moor Park by taking advantage of Sir William's library, Swift went to Oxford and took his Master of Arts degree in 1692. A year and a half he worked as a vicar at a church in Ireland and then returned to Moor Park. He continued to live and work there until sir William Temple's death in 1699.

By 1697 Swift had written his first satires “The Battle of Books” and “A Tale of a Tub”. But both of them were published later, in 1704. In “A Tale of a Tub” the author ridiculed the extravagances of religion, literature, and academia. “The Battle of Books” is a mock debate between ancient and modern authors.

After sir William Temple’s death, Swift became vicar again and went to live in Ireland. He invited Esther Johnson to come to his place. It is believed that Swift made a secret marriage with her, but much of his private life is unknown.

In Ireland Swift kept an eye on the political events of London. He wrote political pamphlets in defense of the Whigs. His contributions to “The Tattler”, “The Spectator” and other magazines show how well he understood the spirit of the time. Swift’s conversations with the leaders of the English political parties are described in his letters to Stella (Esther). These letters became his famous work “Journal to Stella”.

In 1713 Swift was made Dean of St. Patrick’s Cathedral in Dublin. In Ireland Swift came into contact with common people and saw miserable conditions under which the population lived. Swift wrote pamphlets criticizing the colonial policy of England. In 1726 Swift’s masterpiece “Gulliver’s Travels” appeared and it made a great sensation.

In 1728 Stella died after a long illness. This loss affected Swift deeply.

Conditions in Ireland between 1700 and 1750 were disastrous. Famine depopulated whole regions. Some areas were covered with unburied corpses. Swift wrote the pamphlets: “The Present Miserable State of Ireland”, “A Modest Proposal for Preventing the Children of Poor People from Being a Burden to Their Parents or the Country” and others.

Hard work and continuous disappointments in life undermined Swift’s health. By the end of 1731 his mind was failing rapidly. In 1740 his memory and reason were gone and he became completely deaf. He died on the 19th of October 1745, in Dublin.

During all his hard later years of a mental decline his friends stayed loyal to him. The Irish people continue to this day to celebrate him as a hero. The

generosity of spirit, deep learning, genuine humor were characteristic features of his writing, and they were a great gift to the literary tradition.

“Gulliver’s Travels”

In “Gulliver’s Travels” (originally the novel was called “Travels into Several Remote Nations of the World by Lemuel Gulliver, First a Surgeon and then a Captain of Several Ships”) Swift criticized and satirized the evils of the existing society in the form of fictitious travels. Apart from being a good story, it is the indictment of the human race for refusing reason and benevolence as the ways of life. The scenes and nations described in the book are so extraordinary and amusing, that the novel still arouses interest with both children and adults. It covers the adventures of a ship’s surgeon who is washed up on a number of imaginary shores. The novel is divided into four parts that are actually four voyages:

Part 1. A voyage to Lilliput.

Part 2. A voyage to Brobdingnag.

Part 3. A voyage to Laputa, Balnibarbi, Luggnagg, Glabdubdrib and Japan.

Part 4. A voyage to the country of the Houyhnhnms.

Thus, Gulliver first visits Lilliputians - tiny people whose bodies and surroundings are only 1/12 the size of normal people and things. At first the Lilliputians treat Gulliver well. Gulliver helps them, but after a time they turn against him and he escapes their land.

Gulliver’s second voyage takes him to the country of Brobdingnag, where people are 12 times larger than Gulliver and amused by his tiny size.

Gulliver’s third voyage takes him to several strange kingdoms. The conduct of the strange people of these countries shows the types of foolishness Swift saw in his world. For example, in the academy of Lagado, scholars waste all their time on useless projects such as extracting sunbeams from cucumbers. Here Swift satirizes impractical scientists and philosophers.

In his last voyage, Gulliver discovers a land ruled by wise and gentle horses called Houyhnhnms. Stupid, savage creatures called Yahoos also live there. The

Yahoos look like human beings. The Houyhnhnms dislike and distrust Gulliver because he looks like Yahoos, and they believe he is also a Yahoo. Gulliver wishes to stay in the company of the Houyhnhnms, but they force him to leave.

Thus in each country Gulliver makes observations about society in general. He finally returns to England with a painful recognition of his own country's flaws.

The greatest merit of the novel is the satirical description of all the vices of the society of the time. Under the cloak of fantasy Swift satirized the politics of the time, religious prejudices, wars of ambition and the absurdity of many aspects of science.

Swift's style is uniquely simple. Every line and every detail is alive but it is full of biting satire. The author presents the most improbable situations with the utmost gravity and makes the reader believe them. Defoe's prose is clear, it is a clarity sustained by the most vigorous mind of the century. It defies imitation. Never is the meaning obscure, and each argument is developed with a deadly certainty, not through rhetoric, but by putting the proper words in the proper places.

Jonathan Swift had a great influence on the writers who came after him. His work has become popular in all languages. Like Defoe's "Robinson Crusoe", it has the merit both of amusing children and making men think.

The Development of the English Realistic Novel

The development of the novel is one of the great achievements of the English literature. The foundations of early realism in English literature were laid by Daniel Defoe and Jonathan Swift. Their novels were of a new type and with a new hero, but they were based on imaginary voyages and adventures supposed to take place far from England. Gradually the readers' tastes changed. They wanted to find more and more of their own life reflected in literature. These demands were satisfied when the great novels of Samuel Richardson, Henry Fielding and Tobias Smollet appeared one after another. They marked a new stage in the development of literature. The greatest merit of these novelists is in their deep sympathy for the

common man. The common man is shown in his actual surroundings, which makes him convincing, believable, and true to life. With Fielding the novel had come of age. He had established it in one of its most notable forms, middle-class realism. He had endowed it with a conception of forms, and made it an art not unworthy of comparison with the pictorial art.

Many scholars consider Samuel Richardson's "Pamela" (1740) to be the first true novel in English. This book is highly moralistic. In contrast, the novels of Henry Fielding and Tobias Smollet are humorous and satiric. Laurence Stern was another leading novelist of the period. With the above-mentioned writers, yet background alone was lacking, and was to remain absent until Walter Scott gave it lavishly in his fictions. Above all, he had less reticence than Richardson, and less than any of the novelists that succeeded him in the nineteenth century.

Henry Fielding (1707 - 1754)

Henry Fielding was the greatest representative of realism in the 18th century. He was from an aristocratic family and studied at the old-established boys school of Eton. At the age of twenty he started writing for the stage, and his first play "Love in Several Masques" was a great success with the public. The same year he entered the philological faculty of the University at Leyden (a Dutch city), but he had to leave his studies because he was unable to pay his fees.

From 1728 till 1738 25 plays were written by Fielding. In his best comedies "A Judge Caught in his Own Trap" (1730), "Don Quixote in Eng-land" (1734), and "Pasquin" (1736) he mercilessly exposed the English court of law, the parliamentary system, the corruption of state officials and religion. But the censorship of the stage put an end to Fielding's career as a dramatist. The writer had to earn his living by some means and he tried his pen as a novelist. Besides, at the age of thirty he became a student of a University law faculty. On graduating, he became a barrister and in 1748 accepted the post of magistrate. This work enlarged his experience. Being unable to do away with social evils, he exposed them in his books.

In the period from 1742 to 1752 Fielding wrote his best novels: 1) "Joseph Andrews" (1742), to ridicule Richardson's "Pamela". He contrived this satire by reversing the situation in the latter's novel. Instead of the virtuous serving-maid, Fielding presents Joseph as the chaste servant. Fielding's purpose in this first novel is nowhere a simple or direct one. Apart from the motive of satire, he is attracted, in a learned way, by the contrasts between the novel, with its picture of humble, contemporary life, and the classical epic. With this in mind he calls his novel "a comic epic in prose", and it leads him, with encouragement from Cervantes, to introduce a burlesque element into the style and frequently into the incident; 2) "The Life of Mr. Jonathan Wild the Great" (1743), the motive of satire completely dominated his second narrative, in which he took the life of a thief and receiver, who had been hanged, as a theme for demonstrating the small division between a great rogue and a great soldier, or a great politician; 3) "The History of Tom Jones, a Foundling" (1749) – Nothing in his work compares with this great novel, so carefully planned and executed that though the main theme follows Tom Jones's life from childhood onwards, the reader is kept in suspense until the close as to the final resolution of the action; and "Amelia" (1752), his last novel and is less even in its success. He idealizes the main woman character, and this leads to an excess of pathos, which deprives the novel of the balance possessed by "Tom Jones". All these novels were excellent but they did not make him rich; only his publishers prospered. Fielding continued to act as a judge till 1754. Then he had to leave England for Portugal to restore his health, which had begun to fail. But the warm climate of the country did not help him; he died in Lisbon in October 1754 and was buried there.

Fielding possessed qualities rarely found together; a rich imagination, great critical power and keen knowledge of the human heart. He used to say that the three essential qualities in a novelist are genius, learning, and experience of human nature. His characters are all-round living beings of flesh and blood, a combination of contradictions of good and bad. The virtues he appreciates most are courage, frankness and generosity. The most detestable vices for him are selfishness and

hypocrisy. All these found its expression in Fielding's masterpiece "The History of Tom Jones, a Foundling". In this novel he has drawn one of the great human characters of the English literature.

"The History of Tom Jones, a Foundling"

The novel consists of eighteen books, each beginning with an introductory chapter where the author discourses with the reader, in a free easy manner, on certain moral and psychological themes. The plot of the novel is very complicated; its construction is carefully worked out, every detail being significant. Depicting England of the 18th century, Fielding touches upon all spheres of life. He shows the courts of law, the prison, the church, the homes of people of all classes, inns and highways, even the theatre. Many people of different social ranks and professions are introduced. The charm of the book lies in the depiction of Tom's character. He is a full-blooded human being, neither idealized nor ridiculed. His open, generous and passionate nature leads him into a long series of adventures. Tom acts on impulse sometimes well and sometimes ill, but never from interested motives. He is light-minded and naive, but kind, honest and unselfish, always ready to help anyone who needs his assistance. His intentions are noble and good, but he is simple-hearted. That's why he often falls a victim to prejudice and he is constantly accused of vices he is not guilty of.

In his "The History of Tom Jones, a Foundling" Fielding has taken an ordinary young man. Tom's parentage is unknown and he had been left as a foundling on the doorstep of squire Allworthy. As a matter of fact, he is illegitimate child of Allworthy's sister but this is not revealed till the end of the story. Allworthy is a guardian of another nephew too and the uncle rears the two together. Tom is an open hearted type who always falls into trouble. Blifil has hypocritic nature. He constantly tells on Tom and poisons his uncle's mind against him. Tom falls out of Squire Allworthy's favour as a result of one of his lapses (slight errors), a love affair with Molly Seagrim, a gamekeeper's daughter. Squire sends Tom away. Tom sets out on his travels, accompanied by the schoolmaster

Partridge, a simple lovable creature, and meets with many adventures on the road after he leaves home.

Finally, Tom is discovered to be the son of Allworthy's sister, Blifil's treachery through the years comes to light. Tom is happily united to the lovely Sophia Western, daughter of a country squire. All ends happily.

Sentimentalists

As it was outlined above, towards the middle of the 18th century a new literary trend appeared. It was sentimentalism. The first representative of the sentimental school in the English literature was Samuel Richardson (1689-1761), the son of a joiner, who came to London and was apprenticed as a printer. He remained a printer throughout his life and followed the path of the virtuous and successful apprentice, even to marrying his master's daughter. He was asked to prepare and a series of model letters for those who could not write for themselves. Richardson told maid-servants how to negotiate a proposal of marriage, apprentices how to apply for situations, and even his sons how to plead their father's forgiveness. This humble task taught Richardson that he had at his fingers' ends the art of expressing himself in letters, and in the years that followed he published three long works, on which his reputation rests; "Pamela; or, Virtue Reward-ed" (1740), "Clarissa; or, the History of a Young Lady" (1748) and "The History of Sir Charles Grandison" (1754), in which the inner world of the character is shown. In them Richardson glorifies middle-class virtues as opposed to the immorality of the aristocracy. He makes his readers sympathize with his heroes. In each instance, the central story is a simple one. Pamela was a virtuous servant, who resisted the attempts at seduction of the son of her late mistress, and, as a result, gained from him a proposal of marriage, which she gleefully accepted. Clarissa was virtuous but a lady. Tormented by the pressure of her family, who urged on her a detestable suitor, she fled from home to the protection of the attractive Mr. Lovelace, who, once he had her in his power, declared his attention in a manner which even his virtuous upbringing could not mistake. Nor was he content with declarations. For when these failed, he forced himself upon her, and as indirect consequence of is

actions, she died. Sir Charles Grandison was a model gentleman, who rescued one lady, and was betrothed to another, a situation which he controlled with incredible delicacy, to the apparent satisfaction of all parties.

Richardson was the first novelist of the period to make so detailed a study of feelings and states of mind. His epistolary novels "Pamela; or, Virtue Rewarded" and "Clarissa; or, the History of a Young Lady" had a lasting and deep influence upon the history of European literature. These novels were very much admired in the 18th and 19th centuries. These works are too long to be much read today, but their influence has been enormous.

Richardson's books brought various important, and in some ways new, elements to the novel. Each of his novels has a unified plot rather than disconnected episodes. The works established the theme of courtship leading to marriage as a basic plot of the novel.

All three novels by Samuel Richardson are written in the form of letters. The main direction of his novels was a detailed description of real people in common situations of domestic life. Particularly, Richardson's novels treat woman's concern for security, marriage, and a social role. The novelty of form, by which he revealed his narrative through letters, came by accident, but, though never self-conscious in his art, he must have realized that this was his ideal method. For his strength lay in the knowledge of the human heart, in the delineation of the shades of sentiment, as they shift and change, and the cross-purposes which trouble the mind moved by emotion.

Influenced by the French writer Rousseau the sentimentalists thought that civilization was harmful to humanity. They believed that man should live close to nature and be free from the corrupting influence of town life. For example, in Oliver Goldsmith's novel "The Vicar of Wakefield" (1766) and Laurence Sterne's (1713 - 1768) "Sentimental Journey" and in some other novels of the time, the corruption of town life is contrasted to the happy patriarchal life in the country. Oliver Goldsmith was also a poet. Most of his poems are devoted to the village life. (e.g. "The Deserted Village"). Samuel Johnson said of him in an epitaph, he

attempted every type of literature and each type he attempted he adorned. His dramas and his novel have already been recorded, and his hack-work history is best left without record. His essays, however, showed his individuality, and in “The Citizen of the World” (1762) he comments on life through the imaginary letters of a Chinese visitor. The other sentimentalists of the 18th century were: James Thomson (1700-1748), who was too diffuse to be a great artist. His poem “The Seasons” (1726) is like a schoolboy’s essay padded into the requisite size. Yet for over a century he was one of the most widely-read poets in England. His sympathy with ordinary life, and for poverty, combined with his generous sentiment made him acceptable to many who could not tolerate the hard brilliance of A. Pope. Also his treatment of nature was original, even if ponderous, and it was a theme growing in popularity; Thomas Gray (1716-1771), the author of the “Elegy”. He was among the most learned men in Europe in his day, yet his poems are a thin sheaf, a few odes and the “Elegy”. He brought into his poems new interests, but with the whole of the classical and medieval world within his grasp it is sad that some melancholy or inertia held him from composition.

Samuel Johnson (1709 - 1784)

The second half of the eighteenth century is often called the Age of Johnson. It was named so after Samuel Johnson, whose powerful personality and long literary career, made him the dominating literary figure of the century, from about 1750 until his death in 1784. He was a critic, poet, playwright, lexicographer, essayist, and biographer. Johnson may not have been the greatest writer of his time, but his conservative values and his deep sensibility reflected the age and a profound impact on it.

Samuel Johnson was born in the northern cathedral town of Litchfield, where his father ran a small bookstore. The family was poor, and his father’s lack of money forced Johnson to leave Oxford University without taking a degree. After he left Oxford, he earned his living with a number of teaching and journalism jobs, none of which were a financial success and none of which could satisfy his literary

ambitions. However, by the 1740s he began to produce works of considerable importance.

Johnson's literary achievements are remarkable. His "Dictionary of the English Language" (1755) is noted for its scholarly definitions of words and the use of excellent quotations to illustrate the definitions. No one has equaled him in describing clearly to the English people what the words in their language really mean. In his "The Lives of the English Poets" (1779-1781) Johnson critically examined the work of 52 poets from Cowley to Gray and did much to establish literary criticism as a form of literature. Johnson also wrote articles, reviews, essays, and two satires, "London" (1738) and "The Vanity of Human Wishes" (1749) both based on Juvenal, these show what his powerful mind, his grave moral outlook and his incisive phrasing could achieve. His prose work "Rasselas" (1759), though nominally an Abyssinian narrative, employs the story only for the philosophical argument, which is a trenchant attack on people who seek an easy path to happiness.

Johnson's friends (The Johnson circle) were the most important writers of the late 1700s. They included Oliver Goldsmith; Edmund Burke, who stood high in the councils of the nation. Burke's main work is to be found in a series of political pamphlets, mainly delivered in the form of speeches. Burke in his prose always has the spoken word in mind, and, though he argues closely, he has the audience in view. This contrast with the audience gave him the eloquence and the passion which entered into some of his best-known passages ("On American Taxation", 1774, "On Conciliation with the Colonies", 1775), Burke's oratory became a part of English history. Special tribute should be given to Johnson's biographer, James Boswell (1740-1795), whose "Life of Johnson" was published in 1791. The publication in the middle of the twentieth century of Boswell's own journals and diaries has established him as a major writer, independently of the "Life". It was the Johnson of the later years that he recorded, working from minute records of his sayings, and his mannerism, and with a realistic art that has no parallel. The capacity, the wit, and the downrightness of Johnson, along with his

often kindly and always devout approach to life, are the elements of the portrait which Boswell has created, and without his biographer Johnson would be a lesser man. The list should also include an outstanding playwright of the time, Richard Brinsley Sheridan.

Richard Brinsley Sheridan (1751-1816)

Sheridan was a dramatist and politician. He produced several memorable comedies and was an excellent speaker in the British Parliament. At one time he was Under-Secretary for Foreign Affairs and Secretary to the Treasury.

Sheridan was born in Dublin. In his early 20's he wrote his comedy "The Rivals" (1775), showing an ease and mastery which in a first play was almost incredible. Sheridan's finest play, one of the great comedies of English drama "The School for Scandal" was written in 1777. This play exposes society people who love malicious gossip and does it with glittering wit. Here the author creates contrasting characters of a careless but kind young man, Charles Surface, and his cunning and selfish brother Joseph.

Sheridan's next work is "The Critic", a short satiric play, written in 1779. In this work Sheridan wittily criticizes theatrical fashions. His other plays: the farce "St. Patrick's Day" and a comic opera "The Duenna" were written in 1775. The main memory from his plays is of the verbal dexterity and the laughter which his well-planned scenes can create. Distinctive his comedy undoubtedly is, though its quality cannot easily be described. Often its elements seem reminiscent, and yet the whole is strikingly individual. He was sufficiently realistic to portray the late eighteenth century as no other dramatist had done, yet with the quality of romance. He is unembarrassed by any message, unless it be that the generous and open-hearted spirit is in life the most commendable. It may be that the recognition of this quality has added to the enjoyment which successive generations of audiences have found in his plays. Later George Byron remarked of Sheridan in these words: "He has made the best speech and written the best comedy, the best opera and the best farce in the English literature".

In 1780 he was elected to the British Parliament, and until 1812, he devoted himself to politics. Some of Sheridan's political speeches delivered within this period are regarded as a classical example of English oratory art. His political life influenced his creative work and in 1799 Sheridan wrote his last play "Pizarro". It was a political tragedy.

UNIT 6. THE ROMANTIC AGE IN ENGLISH LITERATURE (1780-1830)

Pre-Romantic Literature

Johnson and his circle were the last great literary figures of the 1700s to follow the classical rules of writing. English writers of the late 1700s and early 1800s substituted passion for Augustan harmony and moderation. They preferred mysteriousness, believed in the creative power of the imagination and adopted a personal view of the world. These writers are called romantics.

Besides, in the age of Romanticism in English literature there was a group of poets who represented a bridge between classicism and romanticism. They are called pre-romantics. The leading pre-romantic poet is William Blake. The poetry of Robert Burns, Thomas Gray and William Cowper also bear the features of pre-romanticism. In many of their works the pre-romanticists showed their awareness of social problems and the love of nature that became typical of English romanticism.

For example, Thomas Gray described the unfulfilled lives of common people in his famous "Elegy Written in a Country Churchyard" (1751). It abounds with images which find a mirror in every mind and with sentiments to which every bosom must return an echo. William Cowper wrote of the beauties of nature and his dislike of cities in "The Task" (1785) where he moved freely amid rural scenes and described them in a manner not very heavy and pretentious. But the most outstanding pre-romanticists in English literature were Robert Burns and William Blake.

Robert Burns (1759 - 1796)

Robert Burns was the most famous Scottish poet of the 18th century. He wrote poetry in English and Scottish dialect. His birthday is celebrated in Scotland as a national holiday. His verses inspired many British and foreign poets.

Robert Burns was born on January 25, 1759 in Ayrshire, Scotland. His father, William Burns, was a poor farmer, but he tried to give his son the best education. Later, the poet wrote about it in his verses "My Father Was a Farmer":

My father was a farmer upon the Carric border, O,
And carefully hebbred me in decency and order, O.
He bade me act a manly part, though I had ne'er a fathing, O,
For without an honest, manly heart no man was worth regarding, O.

Robert was sent to school at the age of six, but as his father could not pay for the two sons, Robert and his brother Gilbert attended school in turn. Thus William had to pay for only one pupil. When not at school, the boys helped the father with his work in the fields.

The school was closed some months after the boys had begun attending it, and William Burns persuaded his neighbours to invite a clever young man, Murdoch by name. Murdoch taught their children language and grammar.

Robert was a capable boy. He became fond of reading, learned the French and Latin languages. His reputation as “untutored”, which he himself helped to create, was false, for he had read widely both in earlier Scottish poetry and English. His favourite writers were Shakespeare, Sterne, Smollett, and Robert Fergusson, another talented Scottish poet (1750-1774). Burns started writing poems at the age of seventeen. When he wrote in English, he wrote as a cultivated English poet would write, and his Scottish poems were not naive dialect pieces, but clever manipulations of language varying from Ayrshire to standard English. He composed verses to the melodies of old folk-songs, which he had admired from his early childhood. He sang of the woods, fields and wonderful valleys of his native land. Burns had a deep love for Scotland, its history and folklore. The poet was deeply interested in the glorious past of his country. He sang the beauty of his native land where he had spent all his life. One of such poems is “My Heart’s in the Highlands”.

My Heart’s in the Highlands

My heart’s in the Highlands, my heart is not here,

My heart's in the Highlands, a-chasing the deer,
Chasing the wild deer and following the roe.
My heart's in the Highlands wherever I go.
Farewell to the Highlands, farewell to the North,
The birth-place of Valour, the country of Worth;
Wherever I wander, wherever I rove,
The hills of the Highlands for ever I love.
Farewell to the mountains, high covered with snow;
Farewell to the straths and green valleys below;
Farewell to the forests and high-hanging woods;
Farewell to the torrents and loud-pouring floods.
My heart's in the Highlands, my heart is not here,
My heart's in the Highlands, a-chasing the deer,
Chasing the wild deer and following the roe.
My heart's in the Highlands wherever I go.

In 1784 William Burns died. After the father's death Robert and Gilbert worked hard, but the land gave poor crops, and the affairs of the family went from bad to worse. The young poet keenly felt the injustice of the world, where the best land, pastures, and woods belonged to the landlords. His indignation was expressed in his many verses, which became so dear to the hearts of the common people. ("Is There for Honest Poverty", "John Barleycorn", "Epistle to Dowie, a Brother Poet", "Lines Written on a Bank-note").

Robert was very young, when he understood that poverty could ruin his whole life: he had fallen in love with Jean Armour and was going to marry her, but the girl's father did not want to have a poor peasant for his son-in-law. The fact that the young people loved each other did not alter his intention to marry Jean to a rich man. Seeing that there was no way for a poor peasant in Scotland, Burns decided to sail for Jamaica. To earn money, Robert decided to publish some of his poems. The little volume "Poems Chiefly in the Scottish Dialect" was published in

1786. The book contained lyrical, humorous and satirical poems written in his earlier years, though some of his greatest satires such as “Address to the Unco’ Guid”, “Holy Willie’s Prayer” and “The Jolly Beggars” were not included into it. This volume opened for him the doors of fashionable society in Edinburgh, for a season, as the untutored ploughman poet, he was a lionized curiosity. The same year Robert Burns received an invitation from Edinburgh scholars, who praised his verses. The poet accepted the invitation, and went to Edinburgh. A new and enlarged edition of his poems was the result. Burns returned to his native village with money enough to buy a farm and marry Jean Armour. In 1791 he went bankrupt and was obliged to sell the farm and take a position as customs officer in the town of Dumfries. Sometimes Robert Burns is represented by critics as a child of the French Revolution. It is true but only partially. His best poems were written before that Revolution. He is rightly judged not against the wide expanse of European politics but against the sanctimonious hypocrisy of the religious, and against the social barriers that divided man from man. This equalitarian philosophy he discovered not in the text-books of political theory, but from his own observation, and he expressed it admirably, even recklessly, in one of the greatest of all his poems “The Jolly Beggars”.

Hard work destroyed the poet’s health. In 1796 he died in poverty at 37. After his death, his widow and children were left without a shilling. But the common Scottish people collected enough money to provide the widow with the sustenance for the rest of her life and give all his children an education.

William Blake (1757-1827)

William Blake was a poet, artist, and mystic, who followed no style but his own. Thus, his work stands alone in English literature, for no one saw life quite in the same way as he did. Blake grew in the middle of London, surrounded by the poverty of the new industrial age. His family was poor, and Blake had no opportunity to receive education as a child. When he was ten, his father was able to send him to a drawing school, and at fourteen he was apprenticed to an engraver.

As an apprentice he had time to read widely and began to write the first of his poetry.

In 1778, when he had completed his apprenticeship, Blake became a professional engraver and earned a living over the next twenty years by supplying booksellers and publishers with copperplate engravings. In 1789 he published a volume of lyrical poems called "Songs of Innocence". It was followed by a companion volume "Songs of Experience". It was to be read in conjunction with "Songs of Innocence". The two works contrast with each other: one deals with good, passivity, and reason; the other, with evil, violence, and emotion. They were the first of Blake's books to be illustrated, engraved, and printed on copperplates by himself. Blake's engravings and paintings are an important part of his artistic expression, for the verbal and visual work together evoke one unified impression. Blake himself manufactured all his poems that appeared during his lifetime.

As Blake grew older, he became more and more caught up in his mystical faith and his visions of a heavenly world. He actually saw the angels and strange figures which his pictures portrayed. They sat beside him in the garden, or in the trees, gathering around him as naturally as a group of friends. Those visions loosened him from the material world, in which so much of the eighteenth century was stuck fast as in a slough of mental despond. Repression he regarded as evil, though freedom from repression he interpreted not psychologically, as in the contemporary manner, but mystically. As a child he was fascinated by the Bible and by the ideas of the German mystic Jacob Boeme. Blake's later symbolic works, including "The Marriage of Heaven and Hell" (1790), "The Gates of Paradise"(1793), and "Jerusalem" (1804), reflect his ever-deepening reflections about God and man. His interest in the supernatural and his imaginative experimentation with his art and verse classify him, like Robert Burns, as a pre-Romantic. Even today scholars continue to puzzle over the complex philosophical symbolism of his later works, but all readers can appreciate the delicate lyricism of his "Songs of Innocence" and "Songs of Experience".

The short poem given below is from the volume “Songs of Innocence”. The symbolic images of rose and worm may make you puzzle too:

The Sick Rose

O Rose, thou art sick.

The invisible worm

That flies in the night

In the howling storm

Has found out thy bed

Of crimson joy,

And his dark secret love

Does thy life destroy.

Romanticism in England

General Background

Romanticism, which was the leading literary movement in England for half a century, was caused by great social and economic changes. The Industrial Revolution, which had begun in the middle of the 18th century didn't bring happiness to the people of Great Britain. During this period England changed from an agricultural to an industrial society and from home manufacturing to factory production. The peasants, deprived of their lands, had to go to work in factories. Mines and factories had changed the appearance of the country. In the cities a large new working class developed. But mechanization did not improve the life of the common people. The sufferings of the working people led to the first strikes, and workers took to destroying machines. This was a movement directed against industrial slavery. Workers, who called themselves Luddites after a certain Ned Ludd who in fit of fury broke two textile frames, naively believed that machines were the chief cause of their sufferings. These actions led to severe repression by the authorities.

During the early 1800s the French situation dominated England's foreign policy. The French Revolution had begun in 1789 as a protest against royal despotism. In its early phases the French Revolution had seemed to offer great hope for common people. At the beginning of the French Revolution, most enlightened people in Great Britain had felt sympathy for the democratic ideals of the revolutionaries in France. But after achieving power, the revolutionary government in France resorted to brutality. Furthermore, in 1793 revolutionary France declared war on England.

Scientific achievements in the areas of geology, chemistry, physics, and astronomy flourished during the Romantic Age, but they also did not improve the living conditions of the common working people. Now the belief of progressive-minded people in the ideal nature of the new system fell to pieces. As a result the Romantic Movement sprang up towards the close of the 18th century.

The Romantic Age brought a more daring, individual and imaginative approach to both literature and life. In the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, many of the most important English writers turned away from the values and ideas characteristic of the Age of Reason. The individual, rather than society, was at the center of the Romantic vision. The Romantic writers believed in the possibility of progress and social and human reform. As champions of democratic ideals, they sharply attacked all forms of tyranny and the spreading evils of individualism, such as urban blight, a polluted environment, and the alienation of people from nature and one another. They all had a deep interest in nature, not as a centre of beautiful scenes but as an informing and spiritual influence on life. It was as if frightened by the coming of industrialism and the nightmare towns of industry, they were turning to nature for protection. Or as if, with the declining strength of traditional religious belief, men were making a religion from the spirituality of their own experiences.

They all valued their own experiences to a degree which is difficult to parallel in earlier poets. Spencer, Milton and Pope made verse out of legend or

knowledge, which was common to humanity. The romantic poets looked into themselves, seeking in their own lives for strange sensations.

Whereas the writers of the Age of Reason tended to regard evil as a basic part of human nature, the Romantic writers generally saw humanity as naturally good, but corrupted by society and its institutions of religion, education, and government.

In the period from 1786 to 1830 two generations of Romantic poets permanently affected the nature of English language and literature. Usually, William Wordsworth and Samuel Taylor Coleridge, who wrote most of their major works from 1786 to 1805, are regarded as the first generation of the English Romantic poets.

William Wordsworth Samuel Taylor Coleridge

George Gordon Byron, Percy Bysshe Shelley and John Keats, who produced their major works between 1810 to 1824, are regarded as the second generation of English Romantics.

Percy Bysshe Shelley John Keats

In 1798, with the publication of “Lyrical Ballads”, William Wordsworth and Samuel Taylor Coleridge gave official birth to the Romantic Age in literature. The second edition of “Lyrical Ballads”, published in 1800, contained a preface in which Wordsworth stated the poetic principles that he and Coleridge believed in: first, that ordinary life is the best subject for poetry because the feelings of simple people are sincere and natural; second, that the everyday language of these people best conveys their feelings and is therefore best suited to poetry; third, that the expression of feeling is more important in poetry than the development of an action, or story; and finally, that “poetry is the spontaneous overflow of powerful feelings”. These principles were often challenged by other writers of Wordsworth’s day, but, nevertheless, they served as a formal declaration of a new spirit in English literature and became a turning point in the history of English poetry.

The important figures of the second generation of Romantic poets were Lord Byron, Percy Bysshe Shelley, and John Keats. Though highly different in

personality and artistic temperament, they were similarly intense, precocious, and tragically short-lived. During his brief lifetime, George Gordon Byron, was the most popular poet abroad as well as at home and also the most scandalous. He was reckless, bitter, in constant revolt against society and devoted to the cause of freedom and liberty. Shelley, too, like Byron was rebellious and scandalous. In his poems revolted against tyranny, he believed that the church and state commerce, as organized and conducted in his time, led to superstition, selfishness and corruption. That's why some literary critics call them Revolutionary Romantics.

Romanticism represented an attempt to rediscover the mystery and wonder of the world. Romanticists made emotion, and not reason, the chief force of their works. This emotion found its expression chiefly in poetry.

Some poets were seized with panic and an irresistible desire to get away from the present. They wished to call back "the good old days", the time long before the mines and factories came, when people worked on "England's green and pleasant land". These poets are sometimes called the Passive Romanticists. They spoke for the English farmers and Scottish peasants who were ruined by the Industrial Revolution. They idealized the patriarchal way of life during the Middle ages, a period that seemed to them harmonious and peaceful. Their motto was : "Close to Nature and from Nature to God", because they believed that religion put man at peace with the world.

The poets William Wordsworth, Samuel Taylor Coleridge, and Robert Southey belonged to this group. They were also called the Lake Poets after the Lake District in the north-west of England where they lived. The Lake District attracted the poets because industry had not yet invaded this part of the country.

In the poetry of all romantic poets there is a sense of wonder, of life seen with new sensibilities and fresh vision. This strangeness of the individual experience leads each of the romantics to a spiritual loneliness. They are keenly aware of their social obligations, but the burden of an exceptional vision of life drives them into being almost fugitives from their fellow-men. This sense, present in them all, can be found most strongly in Shelley, "who seems even more content

amid the dead leaves, the moonlit water, and the ghosts, than in the places where men inhabit". The romantic poets lead the reader to the strange areas of human experience, but seldom welcome him in the language of ordinary conversation, or even with the currency of normality.

Drama did not flourish during the Romantic Age. The main type of drama produced at that period was simplistic, in which all the poor are good and all the rich are evil. Some of the leading Romantic poets wrote so called closet drama, poetic drama written to be read rather than produced. Shelley's tragedy "The Cenci", Byron's "Manfred", and Coleridge's "Remorse" are among the better known plays of this type.

Prose in the romantic age included essays, literary criticism, journals, and novels. The two greatest novelists of the romantic period were Jane Austen (1775-1817) and Sir Walter Scott (1771-1832). Their novels drastically differed from each other. Though Jane Austen wrote during the height of the period, she remained remarkably unaffected by Romantic literary influences. Her plots concerned domestic situations. Austen wrote about middle-class life in small towns and in the famous resort city Bath. More than anyone since Fielding, she regarded the novel as a form of art which required a close and exacting discipline. The resulting narratives were so inevitable in their movement, so precise in their realism, that they gave the impression of ease, but the facility was a gift to the reader, exacted from the fundamental brainwork of the author. Her integrity as an artist was shown by the fact that she had continued to write and to revise novels even when her work seemed unlikely to find acceptance from the publishers. The women in Austen's novels as "Pride and Prejudice"(1813) and "Emma" (1816) are known for their independence and wit. Her novels, including "Mansfield Park" (1814), "Persuasion" (1818) are realistic in tone. These later novels lack the continuous comedy and the semblance of spontaneity. In compensation, they have a more complex portrayal of characters, a more subtle irony, a deeper, warmer-hearted attitude to the players of her scene. Jane Austen respected the novel as a great art. In "Northanger Abbey" (1818) she had satirized the "terror" novel, and

in her own work she substituted her cleverly worked realism and comedy. Her letters show how conscious she was of what she was doing, and of her own limitations: "I must keep to my own style and go on in my own way; and though I may never succeed again in that, I am convinced that I should totally fail in any other". The complete control of her world gives her work a Shakespearian quality, though the world she controlled was smaller. She is considered to be more representative of the neoclassical tradition of eighteenth century literature than of the Romanticism. Although she received little public recognition during her lifetime, Austen is now one of the best-loved English novelists who helped to develop a modern novel.

Sir Walter Scott wrote novels of adventure. He was immensely popular during his lifetime and is now considered the father of the historical novel. Reflecting the Romantic interest in the past, he set many of his novels in old England and Scotland. Scott is considered to be a true product of the Romantic Age. Scott's death in 1832 marked the end of the romantic period.

George Gordon, Lord Byron (1788 -1824)

Byron was a real fighter; he struggled for the liberty of the nations with both pen and sword. Freedom was the cause that he served all his life. Byron hated wars, sympathized with the oppressed people. Nevertheless, definite limitations of the poet's world outlook caused deep contradictions in his works. Many of his verses are touched with disappointment and skepticism. The philosophy of "world sorrow" becomes the leading theme of his works. Romantic individualism and a pessimistic attitude to life combine in Byron's art with his firm belief in reason: realistic tendencies prevail in his works of the later period. In spite of his pessimism, Byron's verse embodies the aspirations of the English workers, Irish peasants, Spanish partisans, Italian Carbonari, Albanian and Greek patriots.

George Gordon Byron was born in London, on January 22, 1788, in an impoverished aristocratic family. His mother, Catherine Gordon, was a Scottish Lady of honourable birth and respectable fortune. After having run through his own and most of his wife's fortune, his father an army officer, died when the boy

was only 3 years old. His mother was a woman of quick feelings and strong passions. Now she kissed him, now she scolded him. These contradictory emotions affected his life, character and poetry. Byron was lame from birth and sensitive about it all his life. But, thanks to his strong will and regular training, he became an excellent rider, a champion swimmer, a boxer and took part in athletic exercises.

Byron spent the first ten years of his life in Scotland. His admiration of natural scenery of the country was reflected in many of his poems. He attended grammar school in Aberdeen. In 1798, when George was at the age of ten, his grand-uncle died and the boy inherited the title of Lord and the family estate of the Byrons, Newstead Abbey, in Nottinghamshire. Now he was sent to Harrow School. At the age of seventeen he entered the Cambridge University and in 1808 graduated from it. George was sixteen when he fell in love with his distant relative Mary Chaworth, and his youthful imagination seemed to have found the ideal of womanly perfection. But she did not return his affection. Byron had never forgotten his love to Mary and it coloured much of his writing. In the first canto of "Childe Harold's Pilgrimage" the poet says that Harold "sighed to many, though he loved but one" and it is a hint to the poet's own life.

While a student, Byron published his first collection of poems "Hours of Idleness" (1807). It was mercilessly attacked by a well known critic in the magazine "Edinburgh Review". In a reply to it Byron wrote his satirical poem "English Bards and Scotch Reviewers". In that poem Byron criticized the contemporary literary life. In 1809, next year after graduating from the University, the poet took his hereditary seat in the House of Lords. The same year he left England on a long journey and visited Portugal, Spain, Albania, Greece and Turkey, and during his travels wrote the first two cantos of "Childe Harold's Pilgrimage".

After an absence of two years the poet returned to England. On February 27, 1812, Byron made his first speech in the House of Lords. He spoke in defense of the English workers and blamed the government for the unbearable conditions of the life of the working people. Later the poet again raised his voice in defense of

the oppressed workers, encouraging them to fight for freedom in his "Song for the Luddites". (1816)

In 1812 the first two cantos of "Childe Harold's Pilgrimage" were published. Walter Scott declared that for more than a century no work had produced a greater effect. The author himself remarked: "I awoke one morning and found myself famous". Between 1813 and 1816 Byron composed his "Oriental Tales": "The Giaour", "The Corsair", "Lara", "Pari-sina" and others. These tales embody the poet's romantic individualism. The hero of each poem is a rebel against society. He is a man of strong will and passion. Proud and independent, he rises against tyranny and injustice to gain his personal freedom and happiness. But his revolt is too individualistic, and therefore it is doomed to failure. A collection of lyrical verses, which appeared in 1815, "Hebrew Melodies", confirmed Byron's popularity. One of the most beautiful poems of the cycle is "My Soul is Dark"

My Soul is Dark

My soul is dark - oh! quickly string
The harp I yet can brook to hear;
And let thy gentle fingers fling
Its melting murmurs o'er mine ear.
If in this heart a hope be dear,
That sound shall charm it forth again:
If in these eyes there lurk a tear,
'Twill flow, and cease to burn my brain.
But bid the strain be wild and deep,
Nor let notes of joy be first:
I tell thee, minstrel, I must weep,
Or else this heavy heart will burst,
For it hath been by sorrow nursed,
And ached in sleepless silence long;
And now 'tis doom'd to know the worst,

And break at once - or yield to song.

In 1815 Byron married Miss Isabella Milbanke, but it was an unlucky match. Though Byron was fond of their only child Augusta Ada, and did not want to break up the family, separation was inevitable. The scandal around the divorce was enormous. Byron's enemies found their opportunity, and used it to the utmost against him.

On April 25, 1816, the poet left England for Switzerland. Here he made the acquaintance of Shelley, the two poets became close friends. While in Switzerland, Byron wrote the third canto of "Childe Harold's Pilgrimage", "The Prisoner of Chillon", the dramatic poem "Manfred" and many lyrics. "The Prisoner of Chillon" describes the tragic fate of the Swiss revolutionary Bonnivard, who spent many years of his life in prison together with his brothers.

In 1817 Byron left Switzerland for Italy. The Italian period (1817- 1823) is considered to be the summit of Byron's poetical career. In Italy he wrote "Beppo"(1818), a humorous poem in a Venetian setting, and his greatest work "Don Juan", the fourth canto of "Childe Harold's Pilgrimage", "The Prophecy of Dante", the dramas "Marino Faliero", "Cain". At the same period he wrote his satirical masterpieces "The Vision of Judgement" and "The Age of Bronze". Unfortunately, the prudery of Victorian critics obscured these poems from the public, and they have never received their due esteem. Special words should be said about "Don Juan", one of his great poems, a performance of rare artistic skill. Humor, sentiment, adventure, and pathos were thrown together with that same disconcerting incongruity as they were to be found in life. The style is a clever imitation of idiom and phrasing of ordinary conversation, used with great cunning for satiric and comic effects.

The war of Greece against the Turks had been going on that time. Byron longed for action and went to Greece to take part in the struggle for national independence. There he was seized with fever and died at Missolonghi on April 18, 1824, at the age of 36. The Greeks desired that his remains should be buried in

the country for which he had spent his life, but his friends wanted him to be buried in Westminster Abbey. The English authorities refused it, and the poet's body, already transported from Greece to England, was buried in the family vault near Newstead. His spirit might have flourished better in some world other than the heavy Georgian society in which he grew up. The last episode in Greece showed that he had leadership and courage.

Sir Walter Scott (1771 - 1832)

Sir Walter Scott was a Scottish romantic writer, the first great writer of historical novels. He was born in Edinburgh on August 15, 1771. His father was an Edinburgh lawyer and had a large family. Walter, the future writer, was the ninth of his twelve children. When not yet two years old, the boy fell ill with a disease that left him lame. His parents thought country air would be good for him and sent him to his grandparents' farm. It was a place with hills, crags and ruined tower. Walter soon became a strong boy. In spite of his lameness he climbed the hills and rode his pony at a gallop. Walter's grandparents told him thrilling Scottish tales. He learned to love the solemn history of Scotland and liked to recite Scottish ballads and poems.

Scott enjoyed taking trips into the Scottish countryside. These trips gave him profound knowledge of the life of rural people, and provided material for his first major publication, "Minstrelsy of the Scottish Border" (1802-1803). This book was a collection of popular songs and ballads and consisted of three volumes.

At the suggestion of his father, Scott became a lawyer and practiced for fourteen years. During his business trips he visited the places of famous battles and collected old ballads. Like many writers belonging to the Romantic trend, Scott, too, felt that all the good days were gone. He wished to record all the historical facts he knew before they were forgotten.

At the age of 26 Scott married, and bought a large estate not far from Edinburgh. There Scott built a fine house in the style of a castle. His house became a sort of museum of Scottish history and culture.

In 1805 he began to publish his own romantic poems, which attracted the attention of the reading public. The best were “The Lay of the Last Minstrel” (1805), “Marmion” (1808) and “The Lady of the Lake” (1810). These poems reproduce old legends and combine them with historical material. They were written with great poetic skill and poet became very famous. But when Byron’s wonderful poems appeared, Scott, to quote his own words, “left the field of poetry to his rival ” who by that time was already a friend of his. He took to writing novels. It marked a new period in Scott’s creative work. He declined the honour of poet-laureate in 1813 because he understood that writing official verses and odes on the birthdays of members of the royal family would interfere with his creative work.

In 1814 Scott published his “Waverley, or ‘Tis Sixty Years Since”. This novel describes a Scottish rebellian against England in 1745. As he had an established reputation as a poet, Scott decided to print his first novel anonymously. The book was a great success, and everybody wanted to know who the author was. Scott published many of his novels under the name of “The Author of Waverley”. During the next seventeen years (1815 - 1832) Scott wrote more than 27 other novels, four plays and many stories and tales besides. All of his novels were referred to as part of the Waverley series, because the author was identified on the title page as “The Author of Waverley”. Scott’s authorship was officially revealed in 1827, but it had been known for years.

Despite his success and fame, Scott’s last years were sad. They were marked by illness and financial difficulties brought on by the failure of a publishing company in which he had an interest. At that time his health was broken down. His doctors sent him to Italy; but it was too late. Before reaching Italy he had to turn back, and on his arrival at his estate he died.

Literary critics divide Scott’s works into three groups:

The first group of novels are those devoted to Scottish history: ”Waverley, or “Tis Sixty Years Since” (1814), “Guy Mannering, or the Astrologer” (1815), “The Autiquary” (1816), “Black Dwarf” (1816), “Old Mortality” (1816), “Rob

Roy" (1817), "The Heart of Midlothian" (1818), "The Bride of Lammermoor" (1819), "A Legend of Montrose" (1819), "Redgauntlet" (1824), "The Fair Maid of Perth" (1828)

The second group of novels refer to English history: "Ivanhoe" (1819), the best of this series; "The Monastery" (1820), "The Abbot" (1820), "Kenilworth" (1821), "The Pirate" (1822), "The Fortunes of Nigel" (1822), "Peveril of the Peak" (1822), "Woodstock" (1826).

The third group comprises novels based on the history of Europe: "Quentin Durward" (1823), "The Talisman" (1825), "Count Robert of Paris" (1832), "Anne of Geierstein" (1829), "Castle Dangerous" (1832).

The novel "St. Ronan's Well" (1824) stands in a class by itself. The story is laid at a fashionable health-resort somewhere near the border between England and Scotland. It is the only novel written by Scott about his own time and shows his attitude to contemporary society. It is a precursor of the critical realism of the 19th century.

Scott wrote frequently about the conflicts between different cultures. For example, "Ivanhoe" deals with the struggle between Normans and Saxons, and the "Talisman" describes the conflict between Christians and Muslims. The novels dealing with Scottish history are probably considered to be his best works. They deal with clashes between the new commercial English culture and older Scottish culture. Many critics regard "Old Mortality", "The Heart of Midlothian", and "St. Ronan's Well" as Scott's best novels.

"Ivanhoe"

The action of the novel takes place in medieval England during the Crusades. The central conflict of the novel lies in the struggle of the Anglo-Saxon landowners against the Norman barons, who cannot come to an understanding.

There is no peace among the Norman conquerors either. They struggle for power. Prince John tries to usurp the throne of his brother Richard, who was engaged in a Crusade at that time. These two brothers back different tendencies concerning their relations with Anglo-Saxons. John wishes to seize all the land and

subdue the Anglo-Saxons completely, while Richard supports those, who tend to cooperate with the remaining Anglo-Saxon land-owners. The latter tendency was progressive, because it led to peace and the birth of a new nation.

At the head of the remaining Anglo-Saxon knights is a thane, Cedric the Saxon. He hopes to restore their independence by putting a Saxon king and queen on the throne. He wants to see lady Rowena, who has been descended from Alfred the Great, as the queen and Athelstane of Coningsburgh as a king. But Cedric has a son, Wilfred of Ivenhoe, who destroys his father's plan by falling in love with Rowena. Cedric becomes angry and disinherits his son. Ivanhoe goes on a Crusade where he meets King Richard, and they become friends. On their return to England, Richard with the help of the Saxons and archers of Robin Hood, fights against Prince John for his crown and wins. At last Cedric understands the impossibility of the restoration of the Saxon power and becomes reconciled to the Normans.

The book is written with the great descriptive skill for which Scott is famous. He was a master of painting wonderfully individualized expressive and vivid characters.

The main idea of the book is to call for peace and compromise. Scott wanted to reconcile the hostile classes. He believed that social harmony possible if the best representatives of all classes would unite in a struggle against evil. This idea is expressed in the novel "Ivanhoe" in the episode when the Norman king Richard, together with Robin Hood and his merry men, attack the castle of the Norman baron to set the Saxon thanes free. This incident shows how the allied forces of honest men, though from hostile classes, conquer evil.

UNIT 7. THE VICTORIAN AGE (1837-1901)

General Background

Victoria became queen of Great Britain in 1837. Her reign, the longest in English history, lasted until 1901. This period is called Victorian Age.

The Victorian Age was characterized by sharp contradictions. In many ways it was an age of progress. The Victorian era marks the climax of England's rise to economic and military supremacy. Nineteenth-century England became the first modern, industrialized nation. It ruled the most widespread empire in world history, embracing all of Canada, Australia, New Zealand, India, Pakistan, and many smaller countries in Asia, and the Caribbean. But internally England was not stable. There was too much poverty, too much injustice and fierce exploitation of man by man.

The workers fought for their rights. Their political demands were expressed in the People's Charter in 1833. The Chartist movement was a revolutionary movement of the English workers, which lasted till 1848. The Chartists introduced their own literature. The Chartist writers tried their hand at different genres. They wrote articles, short stories, songs, epigrams, poems. Chartists (for example Ernest Jones "The Song of the Lower Classes"; Thomas Hood "The Song of the Shirt") described the struggle of the workers for their rights, they showed the ruthless exploitation and the miserable fate of the poor.

The ideas of Chartism attracted the attention of many progressive-minded people of the time. Many prominent writers became aware of the social injustice around them and tried to picture them in their works. The greatest novelists of the age were Charles Dickens, William Makepeace Thackeray, Charlotte Bronte, Elizabeth Gaskell, George Eliot. These writers used the novel as a tool to protest against the evils in contemporary social and economic life and to picture the world in a realistic way. They expressed deep sympathy for the working people; described the unbearable conditions of their life and work. Criticism in their works was very strong, so some scholars called them Critical Realists, and the trend to which they belonged - Critical Realism. "Hard Times" by Charles Dickens and "Mary Barton" by Elizabeth Gaskell are the bright examples of that literature, in which the Chartist movement is described. The contribution of the writers belonging to the trend of realism in world literature is enormous. They created a broad picture of social life, exposed and attacked the vices of the contemporary society, sided with

the common people in their passionate protest against unbearable exploitation, and expressed their hopes for a better future.

As for the poetry of that time, English and American critics consider Alfred Tennyson, and Robert Browning to be the two great pillars on which Victorian poetry rested. Unlike the poetry of the Romantic Age, their poetry demonstrated the conservatism, optimism, and self-assurance that marked the poetry of the Victorian age.

Alfred, Lord Tennyson (1809-1892)

Alfred, Lord Tennyson, was the most revered of the Victorian poets. He was a poet-laureate and his poems found their way into almost every home of that time. In his art and outlook Tennyson was deeply influenced by the English Romantic poets, particularly by William Wordsworth and John Keats.

He was one of twelve children of a country minister and grew up in the quiet village of Somersby in Lincolnshire, eastern England. His father had an excellent library and the young Tennyson began his study of the English classics there. He began writing poetry at a very early age. While preparing for the university Tennyson learned classical and modern languages from his gifted father. Tennyson entered Cambridge University and made a promising debut as a young poet there with the publication of "Poems, Chiefly Lyrical" (1830).

Then calamity struck their family. His father's fatal illness forced Tennyson to leave Cambridge without finishing his degree. His next work, "Poems", was published in 1833. In the same year the poet lost his dearest and nearest friend Henry Hallam. Hallam's death threw Tennyson into a long depression. He was silent for nearly a decade.

He broke "ten years of silence", as he called them later, in 1842 by publishing new work that soon made him a leading poet of his time. In 1850 he published his great elegy to Hallam. "In Memoriam A.H.H." "In Memoriam" is the poem of the poet himself, and, since it is so genuinely his, it becomes at the same time the great poem of his age. He records the death of his friend Arthur Hallam and his thoughts on the problem of life and death, his religious anxieties, and hard-

won faith in an eternal life. The same year he married and was named a poet laureate.

Tennyson's life was long and productive. He experimented with a great variety of poetic forms. One of his most popular works is "The Idylls of the King", a series of poems on the legend of King Arthur, which are picturesque, romantic, but allegorical and didactic as well. Tennyson has reduced the plan of the Arthurian stories to the necessities of Victorian morality.

Toward the end of his career, Tennyson was knighted by Queen Victoria. This honor, that never before was given to a writer, indicates the great esteem in which Tennyson was held by the people of his time and country.

Robert Browning (1812-1889)

Robert Browning, one of the leading Victorian poets, was born in London. His father was a bank official and pursued scholarship as a hobby, collecting a rich library. Robert Browning developed broad knowledge in the classics, painting, poetry, and the theatre.

First he wrote lyrical verse imitating Byron and Shelley, but later found his own poetic voice. In 1835 he published his dramatic psychological "Paracelsus", in 1837 the drama "Strafford". Then he spent two years in Italy and wrote his long, difficult "Sordello" in 1840. All these works did not bring him fame, though he had developed an independence of style, with an assumption of unusual rhythms, grotesque rhymes, and abrupt, broken phrasing. At its best this gave to his verses a virility which contrasts pleasantly with the over-melodious movement of much nineteenth-century poetry. That he was a master of verse can be seen from the easy movements of his lyrics, but his special effects, though they gave realism to his poems, were in danger of becoming a mannerism.

When he was still largely unknown, the poet came across a volume of poetry. Its author was the popular Elizabeth Barrett (1806-1861), a semi-invalid who was six years older than Robert Browning. He fell in love with her poems and then with the poet herself. Despite her father's disapproval, Robert and Elizabeth eloped in 1846. They lived a happy life together in Italy and it revived Mrs.

Browning. There, for several years, Elizabeth Barrett-Browning wrote a series of sonnets expressing her love for her husband. Her sonnet “How Do I Love Thee “, addressed to Robert Browning is the most-quoted love poem in the English language.

How Do I Love Thee

How do I love thee? Let me count the ways.

I love thee to the depth and breadth and height

My soul can reach, when feeling out of sight

For the ends of Being and ideal Grace.

I love thee to the level of everyday’s,

Most quiet need, by sun and candle light.

I love thee freely, as men strive for Right;

I love thee purely, as they turn from Praise.

I love thee with the passion put to use

In my old griefs, and with my childhood’s faith.

I love thee with a love I seemed to lose

With my lost saints – I love thee with the breath,

Smiles, tears, of all my life! – and, if God choose,

I shall but love thee better after death.

During their life together Elizabeth remained much more famous than her husband.

Elizabeth Barrett-Browning (1806-1861)

After his wife’s death in 1861, Robert Browning returned to England with their son. It was only then, in his fifties, that Browning established his own reputation as a poet with the collections of dramatic monologues such as “Dramatis Personae” (1866), and “The Ring and the Book” (1869). Now Browning became famous and Tennyson’s equal among Victorian readers. But these two great poets were absolutely different in their manner of writing and behaviour. The

biographers and critics write that Tennyson was introverted, withdrawn, and often melancholy. Browning was open, social, and optimistic. Tennyson's poetry is melodic and beautifully polished; Browning's is intentionally harsh and "unpoetic", and reflects the language of lively conversation.

Browning has generally been called a difficult writer, so much that societies were formed to interpret his poetry. But sometimes he wrote simply, when he thought it consistent with his subject. One of his such not-too-difficult-to-understand lyrical poems is "The Lost Mistress".

The Lost Mistress

1

All's over, then – does truth sound bitter
As one at first believes?
Hark, 'tis the sparrows' good-night twitter
About your cottage eaves!

2

And the leaf-buds on the vine are woolly,
I noticed that, to-day;
One day more bursts them open fully
- You know the red turns gray.

3

To-morrow we meet the same then, dearest?
May I take your hand in mine?
Mere friends are we, - well, friends the merest
Keep much that I'll resign:

4

For each glance of that eye so bright and black,
Though I keep with heart's endeavour, -
Your voice, when you wish the snowdrops back,
Though it stays in my soul for ever! –

- Yet I will but say what mere friends say
Or only a thought stronger;
I will hold your hand but as long as all may,
Or so very little longer.

This poem belongs to the collection of short poems called “Dramatic Romances and Lyrics” (1845).

Browning’s best-known work is “The Ring and the Book” (1868-1869). He based the poem on an Italian murder case of 1698. Twelve characters discuss the case, and each does it from his or her own point of view.

Browning strikes our contemporary readers as the more modern poet, because of his colloquial and quirky diction, and because of his interest in human psychology.

Charles Dickens (1812 - 1870)

Charles Dickens, the first novelist of the trend of Critical Realism, was born in 1812 near Portsmouth on the southern coast of England. His father was a clerk and the family lived on his small salary. They belonged to the lower middle class. The father was often transferred from place to place. First they moved to the ancient town of Rochester, then, in 1822 to London. In Rochester Charles began to attend school. He continued his studies in London as well. But soon his father lost his job and was imprisoned for debt. Charles had to begin to work in a factory. In about a year the Dickenses received a small sum of money after the death of a relative, so all the debts were paid. Charles got a chance to go to school again. Dickens left school when he was twelve. He had to continue his education by himself. His father sent him to a lawyer’s office to study law. He did not stay there long, but he learned the ways and manners of lawyers, as many of his books show.

In 1832 Dickens became a parliamentary reporter. Dickens’s first efforts at writing were little stories about the ordinary Londoners he saw. He signed them Boz (the nickname given to him by his youngest brother. At the age of 24 Dickens

married Catherine Hogarth. Later he discovered his ability as a novelist and devoted himself to literary work. Twice he visited the USA. Besides Dickens was a master of reading. He had invented the theatre for one actor. From 1858 to 1868 he had given dramatic readings of his novels in England and America. An audience to Dickens was like a potent wine, he delighted in the applause. Dickens knew more than he revealed. His own nature was involved in a high emotionalism, which prevented him from reaching the sense of tragedy of Dostoyevsky, or that full vision of life, which makes Tolstoy supreme among novelists of the world. Short of this he had everything. In 1867-1868 Dickens made a triumphant reading tour in the United States during his second visit, which was a great strain on him and undermined his health. He died suddenly on June 9, 1870. Dickens was buried in Westminster Abbey. When Dickens died something had gone out of English life that was irreplaceable, a bright light that had shone upon the drab commercialism of the century, calling men back to laughter and kindness, and the disruption of the cruelties in which they were entangling themselves. Like all great artists he saw the world as if it was an entirely fresh experience seen for the first time, and he had an extraordinary range of language, from comic invention to great eloquence. He invented character and situation with a range that had been unequalled since Shakespeare. So deeply had he affect his audiences that the view of life behind his novels has entered into the English tradition. Reason and theory he distrusted, but compassion and cheerfulness of heart he elevated into the supreme virtues. He knew in his more reflective moments that cheerfulness alone will not destroy the Coketowns of the world. This reflection he kept mainly to himself, and his intense emotionalism helped him to obscure it.

Dickens's Creative Work

Dickens was the greatest novelist of his age. He wrote a tremendous number of works. He created a new type of novel - a social novel. The great contrast between rich and poor Dickens considered abnormal in a civilized society. Dickens put all his hopes in the good qualities of human nature. To the end of his life he hoped to find means to better the world he lived in. But while painting hard reality,

Dickens changed his attitude as years went by, as to the causes of poverty and exploitation. His creative work has been divided into four periods.

I. The works written between the years 1833 - 1841 belong to the first period. They are: "Sketches by Boz" (1833 - 1836), "The Posthumous Papers of the Pickwick Club", "Oliver Twist", "Nicholas Nickleby", "Barnaby Rudge", "The Old Curiosity Shop". Dickens's heroes and heroines of the first period are remarkable for their fortitude. They never hesitate to take the wisest way and remain true to the principles of honour. They prefer to live in poverty and work hard. Finally virtue conquers evil. Humour and optimism are characteristic of the first period in Dickens's writings.

II. The following books, written between the years 1842 -1848, belong to the second period in the writers creative work: "American Notes", "Martin Chuzzlewit", "The Christmas Books", "Dombey and Son". In the works of the second period Dickens begins to describe the crimes that arise from the existing system itself.

III. During the third period (1850-1859) he wrote "David Copperfield", "Bleak House", "Hard Times", "Little Dorrit", "A Tale of Two Cities". These novels are the strongest for the social criticism expressed in them. Dickens describes in detail the social institutions of the day and draws a vivid picture of the English people life.

IV. The fourth period in Dickens's creative work was the sixties. During these years he wrote only 2 novels: "Great Expectations", and "Our Mutual Friend". These works are written in a spirit of disillusionment. Now he feels that a better future is too far off and he only allows himself, as a writer, to dream of that future. His heroes show the moral strength and patience of the common people.

"Dombey and Son"

In this novel, the writer turns away for the first time from the world of little people to that of the high bourgeoisie.

The full title of the novel is: "Dealings with the Firm of Dombey and Son, Wholesale, Retail and for Exportation." It tells the story of a rich family, the

Dombey's. Mr Dombey is a merchant and his only interest in life is the prosperity of his family firm.

Mrs. Dombey dies at the close of Chapter 1, after giving birth to her only son, and thereafter the house, which is depicted as glacial and cavernous, resolves round the hopes founded by Mr. Dombey on his heir. Little Paul Dombey is a sickly, sensitive child, whose father adopts toward him the attitude of the prince consort to an eldest son; he must be made "the most perfect man", and to that end he is starved of the affection he needs, and sent, at the age of five, to Mrs. Pipchin's establishment in Brighton. If he has received little, his sister Florence, older than he by six years, gets even less. As a daughter, she is of no consequence to her father, or to anyone else except her faithful and outspoken attendant, Susan Nipper.

The machinery of the plot is comparatively simple in contrast to the richness of its orchestration. Dombey, distressed by the death of his son and the foundering of his hopes, increasingly rejects his daughter Florence, in spite of her attempts to win his affection. Dombey marries again, this time choosing a beauty of superior social standing to his own. Edith Dombey is instantly drawn to Florence, who in her teens, not only takes warmly to her stepmother but counts on her help to overcome her father's hostility. However, Edith has her own kind of pride. She sets up in flat opposition to her husband, whom her one aim is to humiliate. For Florence's sake, she begins to keep the little girl at arm's length until, after a final scene, she leaves for France with Dombey's trusted manager.

Dickens considers all blows that have fallen upon Mr. Dombey as punishment deserved. Mr. Dombey is the symbol of all that was cruel and unhuman in the upper middle class in Dickens's time.

But the character of Mr. Dombey changes unexpectedly at the end of the novel. Misfortunes soften his character and he becomes a good man. Old Mr. Dombey lives in the happy home of Florence, who is now married to Walter Gay. Now Mr. Dombey loves his daughter and grandchildren.

The author of the book, Charles Dickens, always wanted to reconcile people with one another, and the end of the book is a vivid example of it.

William Makepeace Thackeray (1811- 1863)

M. Thackeray was one of the greatest representatives of the English Victorian age. Thackeray's novels focus on a vivid description of his contemporary society, the mode of life, manners and tastes of aristocracy. Revealing their pride and tyranny, snobbishness, and selfishness, he demonstrates his broad and analytical knowledge of human nature.

W.M. Thackeray was born in Calcutta, India, where his father was a well-to-do English official. At the age of six he was sent to England to be educated. He studied at the Charterhouse school, then he passed on to Cambridge University.

While a student, William displayed his skill of drawing cartoons and writing verses, most of them were parodies. But being an ambitious person he wanted to achieve more and become an artist, so without graduating the University and went to Germany, Italy and France to study art. In Germany he was introduced to Goethe, who deeply impressed him.

Thackeray returned to London in 1833, with the aim to complete his education, and began a law course. Unfortunately, at that time the Indian bank went bankrupt, and Thackeray lost the money invested by his father to him. Not being able to continue his regular education he had to earn a living. He was equally talented in art and literature. Journalism became the most attractive occupation for him, and throughout his whole life Thackeray was a journalist. Up to 1854 he was a regular contributor to "Punch", and later he was the editor of "The Cornhill". In 1836 Thackeray married Isabella Shawe, they had three daughters. Thackeray's married life was unhappy as his wife became ill after giving birth to the third child. To the end of his life Thackeray did all he could to make her life comfortable working hard and bringing himself down. Isabella outlived her husband by many years. Like Dickens he drove himself to give readings of his novels in London and in America. Moreover, his lectures on "The English Humourists" and "The Four Georges" show him a master.

Literary Work

W.M. Thackeray was an author of many articles, essays, reviews and stories. But his first notable work was “The Book of Snobs”, published in 1848. It was a collection of his magazine writings, where the author criticized social pretentiousness. The book may be regarded as a prelude to the author’s masterpiece “Vanity Fair”, which showed him at his best in a clear-sighted realism, a deep detestation of insincerity, and a broad and powerful development of narrative. For one brilliant decade the bright yellow shilling numbers in which his novels were published became a feature of English life. In those years he published “The History of Pendennis” (1850), “Henry Esmond” (1852), “The Newcomes” (1854), “The Virginians” (1859) and “Denis Duval”. Thackeray wrote in a colorful, lively style. His vocabulary is simple and sentences clearly structured.

The novels “The History of Pendinnes” and “The Newcomes” are realistic, they show gradual reconciliation of the author with reality. In the other novels “Henry Esmond” and “The Virginians” Thackeray turned to historical themes, which he treated with a realistic approach. Thackeray’s last novel “Denis Duval” remained unfinished, for Thackeray died in 1863.

Thackeray’s literary work shows that he did not like people who were impressed by their birth or rank. He hated cruelty and greed, and admired kindness.

“Vanity Fair (a novel without a hero)”

The subtitle of the book shows the author’s intention not to describe separate individuals, but the society as a whole. The author believed that most people are a mixture of the good and evil, of the heroic and ridiculous. He knew that a human being is complex and avoided oversimplifying it. The interest of the novel centers on the characters than on the plot. The author shows various people, and their thoughts and actions in different situations. There is no definite hero in the book. In Thackeray’s opinion there can be no hero in a society where the cult of money rules the world. He is less concerned to present a moral solution than to evoke an image of life as he has seen it.

Thackeray's satire reaches its climax when he describes Sir Pitt Crawley, a typical snob of Vanity Fair. "...Here was a man, who could not spell, and did not care to read - who had the habits and the cunning of a boor; whose aim in life was pettifogging; who never had a taste, or emotion or enjoyment, but what was sordid and foul; and yet he had rank, and honours, and power, somehow; and was a dignitary of the land, and pillar of the state. He was high sheriff, and rode in a golden coach. Great ministers and statesmen courted him; and in Vanity Fair he had a higher place than the most brilliant genius of spotless virtue".

The novel focuses on the fate of two girls with sharply contrasting characters - Rebecca (Becky) Sharp and Amelia Sedley. Both characters are depicted with great skill. Becky is good looking, clever and gifted. She possesses a keen sense of humour and a deep understanding of human nature. At the same time she embodies the very spirit of Vanity Fair, as her only aim in life is at all costs to find her way into high society. Becky believes neither in love nor in friendship. She is selfish, cunning, and cynical, and ready to marry any man who can give her wealth and a title.

In contrast to Rebecca, Amelia is honest, generous and kind to all the people she comes in touch with and is loved by all. But she, too, cannot be regarded as the heroine of the novel. She is not clever enough to understand the real qualities of the people who surround her. She is too intelligent, naive and simple-hearted to understand all the dirty machinations of the clever and sly Rebecca. Thackeray writes about Amelia Sedley as a kind and gentle being, but at the same time calls her "a silly little thing".

The most virtuous person in the novel is Captain William Dobbin. He worships Amelia, and his only aim in life is to see her happy. He does not think of his own happiness. Knowing that Amelia loves George Osborne, Dobbin persuades her to marry the girl. He knows that his own life will be a complete disappointment, but he does not care. His personal feelings are of no importance for him in comparison with those of Amelia. Though Dobbin, like Amelia, is an

exception in *Vanity Fair*, he is too simple-minded and one-sided to be admired by the author.

Though nothing in the early nineteenth century approaches Dickens and Thackeray, the novel in that period showed great variety. Fiction had become the dominant form in literature, and the problem of recording even its main types becomes difficult.

Charlotte Brontë (1816-1855)

Charlotte Brontë's father, Patric Brontë was a poor Irishman who became a clergyman in the small, isolated town of Haworth, Yorkshire. Charlotte's mother died in 1821, when the girl was only five and her aunt, mother's sister, brought up the family conscientiously, but with little affection or understand-in. Together with her two younger sisters, Emily and Anne, Charlotte went to several boarding schools where they received a better education than was usual for girls at that time, but in harsh atmosphere.

At that time few jobs were available for women, and the Brontë sisters, except for occasional jobs as governesses or schoolteachers, lived their entire lives at home. The sisters were poor, shy, lonely, and occupied themselves with drawing, music, reading and writing. Their isolation led to the early development of their imaginations. In 1846, under the masculine pen-names of Currer, Ellis, and Acton Bell, the sisters published a joint volume of poems. Soon after all three sisters published their first novels.

This portrait of the Brontë sisters was painted by their brother Patrick Branwell Brontë. The picture shows Anne (left), Emily (center) and Charlotte (right).

Emily Brontë (1818-1848) is the author of the novel "Wuthering Heights" (1847). Anne Brontë (1820-1849) wrote two novels: "Agnes Grey" (1847) and "The Tenant of Wildfell Hall"(1848).

Charlotte Brontë's famous novel "Jane Eyre" was published in 1847 under her pen-name Currer Bell. It is a novel of social criticism. In this novel particular attention is given to the system of education of which Charlotte Brontë had a

thorough knowledge, being a schoolteacher herself. Like Dickens, she believed that education was the key to all social problems, and that by the improvement of the school system and teaching, most of the evils could be removed. This novel is autobiographical. Through the heroine, the author relived the hated boarding school life and her experiences as a governess in a large house. Rochester, the hero of the book and the master of the house described in it, is fictional. "Jane Eyre" was enormously successful.

Charlotte Brontë wrote three other novels. The first of them, "The Professor", was published after her death, in 1857. The second one, "Shirley" was published in 1849. The most popular of these three novels, "Villette" was published in 1853. It is based on Charlotte's unhappy experiences as a governess in Brussels, with the far richer and more romantic experiences which she had imagined. Thus her work is grounded in realism, but goes beyond into a wish-fulfillment. She had the courage to explore human life with greater fidelity than was common in her age, though the reticence of her period prevents her from following her themes to their logical conclusion.

George Eliot (1819-1880)

George Eliot is the pen-name of Mary Ann Evans, one of the most distinguished English novelists of the Victorian period. Mary Ann Evans was born in Warwickshire in 1819. She received an excellent education in private schools and from tutors. After her father's death in 1849, she traveled in Europe and settled in London. There she wrote for important journals. British intellectuals regarded her as one of the leading thinkers of her day. Before she wrote fiction she had translated several philosophical works from German into English.

When Mary Ann Evans began to publish fiction in 1858, she took the pen name George Eliot; this change was an emblem of the seriousness with which she addressed her new career. There were many successful women novelists in Victorian England who wrote under their own names, but there existed a general assumption that they wrote "women's novels". When Evans began to publish her novels under an assumed name she was implicitly asserting her intention to rival

the greatest novelists of her day. Of all the women novelists of the nineteenth century, she was the most learned and, in her creative achievement, the most adult.

Much of her fiction reflects the middle-class rural background of her childhood and youth. George Eliot wrote with sympathy, wisdom and realism about English country people and small towns. She wrote seriously about moral and social problems.

Her first novel "Adam Bede", published in 1859, is a tragic love story. Her works "The Mill on the Floss" (1860) and "Silas Marner" are set against country background. Her "Romola" is a historical novel set in Renaissance Florence. George Eliot's only political novel is "Felix Holt, Radical" written in 1866 is considered one of her poorer works.

George Eliot's masterpiece "Middlemarch: A Study of Provincial Life" (1871-1872) is a long story of many complex characters, and their influence on and reaction to each other. Her last novel "Daniel Deronda" (1876) displays the author's knowledge of and sensitivity to Jewish culture.

Her intellect was sufficiently employed in the difficult problem of structure not to impede her imagination. She had achieved the nearest approach in English to Balzac. In George Eliot's work, one is aware of her desire to enlarge the possibilities of the novel as a form of expression: she wishes to include new themes, to penetrate more deeply into character.

Robert Louis Stevenson (1850-1894)

R.L. Stevenson was a Scottish novelist, essayist, and poet who became one of the world's most popular writers. He was born on November 13, 1850, in Edinburgh, Scotland. He was a sickly boy who suffered from a lung disease that later developed into tuberculosis. Young Stevenson loved the open air, the sea, adventure, and, especially, reading. He was a man of a strong will. He fought illness constantly and wrote many of his books in a sickbed. He traveled widely for his health and to learn about people.

Stevenson's father was a Scottish engineer, and the boy was expected to follow in his father's footsteps, but he preferred literature and history. When he

was 17, Stevenson entered Edinburgh University to study engineering, his father's profession. But this profession was not appealing for him and as a compromise he agreed to study law. He graduated from the University in 1875, but he did not enjoy law and never practiced it. His real love was writing. By the time of his graduation from the University he had already begun writing for magazines. He began publishing short stories and essays in the mid-1870s.

The writer's first book "An Inland Voyage" appeared in 1878. This work relates his experiences during a canoeing trip through France and Belgium. In his next book "Travels with a Donkey in the Cevennes", written in 1879, Stevenson describes a walking tour through France.

In 1879 he followed Mrs. Fanny Osbourne, an American whom he later married, to the American continent. In America his health began to fail and made him a tubercular invalid for the rest of his life. He spent his last nine years on the Pacific island of Samoa.

Stevenson's first and most famous novel "Treasure Island" was published in 1883. The characters of the book, the boy hero Jim Hawkins, the two villains Long John Silver and blind Pew, and their search for the buried treasure have become familiar to millions of readers.

The publication of Stevenson's second major novel "The Strange Case of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde" in 1886 assured his reputation. The story tells of a doctor who takes a drug that changes him into a new person, physically ugly and spiritually evil. The novel is one of the most fascinating horror stories ever written.

The same year Stevenson also published his long novel "Kidnapped". The work is based on historical research and weaves an exciting fictional story around an actual Scottish murder committed in 1745. Because of its length, Stevenson ended "Kidnapped" before the plot was completed. He finally finished the story in 1893 in "Catriona". Besides these he had written many other novels, short stories, essays and travel books.

Some of Stevenson's short stories were collected into "New Arabian Nights" (1882) and "More New Arabian Nights" (1885). His short stories are rich in imagination and fantasy.

Stevenson's last years were clouded by tragedy . At that time his wife suffered a nervous breakdown. This misfortune struck him deeply and affected his ability to complete his last books. Stevenson's life began to brighten when his wife recovered partially, but he died suddenly of a stroke on December 3, 1894. Local chiefs buried him on top of Mount Vaea in Samoa.

Stevenson in all that he wrote, in his essays, his letters, and his novels, remained an artist. He was in style self-conscious, exacting from himself perfection. Stevenson leads the novel back towards story-telling and to the romance. Stevenson is so consistent an artist that it is difficult at first to realize the phenomenon that had produced his success.

UNIT 8. ENGLISH LITERATURE AT THE END OF THE 19TH AND THE BEGINNING OF THE 20TH CENTURY

General Background

By 1880 England had become the first modern industrial empire. Its large, urban manufacturing centers produced goods that went by rail and then by steamship to consumers all over the world. British investments and energy were expanding and served for the defense of the Empire.

Queen Victoria lived until January 1901. Her son, Edward VII, was nearly sixty years old when he was crowned, and reigned only nine years. These nine years in the history of England are called the Edwardian period. Despite the brevity of the Edwardian period, it saw the development of a national conscience that expressed itself in important social legislation (including the first old-age pensions). It laid the groundwork for the English welfare state.

On the other hand, the second half of the 19th century in England gave rise to a rapid growth of social contradictions. These contradictions found their reflection in literature, too. It was reflected in literature by the appearance of different trends. A great number of writers continued the realistic traditions of their predecessors. It was represented by such writers as George Meredith, Samuel Butler, Thomas Hardy. These novelists gave a truthful picture of the contemporary society.

The writers of another trend, by way of protest against severe reality, tried to lead the reader away from life into the world of dreams and fantasy, into the realm of beauty. They idealized the patriarchal way of life and criticized the existing society chiefly for its antiaesthetism. Russian literary critics called them decadents. (English and American literary critics call them the writers belonging to the Aesthetic trend). The decadent art, or the art belonging to the aesthetic trend appreciated the outer form of art more than the content.

Though the decadent writers saw the vices of the surrounding world, and in some of their works we find a truthful and critical description of contemporary life,

on the whole their inner world lacks depth. They were firm in their opinion that it was impossible to better the world and conveyed the idea that everyone must strive for his own private happiness, avoid suffering and enjoy life at all costs. The decadent writers created their own cult of beauty and proclaimed the theory of “pure art”; their motto was “art for art’s sake”. (Oscar Wilde, John Ruskin).

Besides, the end of the 19th century also created writers who were interested in human society as a whole (B.Shaw, J.Galsworthy), and a new type of writer who was preoccupied with the future of mankind (Herbert Wells).

Thomas Hardy (1840-1928)

Thomas Hardy was born in southwestern England, western Dorsetshire. His father, a skilled stone-mason, taught his son to play violin and sent him to a country day school. At the age of fifteen Hardy began to study architecture, and in 1861 he went to London to begin a career. There he tried poetry, then a career as an actor, and finally decided to write fiction.

Hardy’s home and the surrounding districts played an important role in his literary career. The region was agricultural, and there were monuments of the past, that is Saxon and Roman ruins and the great boulders of Stonehenge, which reminded of the prehistoric times. Before the Norman invasion of 1066

First, Hardy aimed his fiction at serial publication in magazines, where it would most quickly pay the bills. Not forgetting an earlier dream, he resolved to keep his tales “as near to poetry in their subject as the conditions would allow.” The emotional power of Hardy’s fiction disturbed readers from the start. His first success, “Far from the Madding Crowd” (1874), was followed by “The Return of the Native” (1878), “The Mayor of Casterbridge”(1885), and “Tess of the D’Urbervilles” (1891). Hardy wrote about the Dorset country-side he knew well and called it Wessex (the name of the Anglo-Saxon kingdom once located there). He wrote about agrarian working people, milkmaids, stonecutters, and shepherds. Hardy’s rejection of middle-class moral values disturbed and shocked some readers, but as time passed, his novels gained in popularity and prestige. An architect by profession, he gave to his novels a design that was architectural,

employing each circumstance in the narrative to one accumulated effect. The final impression was one of a malign. Fate functioning in men's lives, corrupting their possibilities of happiness, and beckoning them towards tragedy. While he saw life thus as cruel and purposeless, he does not remain a detached spectator. He has pity for the puppets of Destiny, and it is a compassion that extends from man to the earth-worm, and the diseased leaves of the tree. Such a conception gave his novels a high seriousness which few of his contemporaries possessed.

No theory can in itself make a novelist, and Hardy's novels, whether they are great or not have appealed to successive generations of readers.

In 1874 he married and in 1885 built a remote country home in Dorset. From 1877 on he spent three to four months a year in fashionable society, while the rest of the time he lived in the country.

In 1895 his "Jude the Obscure" was so bitterly criticized, that Hardy decided to stop writing novels altogether and returned to an earlier dream. In 1898 he published his first volume of poetry. Over the next twenty-nine years Hardy completed over 900 lyrics. His verse was utterly independent of the taste of his day. He used to say: "My poetry was revolutionary in the sense that I meant to avoid the jewelled line. ..." Instead, he strove for a rough, natural voice, with rustic diction and irregular meters expressing concrete, particularized impressions of life.

Thomas Hardy has been called the last of the great Victorians. He died in 1928. His ashes are buried in Westminster Abbey, but, because of his lasting relationship with his home district, his heart is buried in Wessex. His position as a novelist is difficult to assess with any certainty. At first he was condemned as a "second-rate romantic", and in the year of his death he was elevated into one of the greatest figures of English literature. The first view is ill-informed and the second may well be excessive, but the sincerity and courage and the successful patience of his art leave him a great figure in English fiction. In the world war of 1914-18 he was read with pleasure as one who had the courage to portray life with the grimness that is possessed and in portraying if not to lose pity. Often in times of

stress Hardy's art will function in a similar way and so enter into the permanent tradition of English literature.

Oscar Wilde (1854 - 1900)

Oscar Wilde was regarded as the leader of the aesthetic movement, but many of his works do not follow his decadent theory "art for art's sake", they sometimes even contradict it. In fact, the best of them are closer to Romanticism and Realism.

Oscar Wilde was born in Dublin on October 16, 1854. His father was a famous Irish surgeon. His mother was well known in Dublin as a writer. At school, and later at the Oxford University Oscar displayed a considerable gift for art and creative work. The young man received a number of classical prizes, and graduated with first-class honours. After graduating from the University, Wilde turned his attention to writing, travelling and lecturing. The Aesthetic Movement became popular, and Oscar Wilde earned the reputation of being the leader of the movement.

Oscar Wilde gained popularity in the genre of comedy of manners. The aim of social comedy, according to Wilde, is to mirror the manners, not to re-form the morals of its day. Art in general, Wilde stated, is in no way connected with the reality of life; real life incarnates neither social nor moral values. It is the artist's fantasy that produces the refined and the beautiful. So it is pointless to demand that there be any similarity between reality and its depiction in art. Thus, he was a supporter of the "art-for-art's sake" doctrine.

In his plays the author mainly dealt with the life of educated people of refined tastes. Belonging to the privileged layer of society they spent their time in entertainments. In "The Importance of Being Earnest" the author shows what useless lives his characters are leading. Some of them are obviously caricatures, but their outlook and mode of behaviour truly characterize London's upper crust. Wilde rebels against their limitedness, strongly opposes hypocrisy, but, being a representative of an upper class himself, was too closely connected with the society he made fun of; that is why his opposition bears no effective resistance.

The most popular works of the author are “The Happy Prince and Other Tales” (1888), “The Picture of Dorian Gray” (1891), and the come-dies “Lady Windermere’s Fan” (1892). “A Woman of No Importance” (1893), “An Ideal Husband” (1895), “The Importance of Being Earnest” (1895). At the height of his popularity and success a tragedy struck. He was accused of immorality and sentenced to two years’ imprisonment. When released from prison in 1897 he lived mainly on the Continent and later in Paris. In 1898 he published his powerful poem, “Ballad of Reading Gaol”. He died in Paris in 1900.

“The Picture of Dorian Gray” is the only novel written by Oscar Wilde. It is centered round problems of relationship between art and reality. In the novel the author describes the spiritual life of a young man and touches upon many important problems of contemporary life: morality, art and beauty. At the beginning of the novel we see an inexperienced youth, a kind and innocent young man. Dorian is influenced by two men with sharply contrasting characters: Basil Hallward and Lord Henry Wotton. The attitude of these two towards the young man shows their different approach to life, art and beauty. The author shows the gradual degradation of Dorian Gray. The end of the book is a contradiction to Wilde’s decadent theory. The fact that the portrait acquired its former beauty and Dorian Gray “withered, wrinkled and loathsome of visage” lay on the floor with a knife in his heart, shows the triumph of real beauty - a piece of art created by an artist, a unity of beautiful form and content. Besides that, it conveys the idea that real beauty cannot accompany an immoral life.

Sir Arthur Conan Doyle (1859-1930)

Sir Arthur Conan Doyle is a British writer, who created Sherlock Holmes, the world’s best known detective. Millions of readers are delighted in his ability to solve crimes by an amazing use of reason and observation.

Doyle was born in Edinburgh, Scotland. He was a doctor and began practicing medicine in 1882, but his practice was not successful. Sherlock Holmes came into being while the young doctor waited vainly for patients. Doyle amused himself during those long hours by writing stories about a “scientific” detective

who solved cases by his amusing power of deduction. His early stories were not very popular, but he won great success with his first Holmes novel “A Study in Scarlet” (1887).

The author modeled Holmes on a real person, a tall, wiry surgeon who had the reputation of being able to tell a person’s occupation just by looking at him. Holmes appeared in 56 short stories, written by Doyle, and three other novels: “The Sign of Four” (1890), “The Hound of the Baskervilles”(1902), and ”The Valley of Fear” (1915). Later, growing tired of writing Holmes stories, Sir Arthur Conan Doyle wrote a story in which the detective was killed by the Professor Moriarty mentioned at the beginning of “The Adventure of the Norwood Builder”. But Holmes was so popular that public demand forced the author to bring him back to life in “The Return of Sherlock Holmes”

Sir Arthur Conan Doyle also wrote historical novels, romances, and plays. At last he left fiction to study and lecture on spiritualism (communication with spirits).

Rudyard Kipling (1865-1936)

Rudyard Kipling was born in Bombay, India, on December 30, 1865, in the family of John Lockwood Kipling, a professor of architectural sculpture. At the age of six he was taken to England and educated at an English College in North Devon. In 1883 he returned to India and became sub-editor of the Lahore Civil and Military Gazette. At the age of 21 he published his first volume, a small book of verse “Departmental Ditties”. A year later his “Plain Tales from the Hills” introduced him to the public as a story-teller. Before he was twenty-four he had already published six small collections of stories, which showed his remarkable talent.

From 1887 to 1899 Kipling travelled around the world and visited China, Japan and America. During this period he wrote his most popular works: “The Jungle Book” (1894-1895), “Captain Courageous” (1897), “Kim” (1902), “Just so Stories”(1902), “Puck of Pook’s Hill” (1906) and “Rewards and Fairies”(1910).

The best and most beloved of Kipling's prose works is "The Jungle Book". It was intended for children. In it Kipling depicted the life of wild animals, showed their character and behaviour. Each chapter of this book began with a poem and ended with a song.

The main character of this work Mowgli is the child of an Indian wood-cutter. He gets lost in the jungle and creeps into a lair of a wolf. The mother wolf lets him feed together with her cubs and calls him Mowgli which means frog. Mowgli has many adventures and finally returns to the society of men.

The Jungle Book shows that man is a curious animal. He is the weakest and at the same time the strongest animal in the world. Kipling wants to show that in an uncivilized society powerful animals triumph. The weak animals submit to the power of those who are stronger. This is the law of the Jungle, it is the law of the world. Kipling regrets that the same law of the Jungle exists in a civilized society too. He wants to see man as a good and noble being.

Rudyard Kipling was one of the rare writers who were equally strong in prose and in verse. His best-known volumes of verse are "Barrack-room Ballads" (1891), "The Seven Seas" (1896), "The Five Nations" (1903). One of his best poems "If" was dedicated to his son. The poem reads like a lesson in patience, self-possession and quiet fortitude:

IF

If you can keep your head when all about you

Are losing theirs and blaming it on you,

If you can trust yourself when all men doubt you,

But make allowance for their doubting too;

If you can wait and not be tired by waiting,

Or being lied about, don't deal in lies,

Or being hated, don't give way to hating,

And yet don't look too good, nor talk too wise;

If you can dream - and not make dreams your master;

If you can think - and not make thoughts your aim;
If you can meet with Triumph and Disaster
And treat those two imposters just the same;
If you can bear to hear the truth you've spoken
Twisted by knaves to make a trap for fools,
Or watch the things you gave your life to, broken,
And stoop and build 'em up with worn-out tools;
If you can make one heap of all your winnings
And risk it on one turn of pitch-and-toss,
And lose, and start again at your beginnings
And never breathe a word about your loss;
If you can force your heart and nerve and sinew
To serve your turn long after they are gone,
And so hold on when there is nothing in you
Except the Will which says to them: 'Hold on!'
If you can talk with crowds and keep your virtue,
Or walk with kings - nor lose the common touch,
If neither foes nor loving friends can hurt you,
If all men count with you, but none too much;
If you can fill the unforgiving minute
With sixty seconds' worth of distance run,
Yours is the Earth and everything that's in it,
And - which is more- you'll be a Man, my son!

Kipling returned from America to England and lived in a little Sussex village. During the South African war (1899-1902) Kipling supported the policy of British expansion. His belief in empire and his admiration for force damaged his literary reputation. But still he was highly appreciated as a talented master of fiction and poetry. In 1907 he was awarded the Nobel Prize for literature; he was the first Englishman and the first writer who had received this prize.

The death of his son during World War I affected him strongly and made him almost silent. His works of later period “Mary Postage” (1915) and “The Gardener” (1926) evidently show his hatred of war.

A great artist and realist, Rudyard Kipling, died on January 17, 1936 when he was at work on a collection of autobiographical notes. These notes were published a year after his death under the title “Something of Myself”.

Hector Hugh Munro (Saki) (1870 - 1916)

Hector Hugh Munro was born in 1870 in Burma. When his mother died two years later, he went back to England to be reared by his grandmother and aunts. There he attended local schools and then boarded for two years at Bedford Grammar School. He never went to college. Instead, his father retired, returned to England and took his children to a tour of Germany, Austria, and Switzerland. After the tour they settled in the English countryside.

In 1893, at the age of 22, Munro tried to follow his father’s footsteps and enlisted in the Burmese Police. But he could not take the climate, and after a year he returned to England. Now Munro determined to try a different sort of career, and for the next several years did historical research at the British Museum for a book “The Rise of the Russian Empire”, published in 1900. But it did not impress critics and readers.

So in 1901 he decided to play another role and tried his pen in writing political satire. This time he was more successful. Munro knew politics well and his political satires published in the “Westminster Gazette” delighted readers. To preserve his anonymity Munro took the penname “Saki” from the cupbearer in the Persian poem “The Rubaiyat” of Omar Khayyam.

In 1902 Munro left England to become a foreign correspondent for the “Morning Post”. During the next six years he reported from the Balkans, Poland, Russia, and Paris. At the same time he was sending a series of comic short stories to English newspapers, and in 1904 published a book of them. His short stories contain a unique blend of horror and humor that has made them favorites with readers ever since they first appeared in print.

In 1908 Munro returned home, bought a house outside of London, and settled into a quiet life, writing and playing bridge.

But his quiet and productive life soon came to an end. On first hearing that England was at war with Germany, in August 1914, Munro joined the army. At that time he was 43 years old. After a year of brave service he was killed in combat.

George Bernard Shaw (1856-1950)

George Bernard Shaw is an outstanding English playwright, one of the greatest satirists of the twentieth century. He was born in Dublin in an impoverished middle-class family. Until fourteen he attended a college, and from 1871 was employed in a land agent's office. In 1876 he went to London, where he became a journalist and wrote music and dramatic critics for various periodicals. He was always in the midst of political life in Britain and took an active part in solving human problems. As literary critics state, Shaw's manner of expression is based on real facts and ridicule. He exposes truth through satire and sarcasm.

The creative work of Bernard Shaw began with novels: "Immaturity" (1879), "The Irrational Knot" (1880), "Cashel Byron's Profession" (1882), "An Unsocial Socialist" (1883), "Love Among the Artists" (1888), but they had little success, and in 1892 the author turned to dramatic writing. His intellectual equipment was far greater than that of any of his contemporaries. He alone had understood the greatness of Norwegian dramatist Ibsen, and he was determined that his own plays should also be a vehicle for ideas. He had, from the first, accepted a burden in his dramas, beyond the presentation of plot and character. He had signed a contract with himself, and with the spirit of Ibsen, that each play should present a problem and discuss it thoroughly. His most important plays are: "Widowers' Houses" (1893), "Mrs. Warren's Profession" (1898), "Candida" (1898), "The Devil's Disciple" (1901), "Caesar and Cleopatra" (1901), "Man and Superman" (1903), "John Bull's Other Island" (1906), "Major Barbara" (1907), "Heartbreak House" (1917), "Pygmalion" (1919), "Saint Joan" (1923), "Back to Methuselah" (1921), "The Apple Cart" (1930), "Too Good to Be True" (1932),

“On the Rocks” (1933). In these and other plays Shaw criticized the vices of the existing society. They also reveal human psychology as a product of this society.

Shaw was convinced that modern plays should contain, along with the traditional plot conflict and its resolution, what he called “the discussion”, a consideration of important problems and suggestions for their resolution.

“Pygmalion”

One of Shaw’s best comedies is “Pygmalion”, written in 1912 and first produced in England in 1914. It was adapted into the musical “My Fair Lady” in 1956. The title “Pygmalion” comes from a Greek myth. Pygmalion, a sculptor, carved a statue out of ivory. It was the statue of a beautiful young woman whom he called Galatea. He fell in love with his own handiwork, so the goddess of love Aphrodite breathed life into the statue and transformed it into a really alive woman. The fable was chosen to allow him to discuss the theme he had set himself.

The principal characters of the play are Eliza Doolittle and Henry Higgins. Eliza, a girl of eighteen, comes from the lowest social level and speaks with a strong Cockney (East End of London) accent, which is considered to be the most uncultured English. Eliza’s father is a dustman. Eliza does not want to stay with her father and stepmother. She makes her own living by selling flowers in the streets of London.

Henry Higgins, another main character of the play, is a professor of phonetics. He studies the physiological aspects of a person’s speech, the sounds of the language. One day he sees Eliza in the street and bets with his friend Colonel Pickering that he will change this girl. He will not only teach her to speak her native language correctly, but will teach her manners too. Higgins works hard and before six months are over, she is well prepared to be introduced into society. Higgins wins his bet. When the game is over the girl doesn’t know where to go. She doesn’t want to return to her previous life, but at the same time she is not admitted to the high society as she is poor.

Higgins and Eliza remain friends, but the play is without ending. The dramatist thought it best not to go on with the story. Higgins loves Eliza only as his pupil. But he loves his profession as an artist. He has created a new Eliza. She is the work of a Pygmalion.

“Pygmalion” shows the author’s concern for the perfection of the English Language. Shaw was passionately interested in the English language and the varieties of ways in which people spoke and misspoke it. Shaw wished to simplify and reform English. He has pointed out that the rules of spelling in English are inconsistent and confusing. The text of “Pygmalion” reflects some of his efforts at simplifying the usage of letters and sounds in the English Language. The play also allowed Shaw to present ideas on other topics. For example, he touched the problems of social equality, male and female roles, and the relationship between the people.

Herbert George Wells (1866 - 1946)

The main current of fiction in the 20th century reflected the influence of science on popular thinking. People in general wanted to learn the truth. Scientific facts formed a wonderland, which was introduced into fiction as a fresh source of interest. This direct influence of science is illustrated in the writing of H.G.Wells.

Herbert George Wells is often called the great English writer who looked into the future. He devoted more than fifty years of his life to literary work. He was the author of more than forty novels and many short stories, articles and social tracts. His novels are of three types: science fiction, realistic novels on contemporary problems and social tracts.

Wells belonged to the world of science. Science played an important part in his best works, but the principal theme, even in these works is not science but the social problems of the day. His creative work is divided into two periods:

The first period begins in 1895 and lasts up to the outbreak of World War I. His famous works of this period are: “The Time Machine”, “The Invisible Man”, “The War of the Worlds”, “The First Men on the Moon”.

The second period comprises works written from 1914 up to the end of World War II. His most important works of the period are: "The War That Will End War", "Russia in the Shadows", "The World of William Glissold", "Mr. Blettsworthy on Rampole Island", "Experiment in Autobiography".

Wells's best works are his science fiction. They give the reader from the very beginning a forward-looking habit, and that is exactly what the writer aimed at. He believed in the great liberation science could bring to man, but he blamed the existing system because it used scientific achievements for evil aims. His criticism goes along two lines:

1. Scientific progress is more advanced than the cultural level of the people and their moral understanding of how to make use of it. Such being the case, science will sooner be used for destruction than for the good of mankind.

2. The enormous economic breach between the upper classes and the working classes is widened by scientific progress. If this process goes on, it will lead to the degeneration of the human race. In the novels of the second period Wells combines the criticism of society as a whole with the life of an individual. Thus Wells keeps up the traditions of the Critical Realism in the English novel.

"The War of the Worlds"

"The War of the World's" is H.G.Wells' fourth science fiction novel. It was published in 1897. The events in the novel supposedly take place at the beginning of the 20th century in London and its suburbs. The story of the war is told by a professor. He says that he was writing an article, when the first cylinder from Mars came down like a falling star onto the southern part of Britain. The inhabitants of the place were attracted by the unusual phenomena and watched the cylinder open. They saw a Martian came out, then another and another. Their bulky bodies, the size of a bear, moved very clumsily, because the gravity of the Earth had increased their weight three times. The public did not understand the danger until the Martians used their heat-ray, killing many people and burning down houses and woods.

The government decided to fight the Martians. When the second cylinder landed, government troops arrived. They hoped to destroy it by gun-fire before it opened. But the gun-fire was nothing for Martians. Eight more cylinders came down from Mars one after another. The Martians had monstrous fighting machines. These machines moved over the ground smashing everything on their way.

When the fifth cylinder landed, the people were already in a state of panic. The Martian fighting machines advanced on London, and in a few days Society, the State and Civilization disappeared. The people were frightened and became violent. They trampled one another in panic. Those who could not escape from the city hid like rats under the ruins of houses so as not to be killed by the Martians.

Wells ends the novel with the defeat of the Martians. They are infected by bacteria against which their constitution is helpless. The writer makes the people of the Earth win, because he loves them and wants them to be strong and better civilized. He does not portray the Martians as a better race. He believes in man and his better future.

John Galsworthy (1867 - 1933)

John Galsworthy is one of the most outstanding realistic writers of the 20th century English literature. His novels, plays and short stories give the most complete and critical picture of British society in the first part of the 20th century. Particularly, he is best known for his realistic depictions of contemporary British society upper-class.

Galsworthy was not young when he started writing. His first notable work was "The Island Pharisees" (1904) in which he criticized the stagnation of thought in the English privileged classes. The five works entitled "The Country House" (1907), "Fraternity" (1909), "The Patrician" (1911), "The Dark Flower" (1913), and "The Freeland" (1915) reveal a similar philosophy. In these works the author criticizes country squires, the aristocracy and artists, and shows his deep sympathy for strong passions, sincerity and true love.

The most popular and important novels written by Galsworthy are those of the Forsyte cycle (the trilogies "The Forsyte Saga" and "A Modern Comedy").

“The Forsyte Saga” consists of three novels and two interludes, as the author calls them: “The Man of Property” (1906), “In Chancery” (1920), “To Let” (1921), “Awakening” (interlude), “Indian Summer of a Forsyte” (interlude).

“The Forsyte Saga” is followed by “A Modern Comedy”, also a trilogy, consisting of three novels and two interludes: “The White Monkey” (1924), “The Silver Spoon” (1926), “The Swan Song” (1928), “A Silent Wooing” (interlude), “Passers-by” (interlude).

The trilogy called “End of the Charter”, written at a later period, is less critical. The three novels are: “Maid in Waiting” (1931), “Flowering Wilderness” (1932), “Over the River” (1933).

In the first trilogy, which was written in the most mature period of his literary activity, Galsworthy describes the commercial world of the Forsytes, and in particular, the main character, Soames Forsyte, “the man of property”. The first part of “The Forsyte Saga” (“The Man of Property”) attains the highest point of social criticism. The central characters of the novel are the Forsytes of the first generation and the members of their families. They are shareholders and rich owners of apartment houses in the best parts of London. Their sole aim in life is accumulation of wealth. Their views on life are based fundamentally on a sense of property.

The most typical representative of the second generation of the Forsytes is James’ son, Soames, whom old Jolyon called the man of property. In his nature, views, habits and aspiration he perfectly incarnated all the features of Forsyitism. He is firmly convinced that property alone is the stable basis of life. His human relations and feelings are also subordinated to the sense of property. Having married Irene, Soames experiences the greatest pleasure and satisfaction at the thought that she is his property.

The main idea that runs through the novel is the conflict of the Forsytes with Art and Beauty. Irene personifies Beauty and the young architect, Bosinney who falls in love with her, impersonates Art. The conflict between Bosinney and Soames arose in connection with the building of a house at Robin Hill.

In the second part of “The Forsyte Saga” (“In Chancery”) the action refers to the end of the 19th century and the beginning of the 20th century.

In the concluding part of “The Forsyte Saga” (“To Let”) the action takes place after the First World War.

The Forsyte novels are highly valued for the truthful portrayal of the social and personal life. The cycle is considered to be the peak of the author’s Critical Realism.

In his later works, “A Modern Comedy” and “The End of the Chapter”, written after the World War I, Galsworthy’s criticism becomes less sharp. The old generation of the Forsytes does not seem so bad to the author as compared to the new one. During his progress through six novels and four interludes Soames becomes almost a positive character, in spite of the author’s critical attitude towards him at the beginning of the Saga.

Galsworthy’s humanitarian concerns also led him to write plays about the social problems of his time. From 1909 he produced in turn plays and novels. His plays deal with burning problems of life. The author describes the hard life of workers (“Strife”), attacks the cruel regime in English prisons (“Justice”), expresses his indignation towards wars (“The Mob”), rejects the colonial policy of Great Britain (“The Forest”), and presents some other aspects of evils and injustice. Galsworthy’s plays were very popular. But it is not his dramatic works, but his novels and “The Forsyte Saga” in particular, that made him one of the greatest figures in world literature.

Wilfrid Owen (1893-1918)

On August 4, 1914, the First World War broke out. The British young men viewed it as the coming test of their manhood in combat. They lined up at the recruiting stations to be among the first to enlist. This universal readiness to court death and danger, spawned by the long peace, is apparent in the letters, poems, and memoirs of the young men of the period. The most popular poet of the prewar era, Rupert Brooke, urged, “Come and die. It’ll be great fun!” Among the middle and

upper classes, the war was generally regarded as a new kind of “game”, which assisted to win honor and glorious name.

But after only six months of fighting, they understood, that the war was a huge killing machine, which did not spare anyone and anything. A radical transformation in the language, tone and subject matter of literature was taking place in the poetry of the young men serving in the front lines. Rejecting high-sounding abstractions like “glory”, “sacrifice”, and “honor” that no longer held any meaning for them, many of the soldier -poets adopted a colloquial, concrete, realistic style, bitter and deeply ironical in tone.

The most important poet produced by the war was Wilfrid Owen.

Dylan Thomas called him “a poet of all times, all places, and all wars.”

Wilfrid Owen went to France in December of 1916 to participate in some of the hardest fighting during the cold winter of 1917. In June of 1917 he was hospitalized and remained in England until September of 1918. The same year he volunteered to return to the front and met there his literary idol, Siegfried Sassoon and developed a supportive friendship with him.

Owen’s poetry is blunt, and ironic. It is also stylistically distinctive in its use of multiple sound effects achieved through assonance, alliteration, and consonance.

A week before the Armistice of 1918 and two weeks after being decorated for gallantry, Wilfrid Owen was killed by machine-gun fire. He had published only four poems during his lifetime and was unknown as a poet, except to a few friends. Through the efforts of his mother and friends, eight of Owen’s poems were published in periodicals in 1919. They were followed by the publication of his collected poems, in 1920, edited by Siegfried Sassoon. They have come to be praised as the work of the finest poet of World War I and of a major writer of this century.

In his poem “Anthem for Doomed Youth”, written in 1917, two stanzas of which you will read below, Wilfrid Owen describes the death of soldiers.

Anthem for Doomed Youth

What passing-bells for these who die as cattle
Only the monstrous anger of the guns.
Only the stuttering rifles' rapid rattle
Can patter out their hasty orisons.
No mockeries now for them; no prayers nor bells,
Nor any voice of mourning save the choirs, -
The shrill, demented choirs of wailing shells;
And bugles calling for them from sad shires.
What candles may be held to speed them all?
Nor in the hands of boys, but in their eyes
Shall shine the holy glimmers of good-byes.
The pallor of girls' brows shall be their pall;
Their flowers the tenderness of patient minds,
And each slow dusk a drawing-down of binds.

UNIT 9. TWENTIETH CENTURY ENGLISH LITERATURE (1915-2000)

1. The Twenties of the Twentieth century.

The 1920s were not a tranquil period for Britain. Massive unemployment was created by the return of hundreds of thousands of veterans to civilian life. English literature changed in both form and subject matter between the end of World War I in 1918 and the beginning of World War II in 1939. The terrible destruction of World War I left many people with the feeling that society was falling apart.

The 20th century English literature is remarkable for a great diversity of artistic values and artistic methods. Following the rapid introduction of new modes of thought in natural science, sociology and psychology, it has naturally reacted to absorb and transform this material into literary communication. Fundamental political, social and economic changes in the world and, particularly, in Great

Britain deeply affected the creative writing of the new century. The works of such writers as H.F.Wells, Bernard Shaw, John Galsworthy, Arnold Bennet, Joseph Conrad, E.M. Forster, Katherine Mansfield showed an earnest desire to express the feelings and thoughts of the British people. It was the basis of their approach to literature. That's why their works became a new investment in the heritage of English realism and stimulated its further development. In the short-story genre the art of Katherine Mansfield is a significant contribution to the traditions of English realism.

2. English Literature in the 1930s and 1940s

A new generation of realist writers, among them Richard Aldington, John Boynton Priestley and Archibald Joseph Cronin appeared on the literary scene between 1930 and World War II.

The world economic depression that began in the late 1920s had catastrophic effects in highly industrialized and heavily populated Britain. In two years exports and imports declined 35 percent, and unemployment reached three million. The Second World War, which began in September, 1939, with Hitler's invasion of Poland, was disastrous for Britain and her allies. During 1939 and 1940 Nazi Germany mastered Europe. Only Britain under the leadership of Winston Churchill remained to oppose Hitler. But Britons heroically withstood the bombardment of their cities. With the entry of the United States into the war, and the failure of the German invasion of the Soviet Union, the tide began to turn. Although Britain and her allies were eventually victorious, the postwar years were extremely hard. The country was nearly bankrupt, and recovery was slow. Of the new poets writing during this period, the most important and influential was W.H.Auden. During the 1930s, which he characterized as a "low, dishonest decade," Auden was the acknowledged leader of a circle of writers who aligned themselves with the political left and attempted to expose the social and economic ills of their country. Although they considered themselves the creators of a new poetic tradition, the influence of Hopkins, Yeats, and Eliot on these young writers is great. Especially,

it may be observed in their use of precise and suggestive images, ironic understatement, and plain speech.

William Butler Yeats (1865-1939)

William Butler Yeats is considered by many critics to be the greatest poet writing in English in the XX century. He provides a bridge from the Victorian Age into the twentieth century. His early Romantic work, produced before the century turned, gradually became more realistic.

W. B. Yeats, an Irish poet and dramatist, was born in Sandymount, Ireland. His father was a painter. Yeats attended school in Dublin. Beginning as an art student, he soon gave up art for literature. At twenty-one, he published his first work "Mosada", a drama written in verse. During the 1890s and 1900s he published many volumes of poems, which were symbolic in manner, drawing his imagery from Irish myth and folklore. The most important collections of that period were: "The Wandering of Oisín" (1891), "The Wind Among the Reeds" (1899), "The Rose" (1903), "Green Helmet and Other Poems" (1912).

For centuries Ireland had been an English colony, its economy exploited and its native culture suppressed. Yeats's early poems and his book on Irish folk tales, "The Celtic Twilight" (1893), were in part political acts.

W.B. Yeats contributed a great deal to the Irish national theatre. Writing for the stage impressed Yeats with the importance of precise, spare language. His best known plays are "The Countess Cathleen" (1892), "Deirdre" (1907). The latter derived from Celtic mythology.

During the 1920s Yeats became more prominent in both policy and literature. He became a senator in the Irish Free state in 1922 and in 1923 received the Nobel Prize for Literature. In 1925 Yeats published his major philosophical and historical prose work "A Vision".

While many poets produce their finest work during their early years, Yeats was one of those rare poets who created their greatest poems after the age of fifty. He began his poetic career as a Romantic and finished it as a poet of the modern world. His early work was strongly influenced by Blake and Shelley, by the French

Symbolists, and Irish mythology. These early poems were often simple, romantic, musical, and dreamlike. In the middle of his career, his poetry became less dreamlike and more realistic. His tone became more conversational and his imagery more economical. In the last stages of his poetic career, his interest in historical cycles became dominant. Thus, the evolution of Yeats's art never ceased. The poems written when he was an old man ("The Tower", 1928, "The Winding Stair", 1920) are the most audacious.

Below, you will read one of William Butler Yeats' poems. It is believed that Yeats wrote this poem for Major Robert Gregory, the son of his friend Lady Augusta Gregory. Major Gregory, an artist and aviator, was killed in action over Italy during World War I while flying for England's Royal Flying Corps.

An Irishman Foresees His Death

I know that I shall meet my fate
Somewhere among the clouds above;
Those that I fight I do not hate,
Those that I guard I do not love;¹
My country is Kiltarten² Cross,
My countrymen Kiltarten's poor,
No likely end could bring them loss
Or leave them happier than before.
Nor law, nor duty bade me fight,
Nor public men, nor cheering crowds,
A lonely impulse of delight
Drove to this tumult in the clouds;
I balanced all, brought all to my mind,

¹ . Those that I guard I do not love: In the World War I Ireland was technically neutral and was going on struggle for independence from England. But many Irish volunteered to fight on the English side.

² . Kiltarten: a village near the estate of the Gregory family.

The years to come seemed waste of breath,
A waste of breath the years behind
In balance with this life, this death.
“Modernist” Poetry and Prose

The achievement of modern British literature lies in the development of the short story, new movements in poetry, exciting experiments in fiction, and drama worthy of the nation that bred Shakespeare.

Modern literature is characterized by great differences from the past in both form and content. New rhythms, especially in free verse, were invented.

The development of psychology brought psychological realism into literature: writers attempted to show not only what their characters thought but how they thought. The stream-of-consciousness technique, and various modifications of it, created a new attitude toward writing and reading.

The subject matter of literature changed too. With the shocks of the wars, technological advances, and greater social freedom, writers realized that they could and should write about anything. No subject was too dignified or indignified, too familiar or remote, to appear in a modern poem or novel.

The revolution in poetry had its counterpart in fiction. The novelists of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries had written within a defined social context to an audience that shared similar values and beliefs. Modernist writers perceived human beings as living in private worlds and therefore took as their task the illumination of individual experience. Novelists like James Joyce and Virginia Woolf attempted to reproduce the authentic character of human subjectivity, the so-called stream of consciousness

Following World War I, writers such as T.S. Eliot, W.H. Auden, Dylan Thomas and their followers brought about a revolution in poetic taste and practice. Like the painters influenced by cubism and abstract expressionism or composers influenced by the atonal works of Stravinsky, Schoenberg, and Bartok, “modernist” poets developed new techniques to express their vision of the postwar world.

While some of them are difficult, modern poetry as a whole employs the language of common speech to provide rich insights into the people and events of modern life.

Intellectual complexity, allusiveness and intricacy of form are characteristics of modern poetry. When you read these works you come across lines from foreign languages or allusions you don't recognize. For example, some of Eliot's poems, such as "The Hollow Men" have epigraphs that need to be interpreted and applied to the poem. W.H. Auden, in his elegy "In Memory of W.B. Yeats", presumes knowledge of the life of Yeats and political events of the 1930s. In such cases the footnotes help you by providing such information.

Modern poets usually use language that is fresh, exact, and innovative. In "Fern Hill", for example, Dylan Thomas, rejects cliché, and writes "once below a time" instead of "once upon a time" and "All the moon long" instead of "All the night long".

Modern poetry is musical, sensual, and surprising. It also highly varied in subject matter. Modern poets have exercised the freedom to write about any subject they please. To compensate for the limitations of syllabic rhyme, they have resorted to frequent use of consonantal, assonantal, and half-rhymes. Modern poets have sought above all to create poetry that will be appreciated for its form and music as well as meaning.

Poet, critic, and dramatist, T.S. Eliot, was the leading spokesman for the modernist poetry that emerged in the 1920s. This poetry is characterized by intellectual complexity, allusiveness, precise use of images, and pessimism.

James Joyce (1882-1941)

James Joyce is regarded as the most original and influential writer of the twentieth century. Irishman by birth, he exercised a considerable influence upon modern English and American literature.

He was born in Dublin, the eldest of a family of ten children. His father was a civil servant, continually in financial difficulties. For several years Joyce attended Clongowes Wood College, before his family's increasing poverty made this

impossible. He later attended University College, Dublin, where he was a brilliant scholar, accomplished in Latin, French, Italian and Norwegian.

While he was still an undergraduate he began writing lyrical poems, which were collected in "Chamber Music" (1907). Upon graduation from the University in 1902, Joyce lived for a time in Paris where he contributed book reviews to Dublin newspapers. After a brief return to Dublin for his mother's burial, he moved to the continent with Nora Barnacle to spend the rest of his life in Paris, Trieste, Rome and Zurich.

In 1909 and 1912, Joyce made his last two trips to Ireland to arrange the publication of a collection of fifteen stories "Dubliners", the dominant mood of which is realistic. This work was published only in 1914. Joyce said that his purpose in writing the short stories collected in "Dubliners" was to produce "a chapter of the moral history of my country and I chose Dublin for the scene because the city seemed to me the center of paralysis". He wanted to give "the Irish people ... one good look at themselves in my nicely polished looking glass". The style of "Dubliners" marks a sharp break with the fiction of the nineteenth century. Joyce located the center of the action in the minds of his characters. Incident and plot are subordinated to psychological revelation. Each word and detail has a calculated purpose, and the meaning of the story is presented as an epiphany - a moment of heightened awareness that can occur as a result of a trivial encounter, object, or event. For example, in "Araby", one of "Dubliners" short stories, epiphany occurs in the final paragraph and runs as following "Gazing up into the darkness I saw myself as a creature driven and derided by vanity; and my eyes burned with anguish and anger."

In 1916 his partly autobiographical novel "A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man" and in 1922 his most famous novel "Ulysses" were published.

"Ulysses" is a dazzling original attempt to tell the story of group of Dubliners on a single day and at the same time present a symbolic view of human history. Seven hundred pages of the novel relate of one day in the life of two Dubliners who are not acquainted. Leopold Bloom, an advertising agent, and

Stephen Dedalus, a poet and teacher, ramble in the streets of Dublin; the paths of these two men cross and re-cross through the day and finally they meet only for a leave-taking. The book is built on parallel from Homer's *Odyssey*, i.e. each chapter revives an incident from Homer's epic and each character has a Homeric prototype.

In "Ulysses", rendering the workings of his character's minds, Joyce introduced the so-called stream-of-consciousness technique recording the flow of their thoughts and sensations with all the complex associations attached to them. The remaining seventeen years of his life Joyce worked on his next novel "Finnegans Wake" (1939). This book carried the stylistic experimentation of "Ulysses" further.

Virginia Woolf (1882-1941)

Virginia Woolf was born in a large and talented family. Her father, Sir Leslie Stephen, was a distinguished literary critic and historian. She was educated at home by her father. After his death she moved to London with her brother and sister. Their homes in the Bloomsbury district, near the British Museum, became the meeting places of the so-called "Bloomsbury Group", a famous group of intellectuals. One of the members of the group was the writer Leonard Woolf, whom she married in 1912. In 1917 they founded the Hogarth Press, which published her books as well as those of a number of other important modern writers, like T.S.Eliot and E.M.Forster.

Virginia Woolf began her writing career as a literary critic. She used her reviews and essays to promote her opinions about what fiction should be. She thought that writers could get close to real life only by basing their work on their own feelings. In 1915 she began to put her theories into practice in her first novel "The Voyage Out". This novel reveals signs of its author's search and experience to find new forms of expression. During the 1920s her work became increasingly experimental. Her stories and sketches "Monday or Tuesday (1921) show her developing an impressionistic style and bringing some of the techniques of lyrical poetry into prose. In novels like "Mrs. Dalloway" (1925), "To the Lighthouse" (1927), and "The Waves" (1931), she rebels against the social fiction of the

prewar period with its emphasis on detailed descriptions of character and setting. Instead she attempted to express the timeless inner consciousness of her characters. Influenced by James Joyce's "Ulysses" she used the techniques of "stream of consciousness" and "interior monologue" moving from one character to another to variety of mental responses to the same event.

Thus, Woolf's work was a deliberate attempt to break conventions of fiction. She saw life not in neatly arranged series of major events, but in a process we live every day. That's why her fiction avoids plot and instead deals with the consciousness of characters and reveals the essence of their lives.

The outbreak of World War II was a shattering event for Woolf. Nevertheless, she managed to complete a brief, enigmatic final novel "Between the Acts" (1941). The book is about the eternal England, the beautiful threatened civilization which she had always loved. On March 28, 1941 Virginia Woolf, acutely depressed by the constant German bombing of England, committed suicide (drowned herself).

Katherine Mansfield (1888 - 1923)

Katherine Mansfield, the daughter of a wealthy banker, was born in New Zealand and educated in London at Queen's College. A talented cellist, she studied music at the Royal Academy of Music, but later realized that her true calling was writing, not music. In 1911, through a chance meeting in Germany, she became friends with the well known literary critic and editor John Middleton Murry. They were married in 1918. By the end of the war, she had become an invalid, moving from climate to climate for relief from incurable tuberculosis. She died in France on January 9, 1923, at the age of thirty four.

She began to write at an early age. Her contribution to English Literature mainly makes the form of short stories. Katherine Mansfield's first stories and sketches were published in the periodical "The New Age", to which she became a regular contributor. Her first story "Prelude" written in 1918 made her famous. Her second book, the collection of stories "Bliss and Other Stories" was published in 1921. Her third collection "The Garden Party and Other Stories" appeared a year

later. Katherine Mansfield's style was often compared to that of Chekhov. Like him she wrote stories, which depended more on atmosphere, character, and nuances of language than on plot. The stories of Catherine Mansfield are not tales of action, nor have they complicated plots. She describes human conduct in quite ordinary situations. Yet, they are expressive of a vast range. Many of her stories center on children and on old people in isolated circumstances and are deeply affecting in their sympathetic portrayal of the lonely, the rejected, and the victimized.

For example, in her short story "The Doll's House" the author shows how the snobbery of the adults has intruded into the world of children and has made them selfish and cruel. The Kelvey girls are isolated from the other schoolgirls, because they are poor and their father is in prison. The girls of the story (Emmie Cole, Isabel Burnell, Lena Logan, Jessie May) exhibit a high degree of class consciousness and snobbery. The isolation of the Kelveys is described in the following way: "Many of the children, including the Burnells, were not allowed even to speak to them. They walked past the Kelveys with their heads in the air, and as they set the fashion in all matters of behavior, the Kelveys were shunned by everybody. Even the teacher had a special voice for them, and a special smile for the other children when Lil Kelvey came up to her with a bunch of dreadfully common-looking flowers." From all the girls only the Kelveys were not allowed to see the marvelous doll's house, which was presented to the Burnell children. "Only the little Kelveys moved away forgotten; there was nothing more for them to hear." The story is very short but it provokes a deep feeling of sympathy in the hearts of progressive minded readers. The social cruelty to which the Kelveys are subjected by the children and adults around is represented skillfully.

Katherine Mansfield regarded Chekhov as her literary teacher. In collaboration with Kotelansky she translated Chekhov's diaries and letters into English. Once she called herself "the English Chekhov". But differing from Chekhov, Katherine Mansfield declares that life must be taken as it is. She does not see any necessity to change it.

Her writing is objective, but the reader can easily feel her sympathies and antipathies. She is very sensitive to class distinctions, and her sympathy is always on the side of the poor. Any kind of selfishness and pretence on the part of the rich people is treated with ironic objectivity. Her short story "A Cup of Tea" is an example of it.

"A Cup of Tea"

The principal character of the story is Rosemary Fell. The author characterizes her in the following way:

"Rosemary Fell was not exactly beautiful. No, you couldn't have called her beautiful. Pretty? Well, if you took her to pieces... But why be so cruel as to take anyone to pieces? She was young, brilliant, extremely modern, exquisitely well dressed, amazingly well read in the newest of the new books, and her parties were the most delicious mixture of the really important people..."

Rosemary had been married two years. She had a duck of a boy. No, not Peter-Michael. And her husband absolutely adored her. They were rich, really rich, not just comfortably well off..."

Thus, Rosemary is so rich, that can buy anything, and can go anywhere she wants. Once, returning home after shopping, she meets a girl. In contrast to Rosemary, the girl is absolutely poor and helpless. She has nothing even to eat:

"... a young girl, thin, dark, shadowy - where had she come from? - was standing at Rosemary's elbow and a voice like a sigh, almost like a sob, breathed: "Madam, may I speak to you a moment?"

"Speak to me?" Rosemary turned. She saw a little battered creature with enormous eyes, someone quite young, no older than herself, who clutched at her coat-collar with reddened hands, and shivered as though she had just come out of the water.

"M-madam," stammered the voice. "Would you let me have the price of a cup of tea?"

“A cup of tea?” There was something simple, sincere in that voice; it wasn’t in the least the voice of a beggar. “Then have you no money at all?” asked Rosemary.

“None, madam,” came the answer.

“How extraordinary!” Rosemary peered through the dusk and the girl gazed back at her. How more than extraordinary! And suddenly it seemed to Rosemary such an adventure. It was like something out of a novel by Dosto-yevsky, this meeting in the dusk. Supposing she took the girl home? Supposing she did do one of what would happen? It would be thrilling. And she heard herself saying afterwards to the amazement of her friends: “I simply took her home with me,” as she stepped forward and said to that dim person beside her: “Come home to tea with me.”

Rosemary brings the poor girl home to let her have a cup of tea there. But after a remark made by her husband that the girl is pretty, Rosemary’s helpfulness disappears. Her sympathy to the poor girl is showy, superficial, not real. She wants to help the poor thing only because she wants to boast of her generous gestures.

William Somerset Maugham (1874 - 1965)

William Somerset Maugham is one of the best known English writers of the present day. He was not only a novelist of considerable rank, but also one of the most successful dramatists and short story writers. His first novel “Liza of Lambeth” came out in 1897, and he went on producing books at the rate of at least one a year. But he used to say “I have always had more stories in my head than I ever had time to write”.

Somerset Maugham was a keen observer of life and individuals. He has written twenty four plays, nineteen novels and a large number of short stories, in addition to travel works and an autobiography. The most mature period of Maugham’s literary career began in 1915, when he published one of his most popular novels, “Of Human Bondage”. The author himself described this work as an “autobiographical novel”.

The next well known novel written by S. Maugham is “The Moon and Sixpence” (1919). In this novel the writer makes use of some out-standing incidents in the life of the artist Paul Gauguin, (though it cannot be regarded as his biography). The hero of the novel, Charles Strickland, is a prosperous stock-broker. All those who came in touch with the Stricklands were taken by surprise and puzzled when they learned that Charles Strickland, at the age of forty, had given up his wife and children and gone to Paris to study art. Strickland’s life in Paris was “a bitter struggle against every sort of difficulty”, but the hardships which would have seemed horrible to most people did not affect him. He was indifferent to comfort. Canvas and paint were the only things he needed. Strickland did not care for fame. Nor did he care for wealth. He never sold his pictures. He lived in a dream, and reality meant nothing to him. His only aim in life was to create beauty. The reader dislikes Strickland as a human being: he is selfish, cruel, pitiless and cynical. He loves no one. He ruined the life of Dirk Stroeve and his wife who had nursed him when he was dangerously ill. He did not care for his wife and children, and brought misfortune to all the people who came in touch with him. But on the other hand, the reader appreciates him as a talented artist, creator of beauty. His passionate devotion to his art arouses admiration.

Other most prominent works by Somerset Maugham are the novels: “Cakes and Ale” (1930), “ Theatre” (1937) and the “Razor’s Edge” (1944). His most popular stories are “Rain”, “The Unconquered”, “Gigolo and Gigolette”, “The Man with Scar”, “The Luncheon”. Maugham’s short stories are usually very sincere, interesting, well constructed and logically developed.

Thomas Stearns Eliot (1888-1965)

A great many of modern English writers and critics recognize in T.S. Eliot the most influential of the English poets of the 20th century. He was born in St. Louis, Missouri, USA, where his grandfather had founded Washington University. Eliot received his first university training at Harvard; later he studied philosophy at the Sorbonne in Paris, and Oxford. Settled in London in 1914. First drafts of some of his best early poems, like “The Love song of J. Alfred Prufrock”, were written

while Eliot was still at Harvard, but the style and tone were so new that he did not manage to get anything published till 1915. His first volume of poems, “Prufrock and Other Observations” was published in 1917, but it didn’t attract wide attention. At that time Eliot was working in a bank and also reviewing for “the Times Literary Supplement” and for some little magazines. His first volume of criticism, “The Sacred Wood” (1920), became suddenly influential and his poem, “The Waste Land” (1922), made him famous, though it infuriated conservative critics.

Many of Eliot’s views on literature appeared in “The Criterion”, a literary magazine he edited from 1922 to 1939. The main subject of his earlier poetry is that of a civilization doomed to an inglorious end. From the French symbolists he had borrowed the idea that the only reality in life was the inner reality that the world of the poet was superior to the world of common experience that poetry should not work by direct statement of description, but by indirect image and suggestion.

Eliot served as a director of a London publishing house from 1925 until his death. His most important creations of that time were “The Hollow Men” (1925), “Ash Wednesday” and “Four Quartets” (1930). “The Hollow Men” is a devastating portrayal of human beings devoid of spiritual substance. This poem consists of five sections, the first of which is given below:

I
We are the hollow men
We are the stuffed men
Leaning together
Headpiece filled with straw. Alas!
Our dried voices, when
We whisper together
Are quiet and meaningless
As wind in dry grass

Or rats' feet over broken grass
In our dry cellar
Shape without form, shade without color,
Paralyzed force, gesture without motion;
Those who have crossed
With direct eyes, to death's other Kingdom
Remember us - if at all - not as lost
Violent souls, but only
As the hollow men
The stuffed men.

In this work Eliot portrays people of the post-World-War I as hollow men. He depicts hollow men as walking corpses: their mind is detached from reality, they are cut off from one another. Their voices are whispers, "quite and meaningless". They are detached from nature, and live in a place which is devoid of any spiritual presence, a "dead land", a "cactus land", "a valley of dying stars", hollow like the men themselves. Eliot's last major poem "Four Quartets" is deeply religious.

Eliot's poetry makes a great demand on the reader's erudition, on his capacity to understand the complex literary, philosophical and mythological allusions that characterize Eliot's verse. His great achievement was to create rhythms and images corresponding to the tensions and stresses of modern life. He is the person most directly responsible for changing the course of literary style and taste in English literature.

T.S. Eliot also wrote several verse dramas. His dramatic poem "Murder in the Cathedral"(1935) and four tragicomedies, "The Family Reunion" (1939), "The Cocktail Party" (1950), "The Confidential Clerk" and "The Elder Statesman", held a much wider audience than his non-dramatic works.

Eliot was awarded the Nobel Prize.

Wystan Hugh Auden (1907- 1973)

Literary critics consider, that after W.B. Yeats and T.S. Eliot, W.H. Auden is the most influential English poet in the modern period. Auden spent the first thirty-two years of his life in England and most of the remainder part in the United States. Like T.S.Eliot, W.H.Auden is often regarded as both an English and an American writer.

W.H. Auden was born in York in the family of a distinguished physician. He was educated at Oxford where he read English specializing in Anglo-Saxon literature. After graduating from Oxford in 1928, Auden spent a year in Berlin where he was strongly influenced by contemporary German literature.

His public reputation as a poet began with the publication of “Poems” in 1930. Auden earned his living by teaching at schools in England and Scotland. In 1937 he went to Spain, where he drove an ambulance for the Republicans.

In 1939 Auden moved to the United States and gave frequent lectures at American universities. In 1946, seven years after his arrival, he became an American citizen. At that period, he published his volumes of poems “For the Time Being” (1945) and “The Age of Anxiety (1948). The postwar period has come to be known as “The Age of Anxiety”, from the title of his volume. Beginning with 1948, he divided his time between New York and Europe. In 1972 he was elected Professor of Poetry at Oxford. In 1972 he transferred his winter residence from New York to Oxford, where his college had provided him with a small house. He died in Vienna in 1973.

His most important volumes of poems of later period were “The Shield of Achilles” (1959), “Homage to Clio” (1960), “About the House”(1966), and “City Without Walls” (1970). Auden has also written a great deal of literary criticism and opera libretti.

Auden’s poetry is experimental and innovating in an attempt to render the spirit of the age of Anxiety by departing from old poetical conventions. Auden delighted in playing with words, in employing a variety of rhythms, and creating striking literary effects. But he was also insistent that “Art is not enough”; poetry must also fulfill a moral function, principally that of dispelling hate and promoting

love. The paradoxes in his works make the readers think and be analytical. In his sonnet “Who’s Who” Auden gives the opposition of a great man and ordinary one and approaches certain modern values ironically.

Who’s Who

A shilling life will give you all the facts:
How Father beat him, how he ran away,
What were the struggles of his youth, what acts
Made him the greatest figure of his day:
Of how he fought, fished, hunted, worked all night,
Though giddy, climbed new mountains; named a sea;
Some of the last researchers even write
Love made him weep his pints like you and me.
With all his honors on, he sighed for one
Who, say astonished critics, lived at home;
Did little jobs about the house with skill
And nothing else; could whistle; would sit still
Or potter round the garden; answered some
Of his long marvelous letters but kept none.

Dylan Thomas (1914-1953)

Dylan Thomas, a Welsh poet, is the author of some of the most stirring, passionate and eloquent verse in modern literature. He was born in Swansea, Wales. His father was a schoolteacher and poet whose readings of Shakespeare, the Bible, and other poets stimulated Thomas’s early fascination with words.

Thomas left school at 16 and spent fifteen months as a newspaper reporter, but poetry writing was more to his taste. He published his first volume of poetry at the age of nineteen and continued to publish books of verse during the 1930s. He published “Eighteen Poems” in 1934 and “Twenty-Five Poems” in 1936. The literary critics consider the poems of these two collections frustratingly difficult.

Dylan Thomas himself wrote to a friend: "I like things that are difficult to write and difficult to understand. ... I like contradicting my images, saying two things at once in one word, four in two and one in six". His most famous collection of poems 'Deaths and Entrances' (1946), reveals a movement away from obscurity to a simpler, more direct, yet ceremonial style.

A collection of stories about his childhood and youth "Portrait of the Artist as a Young Dog" appeared in 1940. During World War II Thomas worked for BBC as a documentary film editor and also as a radio broadcaster.

Another book of boyhood reminiscences "Quite Early One Morning" (1954), and a verse play, "Under Milk Wood" (1954), were published after his death

Dylan Thomas's poems written in earlier period and later period greatly differ in their approach to life and mortality. Young Dylan Thomas was obsessed with mortality, an awareness that "the force" that gives life to plants and people is also the "destroyer", the later Thomas came to the realization that "...death shall have no dominion" in a cosmos in which all living things exist in a perpetual cycle of change and rebirth. Here is one of his poems written at later period:

Do Not Go Gentle into That Good Night
Do Not Go Gentle into That Good Night
Old age should burn and rave at close of day;
Rage, rage against the dying of the light.
Though wise men at their end know dark is right,
Because their words had forked no lightning they
Do not go gentle into that good night.
Good men, the last wave by, crying how bright
Their frail deeds might have danced in a green bay,
Rage, rage against the dying of the light.
Wild men who caught and sang the sun in flight,
And learn, too late, they grieved it on its way,
Do not go gentle into that good night.

Grave men, near death, who see with blinding sight
Blind eyes could blaze like meteors and be gay,
Rage, rage against the dying of the light.
And you, my father, there on the sad height,
Curse, bless, me now with your fierce tears, I pray.
Do not go gentle into that good night.
Rage, rage against the dying of the light.

Richard Aldington (1892 - 1962)

Richard Aldington was born in Hampshire and educated at Dover College and the university of London, which he left without taking any degree. Richard Aldington began his literary work in the years preceding the First World War. His first poems appeared in the years 1909-1912 and a book of verse "Images Old and New" was published in 1915. By 1916 Aldington was in the army in France, from where he returned with a bad case of shell-shock. For several years, until he recovered his health, he earned a living by translations and literary journalism. In his early poetry Aldington often opposes mythological images of Ancient Greece to unlovely pictures of life in industrial cities. The harmony and beauty of Greek art he sees as an ideal lacking in contemporary reality. The war became a major experience for the young poet. In 1919 he published a new book of poetry "Images of War". War is shown here as a crime against life and beauty.

In later years Aldington devoted himself more to press and produced several successful novels: "Death of a Hero" (1929), "The Colonel's Daughter" (1931), "All Men are Enemies" (1933), "Very Heaven" (1937) and some other books.

"Death of a Hero" (1929) dedicated to the so-called "lost generation" is his first and most important novel. ("Lost generation" is an expression widely used about the generation that had taken part in World War I or suffered from its effect.) Aldington's "Death of a Hero" is regarded as one of the most powerful antiwar novels of the period. The writer shows his deep concern for the post-war "lost generation" in his collections of stories "Roads to Glory"(1930), and "Soft

Answers” (1932) as well. He is also the author of several biographies. Among his last works, the best novel is “Lawrence of Arabia” (1955). Basically his art is strongly linked with the traditions of the nineteenth century critical realism.

Agatha Christie (1891-1976)

Agatha Christie, a prominent detective writer, was born at Torquay, Devonshire. She was educated at home and took singing lessons in Paris. Her creative work began at the end of World War I. Her first novel, “The Mysterious Affair at Styles” appeared in 1920. Here she created Hercule Poirot, the little Belgian detective, the most popular sleuth in fiction since Sherlock Holmes. General recognition came with the publication of her sixth work “The Murder of Roger Ackroyd” (1926).

With “Murder at the Vicarage” (1930) Agatha Christie began a series of novels featuring Miss Marple, a lady detective who won a universal appeal for her wise but unusual methods of unraveling a crime.

Beginning with 1952 Agatha Christie enjoyed another run of success with theatre adaptations of her fiction and plays. Many of her stories have been filmed including “The Secret Adversary”, “The Murder of Roger Ackroyd” (cinema title “Alibi”), “Ten Little Niggers”, “Murder on the Orient Express” and “Witness for the Prosecution”.

Agatha Christie also wrote six romantic novels under the penname Mary Westmacott. Her last Poirot book “Curtain” appeared shortly before her death (though it was written in the 1940th) and her last Miss Marple story “Sleeping Murder” and her “Autobiography” were published posthumously.

She is the author of seventy-seven detective novels and books of stories that have been translated into every major language. Agatha Christie’s success with millions of readers cannot be accounted only for the good entertainment; the explanation lies in her ability to combine clever plots with excellent character drawing, and a keen sense of humour with great power of observation. Besides her books proclaim that justice will win and evil will be conquered. Her works defend

rationality and never go beyond those aspects of human nature that are our common stock.

John Boynton Priestley (1894-1984)

John Boynton Priestley was born in Bradford, Yorkshire in the family of a schoolmaster. He was educated in his native town, and after army service in the First World War he returned to study at Trinity Hall, Cambridge. In 1922 he began to work in London as a reviewer, essayist and literary journalist. During the Second World War he won his countrymen's affection as a patriotic broad-caster of the BBC.

Priestley's career as a novelist began in 1927 with the publication of "Benighted". In 1929 he published "The Good Companions" which was awarded the James Tait Black Prize and was a popular success as well. His novels written over a period of almost fifty years include "Angel Pavement" (1930), "The Wonder Hero" (1933), "They Walk in the City" (1936), "Let the People Sing" (1939), "Black-Out in Gretley" (1942), "Daylight on Saturday" (1943), "Bright Day" (1946), "Festival of Fairbridge" (1951), "The Magicians" (1954), "Sir Michael and Sir George" (1964), "The Lost Empires" (1965), "Salt is Living" (1966), "It's an Old Country" (1967), "The Image Men" (1968-69). These books are extremely varied in kind and quality but they are all united by their author's concern for humanity, for the happiness of men and women. His books present a wide view of mid-20th century life in England.

In 1930s Priestley began a new career as a playwright with a dramatization of "The Good Companions" (1931) which was followed by a series of plays valuable as contributions to the social history of England. Among these plays "Dangerous Corner"(1932), "Time and Conways" (1937), "An Inspector Calls (1946)" show Priestley's detestation of the inhumanity in the existing social system and sympathy for common English people.

J.B.Priestley's list of published works also include literary history(e.g. "Figures in Modern Literature" "The English Comic Characters", "George Meredith", "Literature and Western Man"), social criticism (e.g." Man and Time",

“Victoria in Heyday”, “The English”) and philosophical essays (e.g. “Apes and Angels”, “Delight”, “The Moments - and Other Pieces”).

Archibald Joseph Cronin (1896 - 1981)

Archibald Joseph Cronin is considered a very prominent representative of critical realism. He was born at Cardross, Dumbartonshire, Scotland, educated at Dumbarton Academy and in 1914 began to study medicine at Glasgow University. But his studies were interrupted by World War I, when he served in the Navy as a surgeon sub-lieutenant. In 1919 he graduated from the Glasgow University. After graduation from the University he started practice first in Scotland and later in South Wales and the West End of London. While working in South Wales, Cronin studied hard to receive higher medical degree. He was awarded his M.D. by the Glasgow University.

In 1930 Cronin’s health broke down. Being unable to practice medicine any longer, he decided to try his hand at literature. “Hatter’s Castle”, written in 1931 was his first novel and unassuming honesty of his work won him fame and recognition. At the age of thirty he had won a gold medal in a nation-wide competition for the best historical essay of the year.

“Hatter’s Castle” is an extremely gloomy novel. The plot centres round the life of the Brodie family. The head of the family, Mr. Brodie, is a rich farmer, a proud, selfish, wicked man. His cruelty and vanity ruin the life of his wife and children. The end of the book is tragic. The novel is talented and exciting, but the events and characters are shown in the naturalistic manner, that is they lack the critical interpretation of the events. The author does not go deep into the social causes which give rise to such vicious characters as Mr. Brodie.

The next novel “The Stars Look Down” (1935) marks the beginning of Cronin’s most mature period. The book deals with the burning problems of life: labour and capital, politics, economics, strikes in coalmines, education, marriage and so on. The action takes place in the North of England during World War I. The central conflict of the novel is the fight of the miners against the pit-owners. Cronin does not support the revolutionary struggle of the workers (in his opinion it

is inevitably doomed to failure), but his sympathy with the working people is quite evident. The charm of “The Stars Look Down” lies in a realistic portrayal of the characters and a truthful description of the hard life of the miners. The novel is justly considered one of the best works of Critical Realism.

In “The Citadel” (1937), as in many novels of the later period, Cronin deals with the life and work of an intellectual (usually a medical man). He shows that the profession of a doctor is honourable and important, but it is often regarded only as a means of taking money. Thus a physician faces an alternative, either to prosper at the expense of others or to do his best to help poor suffering humanity and so to be doomed to poverty. Andrew Manson, the main character of “The Citadel”, has to face this alternative. “The Citadel” is a social novel. It is considered to be Cronin’s masterpiece. The book describes different aspects of life in the first half of the 20th century, which the author knew well from his own experience.

3. Modern Literature (after World War II)

The fear of a German invasion and the aerial bombardments of heavily industrialized areas united the country and forged a spirit of comradeship among the British people. England’s most notable postwar achievement was the peaceful liquidation of its once vast empire. This imperial loss and domestic economic problems caused British statesmen to develop a new approach in world affairs. Seeking closer ties with Europe, England accepted an invitation to join the common Market.

Some of the poetry of the period, particularly, the work of Dylan Thomas, was marked by an extravagant, romantic rhetoric. The works of Ted Hughes were simpler in style, but his poetry powerfully evokes the world of nature, using a richly textured pattern of metaphor and mythic suggestiveness for its effects.

English drama experienced a renaissance in the 1950s and 1960s. It was stimulated by the presence of large numbers of first-rate actors and directors and the works of playwrights like John Osborne, John Arden, Harold Pinter, Tom Stoppard, and Edward Bond.

In the 20th century in English Literature appeared such young writers like Graham Greene, Charles Percy Snow, Norman Lewis, and James Aldridge, who created their works in the spirit of optimism. They are mature writers with anti-imperialist and anti-colonial point of view. In the fifties there appears a very interesting trend in literature the followers of which were called “The Angry Young Men”. The post-war changes had given a chance to a large number of young people from the more democratic layers of the society to receive higher education at universities. But on graduating, these students found they had no prospects in life. Unemployment had increased after the war. No one was interested to learn what their ideas on life and society were. They felt deceived and became angry. Works dealing with such characters, angry young men, who were angry with everything and everybody. Outstanding writers of this trend were John Wain, Kingsley Amis, John Brin, Colin Wilson and the dramatist John Osborne. It is important to note that they did not belong to a clearly defined movement. They criticized one another in press. But they had one thing in common - an attitude of unconformity to the established social order. Through their characters these writers were eager to express their anger with society.

Modern literature that began in the sixties saw a new type of criticism in the cultural life of Britain. This criticism was revealed in the “working-class novel”, as it was called. These novels deal with characters coming from the working class. The best-known writers of this trend are Sid Chaplin (1916-1986), the author of “The Last Day of the Sardine” (1961), and Allan Sillitoe, the author of the well-known novel “Key to the Door” (1963).

A great deal of contemporary English fiction and drama is dedicated to the subject of man’s search for identity, and the stress is not so much on political or social issues as on moral problems. The problem of identity is closely linked with one of the most influential philosophical trends of the 20th century - existentialism. According to it man must live and make his choice, must come to terms with his own existence and the true meaning of everything around him. The influence of existentialist ideas left a profound impression on the work of Iris Murdoch.

Writers of earlier times shared with their readers a common value system and sense of what was significant in human life. This helped to determine their choice of subjects and themes as well as their methods of expression. In contrast, the modern age has witnessed the disintegration of a public background of belief, and it is their own personal visions of life and reality that modern writers express.

This personalized view of reality has resulted in significant changes in the subject matter and style of modern poetry and fiction. It has led to the creation of works concerned foremost with the exploration of the moods, thoughts, and feelings of individuals - their inner life. One important consequence of it has been a departure from formally plotted narratives to stories that are virtually plotless. For example, stories such as Joyce's "Araby" and "Eveline" and Woolf's "The New Dress" contain little action, but build up epiphanies, or moments of intense personal revelation.

4. English Literature Today.

During the 1970s and early 1980s, such writers as Greene, Lessing and Le Carre continued to produce important novels. New writers also appeared.

Writers of earlier times shared with their readers a common value system and sense of what was significant in human life. This helped them to determine their choice of subjects, themes and methods of expression. In contrast, the modern age has witnessed the disintegration of public background of belief, and it is their own personal visions of life and reality that modern writers express. This personalized view of reality has resulted in significant changes in the subject matter and style of modern poetry and fiction. It has led to the creation of works concerned foremost with the exploration of the moods, thoughts, and feelings of individuals - their inner life.

Modern writers are creating their works in different genres and various themes. John Fowles combined adventure and mystery in such novels as "The French Lieutenant's Woman" (1969), Margaret Drabble described the complex lives of educated middle-class people in London in "The Garrick Years"(1964),

“The Middle Ground”(1980) and other novels. Iris Murdoch’s novels are psychological studies of upper middle-class intellectuals.

The three leading English poets today are Ted Hughes, Philip Larkin, and Donald Davie. Ted Hughs produced a major work in his cycle of “Crow” poems (1970-1971). Philip Larkin’s verse has been published in his collection “High Windows” (1974). Many of Davie’s poems were collected in “In the Stopping Train” (1977).

Drama is also flourishing in today’s English literature. At the end of the XX century Harold Pinter continued to write disturbing plays. His plays “No Man’s Land”(1975), and “Betrayal” (1978) are highly individual. English playwright Tom Stoppard won praise for the verbal brilliance, intricate plots, and philosophical themes of his plays. His “Jumpers”(1972) and “Travesties” (1974) are among the most original works in Modern English drama. David Hare in his “Plenty”(1978) wrote about the decline in postwar English society. The dramatist Simon Gray created vivid portraits of troubled intellectuals in “Butley” (1971) and “Otherwise Engaged” (1975). Peter Shaffer wrote a complex drama about composer Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart, entitled “Amadeus” (1979). Caryl Churchill wrote mixing past and present in her comedy “Cloud Nine” (1981) and created an imaginative feminist play “Top Girls” (1982).

Thus, English poets, writers and dramatists are continuing to create their masterpieces and are still enriching the world literature with their original works, so the process is going on.

Graham Greene (1904 - 1991)

A great-nephew of Robert Louis Stevenson, Greene was the son of the headmaster of a school in Hertfordshire. Graham attended his fathers school, studied at the Oxford University. In the year of graduation (1925) he published a book of poetry “Babbling April”. During the next two years he married, became a journalist (eventually joined the staff of the London “Times” and converted to Roman Catholicism. After the publication of his first novel “The Man Within”(1929) he left “the Times” and became a free-lance writer and reviewer.

He had a versatile talent being equally good as a novelist, essayist, short-stories writer and a playwright.

Greene is both a prolific writer and an experienced traveler, and over the years his novels have been set in a number of exotic places: “Stamboul Train” (1932) on the Orient Express; “The Power and the Glory” (1940) in Mexico; “The Heart of the Matter” (1948) in Nigeria; “The Quiet American” (1956) in Vietnam; “A Burnt-Out Case” (1961) in Central Africa; “The Comedians” (1966) in Haiti; “The Honorary Consul” (1973) in Argentina.

Two important influences on Greene’s writing have been his Catholicism and the cinema. As a Catholic, Greene reflects on his religious convictions and probes the nature of good and evil in both the personal and doctrinal level. Greene has done excellent work both as a film critic and as a screenwriter.

Greene is known as the author of two genres: psychological detective novels or “entertainments”, and “serious novels”, as he called them. Both novels and entertainments are marked by careful plotting and characterization, but in the “serious novels” the inner world of the characters is more complex and the psychological analysis becomes deeper. The “entertainments” are, for the most part, literary thrillers, such as “A Gun for Sale” (1936), “The Ministry of Fear” (1943), and “The Third Man” (1949). The novels belonging to the “serious” category are: “The Man Within” (1929), “It’s a Battlefield” (1934), “England Made Me” (1935), “Brighton Rock” (1938), “The Power and the Glory” (1940), “The Heart of the Matter” (1948), “The End of the Affair” (1951), “The Quiet American” (1955), “A Burnt-Out Case” (1961), “The Comedians” (1966).

“The Quiet American” is one of Graham Greene’s best works. It marks a new stage in the development of his talent. In “The Quiet American”, the author tells the truth about the war in Vietnam. The book deals with the war waged by the French colonizers against the Vietnamese people, who were fighting for their independence. It also presents the real nature of American diplomacy of that period. The novel conveys the idea that every nation has the right to decide its own future. Besides this, the author tries to convince the reader that no man, no

journalist or writer in particular, can remain neutral; sooner or later he has to take sides.

Among his latest works, there are several novels: “Doctor Fisher of Geneva or the Bomb Party” (1980), “Monsignor Quixote” (1982), “Getting to Know the General” (1984), “The Tenth Man” (1985), “The Captain and the Enemy” (1988). Besides, he wrote two volumes of autobiographies: “A Sort of Life” (1971) and “Ways of Escape” (1980).

Charles Percy Snow (1905-1980)

Sir Charles Percy Snow was born in Leicester in 1905. By the end of the twenties he graduated from the University of Cambridge and went on working there in the field of molecular physics. Snow’s academic life continued until the beginning of World War II.

Charles Percy Snow began writing in the thirties. “The Search”, the first of his novels, was published in 1934. Six years later, in 1940, appeared his novel “Strangers and Brothers” which then became the title of a whole sequence of novels written in the forties, fifties and sixties. The second novel of the sequence entitled “The Light and the Dark”, was published in 1947. It was succeeded by the novels “Time of Hope” (1949) and “The Masters” (1951). Later on “The New Men” (1954), “Homecomings” (1956), “The Conscience of the Rich” (1959) and “The Affair” (1960) were added to it, but the sequence is not yet completed. “Corridors of Powers”, the latest of all the novels already written, appeared in 1964. The author himself divided all the books of the sequence into two main groups. The first group is called “novels of private experience” and includes “Time of Hope” (1947) and “Homecomings” (1956). All the rest belong to the group of “novels of conditioned experience”. The main hero of all the books is Louis Eliot, scientist and statesman, this is why English literary critics call them “the Louis Eliot sequence”. In the so-called “novels of private experience”, Snow describes the life of Louis Eliot in his youth (“Time of Hope”) and in the middle age (“Homecomings”), while in other novels the lives of his friends, relatives and acquaintances is seen through his eyes. In general, Snow makes an impressive

study of English society in the twentieth century. True to the method of modern critical realism, the writer places the representatives of different classes and social circles in the centre of his artistic attention.

Being a scientist by profession, he manages to create convincing pictures of the relations between intellectuals and the upper classes. And, though Snow is very far from communist views himself, his description of the social and political struggle contains certain points of criticism of bourgeois society. As a realist, Charles Percy Snow mainly gives a generalizing picture of English society of yesterday and today, of its most characteristic and typical trends and features. This does not prevent him, however, from being a master of individual psychology. In some of his works (especially “Time of Hope” and “Homecomings”) the inner life of the characters is brilliantly disclosed. However traditional in descriptions, Snow is a subtle and sensitive artist of landscape.

Norman Lewis (1908-2003)

Norman Lewis was born in 1908 into the family of a Welsh farm worker. At the beginning of World War II he joined the British Armed Forces and was sent to Sicily. After the war he worked as a journalist, and being deeply interested in ethnography, he traveled all over the world. Soon he became well-known as an author of travel books and articles. By the end of the forties Lewis, already a professional author, wrote about eight novels, some of which were masterful and emotional.

In his youth Lewis was a great admirer of XIXth century Russian classical literature. Of the modern authors, his writings in both manner and presentation bear the influence of Hemingway. Lewis' first novel was published in 1949. It was followed by “A Single Pilgrim” (1953) and “The Day of the Fox” (1955). Two years later appeared “Volcanoes Above Us” (1957). In the sixties he wrote: “Darkness Visible” (1960), “The Tenth Year of the Ship” (1962), “The Honoured Society” (1964) and “A Small War Made to Order” (1966).

Norman Lewis belonged to the so-called “anti-colonial” trend in English literature. A convinced realist, he always wrote about the countries he knew and

had lived in. Another characteristic feature is his journalistic style of narration. He has written much about movements for liberation and independence in Asia, Africa and Latin America. The action of “A Single Pilgrim” takes place in Laos, while in “The Day of the Fox” we see Spain under Franco’s dictatorship. “Volcanoes Above Us” is a picture of Guatemala after the tragic events of 1954. In this novel the author exposes the American monopolies actively supporting the attempt to overthrow the legal government. The American, Mr. Eliot, one of its characters, is described satirically. “Volcanoes Above Us” narrates the dramatic story of the fate of the native population – Indian tribes – condemned to death in reservations. “Samara” and “Darkness Visible” deal with the civil war in Algeria. Lewis’ novel “The Honoured Society”, which tells of the criminal activity of the Mafia – an illegal reactionary organization in Sicily –, evoked quite a sensation. Built on documentary data, this novel exposes some of the vices of the contemporary society. Among his later publications it’s worth mentioning “Every Man’s Brother” (1967), “Flight from the Dark Equator” (1972), “The Sicilian Specialist” (1975), “Naples ‘44’” (1978), “The German Company” (1979); “The Voices of the Old Sea” (1983), “Jackdaw Cake” (1985) and “The Missionaries” (1987) compose a trilogy.

Sid Chaplin (1916-1986)

Sid Chaplin was born in 1916 in the north of England into a miner’s family. Having graduated from school when he was sixteen, he began working at the coal mines. Only by the end of the thirties Chaplin managed to renew his studies at the workers’ college. Although his books began to appear in the late forties, writing never became his sole profession. Then Sid Chaplin was working in the administration of the coal mines in Newcastle and at the same time was writing novels and articles for newspapers and magazines. Chaplin did not win popularity with his first book. His first publication was a series of short stories entitled “The Leaping Lad” published in 1948. It was followed by three novels: “My Fate Cries Out” (1950), “The Thin Seam” (1951) and “The Big Room” (1960). Widely read and highly appreciated by critics was Chaplin’s novel “The Day of the Sardine”

which appeared in 1961. The novel “The Watchers and the Watched”, published a year later, was an equal success. The latest of the writer’s novels is “Sam in the Morning” (1965). As a writer, Sid Chaplin belonged to the so-called “working class literature” trend in English literature. This trend included, besides Chaplin himself, Alan Sillitoe, Raymond Williams, Stan Barstow, David Storey and others. The essential subject of Chaplin’s books is the life of the working class youth. The writer deals mainly with the present and the future of the younger generation of the English people. A teenager is always present in his characters.

Arthur Haggerston, the hero of “The Day of the Sardine”, is faced with the problem: which way of life to choose? The usual, everyday life with its bourgeois standards and attributes threatens to make “a sardine” of him. The image of a “sardine” is for Chaplin the symbol of a human being absolutely submissive to the power of circumstances. Arthur does not want to become a sardine and chooses an ordinary profession of “the white collar” type. On the other hand, Arthur’s protest has no clear direction; like thousands of other teenagers, he is angry at society as such. Becoming involved in a youth gang, the hero is always in danger of committing some crime. At the end of the novel Arthur is helped to get rid of the gang’s influence by his grown-up friend Harry Parker, but the old problem of choosing a way of life is never solved. Tim Mason, the main character in “The Watchers and the Watched”, finds himself in a similar situation. He is older than Arthur and is married, but his wife, with her conformist views, belongs to the world of “the watchers”, the prison-guards of society, while Tim himself is one of “the watched” imprisoned within it. As Arthur Haggerston, Tim Mason protests against the routine of “sardine-like” existence. A possible solution is prompted by his father, an elderly worker, who reminds Tim of the working class movement in the twenties and thus points out to him the way to live and struggle.

James Aldridge (born in 1918)

James Aldridge was born in Australia in 1918. He got his University education in Australia and in 1938 came to England to continue his career as a journalist. He worked for various London papers and became an editor of the

“Daily Sketch”. During the years of the Second World War Aldridge visited many countries as a correspondent, among them Norway, Greece, Egypt, Libya, Iran and Russia. His war experience was helpful in writing his first novels. “Signed with Their Honour” (1942), “The Sea Eagle” (1944), and a book of sketches “Of Many Men” (1946).

“Signed with Their Honour” can be characterized as a military, social and psychological novel. In the novel the author describes the invasion and occupation of Greece by the German and Italian fascist armies. These events took place from October, 1940 to April, 1941. The main character is an English pilot named Quayle, who witnesses the heroic struggle of the Greek people against the invaders, and the treacherous policy of Greek government circles. All the events in the novel are shown through Quayle’s eyes, except the last air battle, in which he loses his life.

The personal history of John Quayle becomes closely linked with the Greek people as he falls in love with a Greek girl Helen Stangou. Quayle’s contacts with her family and his personal acquaintance with Greek patriots change his views of life. Quayle meets true heroes among the English airmen. They are ready to give their lives in the battle with fascism, and among the Greek soldiers he finds those who do not follow the treacherous policy of their commanders. Aldridge’s characters greatly differ from “the lost generation” described in some works of American and English authors, written about World War I. His characters clearly see why they are fighting. The struggle of the Greek people against fascism is the main factor of the novel.

Aldridge’s anti-colonial point of view is seen in the novel “The Diplomat” (1949). His later novels are devoted entirely to problems of the Arab people in their struggle for liberation. Among them are “Heroes of the Empty View” (1954), “I Wish He Would Not Die”, “The Last Exile”, “Mockery in Arms”. James Aldridge is also the author of a large number of short stories, of which “The Last Inch” is especially popular with the readers. His play “49th State” is a satirical sketch on the world political situation at the end of the forties. Aldridge’s articles in press on the

problems of literature are also well-known. Aldridge's activity as a propagandist for peace and friendship among nations deserve the respect of the people of different nationalities.

IRIS MURDOCH (1919-1999)

Iris Murdoch was one of the most complex writers in modern English fiction. She was born in 1919 in Dublin. The main theme of her novels is the fate of men and women in modern society, their belief and disbelief. Her heroes are lonely and suffering people. In all her novels we find love as great and mysterious force. It is the inner world of the character that interests Iris Murdoch. Her books arise out of the varied experiences of life.

Iris Murdoch lectured in philosophy from 1948 to 1963 at the Oxford University in England. It influenced her literary career and she became an author of many books on philosophy and philosophical novels. She began her literary career with a critical work "Sartre, Romantic Rationalist" (1953). Her first novel "Under the Net" appeared in 1954 and since then she published a book almost every year.

Her characters face difficult moral choices in their search for love and freedom and are often involved in complex networks of love affairs. Some of Murdoch's novels expose the dangers of abstract system of behavior that cut out people off from spontaneous, loving relationships. "Under the Net" (1954) and "Fairly Honourable Defeat" (1970) are examples of it. "The Bells" (1958) describes the relationships among the members of a religious commune. In "A Severed Head" (1961) Murdoch portrays three couples whose unfaithful sexual conduct illustrates their shallow, self-centered philosophies. Existentialistic characteristic features of loneliness, anxiety and fear prevail in "The Unicorn" (1963) and "The Italian Girl" (1964). The ninth novel, "The Red and the Green" (1965) is apparently a progressive point in Murdoch's evolution to realism, but in her next novel, "The Time of Angels" (1966), the writer's realistic vision is completely suppressed by the old pessimistic approach to the individual and society. The line of evolution of Iris Murdoch's creative method was, thus, tremendously unstable and contradictory. By the time she began writing, she was a

convinced defender of the existentialist trend in philosophy. Iris Murdoch was always looking for the mysterious in ordinary life. “The Sandcastle” and “The Bell” demonstrate her ability to make usual and even banal situations exciting. A lot of other novels, except “The Red and the Green”, brim with unaccountable horrors, senseless crimes and love affairs. The characters are hopelessly engulfed in the world of evil, their alienation is complete, and the author’s dependence on traditional schemes of existentialism is obvious. The picture of the Irish uprising in 1916 in the “The Red and the Green” is written with a certain sense of realism. Her other novels include an “Accidental Man” (1971), “The Black Prince” (1973) , “ The Sea, The Sea” (1978), “The Good Apprentice” (1986), and “The Book and the Brotherhood” (1988) . Iris Murdoch tried to write in the spirit of realistic traditions in English literature. But her books are characterized by Romantic foundation .

Sir Kingsley Amis (1922-1995)

Kingsley Amis is an English novelist and poet. He was born in 1922 in London and educated at the City of London School and St. John’s College, Oxford. Between 1943 and 1945 he was in the army and then taught English at the University College.

Amis became famous after he had written his first novel “Lucky Jim” (1954). The protagonist of the novel is Jim Dixon. He is an instructor and an unsuccessful lecturer in history at a small provincial university. He is bored by his subject, but at the same time is afraid of losing his job. This forces him to compromise with many circumstances he disapproves of in reality. Jim is disgusted by the falseness of his colleagues and their works. Thus, he finds that his university education does not give him the entree into the world of power or intellectual endeavour.

The novel’s hero was immediately regarded as one of the protest figures of the fiction produced by the “Angry Young Man” generation of writers. But Amis, himself, strongly objected to being connected with the group, which in itself was

more a term invented by the critics than a literary movement. The targets of criticism in all of Amis's works are various social problems.

Amis's other novels include "That Uncertain Feeling" (1955), "Take a Girl Like You" (1960), "One Fat Englishman" (1964), "The Green Man" (1970), "Jake's Thing" (1979), "The Old Devils" (1986), "Difficulties with Girls" (1989), and "The Folks that Live on the Hill" (1990).

Amis has also published three volumes of poems: "A Frame of Mind" (1953), "A Case of Samples" (1956) and "A Look Around Estate" (1967). His "Collected Poems: 1944-1979" was published in 1979.

Amis is a literary critic as well. In his "New Maps of Hell" (1960) he gives a critical analysis of science fiction. In 1991 his book of autobiographical essays "Memoirs" was published. Queen Elizabeth knighted Amis in 1990. His son, Martin Amis, is also a noted English novelist.

John Wain (1925-1994)

John Wain was born in Staffordshire and educated at Newcastle High School and the Oxford University. From 1946 to 1949 he was a Fellow of St.

John's College, Oxford, and then a lecturer in English literature at Reading University, Berkshire.

John Wain's first novel "Hurry on Down" was published in 1953 and the literary critics immediately placed his name at the top of the list "Angry Young Men" group. The novel portrays a young man who has just left University. He tries to find his proper place in life but fails. His feeling of being a displaced person runs through the whole novel.

Wain's criticism of contemporary life becomes increasingly serious with the further progress of his literary career. In his novels he describes the difficulty of survival in the modern world if one wants to preserve his real self in intrusive and demanding surroundings. Wain's other novels include "Living in the Present" (1955), "The Contenders" (1958), "A Travelling Woman" (1959), "Strike the Father Dead" (1962), "The Young Visitors" (1965), "The Smaller Sky" (1967),

“A Winter in the Hills” (1970), “The Pardoner’s Tale” (1978), “Lizzie’s Floating Shop” (1981), “Young Shoulders” (1982).

John Wain is also a distinguished poet and literary critic. He has published several volumes of verse including “Mixed Feelings” (1951), “A Word Carved on a Sill” (1956), Weep Before God (1961), “Wildtrack (1965) and “Poems 1949-1979”.

Ted Hughes (1930-1998)

Ted Hughes is known chiefly for his portrayal of the violence and fierce beauty of the natural world. He was born in Yorkshire. He took a degree at Cambridge, where he was primarily interested in folklore and anthropology. In 1956 he married an American poet, the late Sylvia Plath. His first book of poetry “The Hawk in the Rain” appeared in 1957.

Much of Ted Hughes poetry deals with the natural world. He frequently writes of the savagery and cunning of animals and of similar qualities in human beings. It is characteristic of Hughes’s verse to use plants, objects or animals as symbols of some larger general concept. His creatures are powerful and watchful. Like Aesop, Hughes portrays animals in terms that carry messages about human nature. But his messages are seldom moralistic or reassuring. His works show a variety of influences: folklore, mythology, anthropology, as well as the poetry of Thomas Hardy, D.H Lawrence, and Robert Graves.

Hughes’s second book of poetry , “Lupercal”, won England’s prestigious Hawthornden Prize in 1961. “Wodwo”, a compilation of both poetry and prose, including short stories and a radio play, was published in 1967.

Here, below, is one of the poems included into Ted Hughes’s “Wodwo”, which shows the poet’s keen observation of nature and natural processes:

Firm

Here is the firm's frond, unfurling a gesture
Like a conductor whose music will now be pause
And the one note of silence
To which the whole earth dances gravely.
The mouse's ear unfurls its trust,
The spider takes up her bequest,
And the retina
Rains the creation with a bridle of water.
And, among them, the fern
Dances gravely, like the plume
Of a warrior returning, under the law hills,
Into his own kingdom.

In 1970 a cycle of poems "Crow" came into being and became a best-seller. In it Hughes attempts to create a fragmentary mythology. In addition to verse, Hughes has written a number of plays and several books for children.

Some critics have attacked Hughes for the grimness of his poetic subject matter and the violence of his language, but his admirers contend, that his language is vibrant and passionate, and that his recognition of violence in man and nature is a valid perception.

In 1984 Hughes was appointed a poet laureate.

Margaret Drabble (born in 1939)

Margaret Drabble is an English novelist. She has become popular for realistic portrayals of middle-class women .

Drabble's early novels, such as "A summer Bird-Cage (1963) and "The Garrick Year' (1964) are considered to be almost autobiographical studies of conflicts, young women experience in their careers, marriages, and family lives. Her best novels contain detailed and perceptive analyses of dilemmas women face in modern world (E.G. "The Needle's Eye", written in 1972.)

Her novels “The Realms of Gold” (1975) and “The Ice Age” include a larger number of characters representing a broad section of English society.

Drabble’s later works are characterized by more emphasis on economic, political and social problems. In her novels “The Middle Ground” (1980) and “The Radiant Way” (1987) she describes how social change influences the human characters. In “Natural Curiosity (1989) and “The Gates of Ivory” (1992) the author continues the social concern and develops characters of the earlier works.

Margaret Drabble has also written historical works and literary criticism. She was the editor of the fifth edition of “The Oxford Companion to English Literature. (1985).

Susan Hill (born in 1942)

Susan Hill was born in Scarborough, Yorkshire, and educated at Scarborough and Coventry grammar schools and King’s College, University of London. At the beginning of her career she wrote literary criticism for the Coventry Evening Telegraph for five years and reviewed fiction for several periodicals. Since 1963 Susan Hill is known as a full-time writer and the author of several novels, volumes of short stories, essays and a number of plays. Her titles include: “The Enclosure” (1961), “Do Me a Favour” (1963), “Gentleman and Ladies” (1968), “A Change for the better” (1969), “The Albatross and Other Stories”(1970), “I Am the King of the Castle” (1971), “Strange Meeting”(1971), “The Bird of Night” (1972), “In the Springtime of the Year” (1974), “The Land of Lost Content”(1976), “The Magic Apple Tree: A Country Year” (1982) and many other works. Her works have received considerable attention and were awarded several times. In 1972 she was elected a Fellow of the Royal Society of Literature.

Susan Hill is highly appreciated as a contemporary writer of psycho-logical fiction. Her style is powerful in its simplicity and unexpected jux-taposition of images.

PREFACE

This book intends to present the course of English literature in accordance with the programme “The Bachelor of Roman-German Philology”, of the specialty 5220100. In the process of its creation, the compilers widely used the achievements of the English, American, Russian and Uzbek literary critics and scientists. In designing this book, we have tried to establish conditions for a creative collaboration between teacher and student. We want not only to introduce students to English authors and their works, but also to help them begin making the critical judgements that can give literature greater meaning.

The book consists of nine units. Each unit contains an information about the definite period of English literature and the most prominent authors of the time. Besides, it is provided with the translations of the key words, expressions and with a series of quotations and tasks, and tests. They serve for the better understanding of the given material.

The language of the book is not very difficult and it may be used by the students of the academic lyceums learning the English language as their main subject, as well. The parts of the book were used at the lectures and practical lessons in English literature at the Faculty of Foreign Philology and academic lyceum of the Bukhara State University and of the Uzbek State University of World Languages, and its shortcomings were removed.

Nevertheless, the authors of the book ask all the specialist users of the book to be strictly critical and send their remarks to the following address:

Uzbekistan,

Bukhara, 705018,

Muhammad Iqbol street, 11

The Bukhara State University,

The Department of English Lexics and Stylistics.

To the assistant-professor Bakaeva M.K.

or teacher Ochilova M.K.

Your suggestions will help us to create the improved version of the book in future.

Commentary on Essential Literary Terms

Allegory (аллегория) - description of one thing under the name of another, the veiled presentation of the meaning metaphorically implied.

Allusion - a brief reference to a person, event, or place, real or fictitious, or to a work of art.

Angry Young Men (жа[лдор ёшлар) - a trend in English literature which appeared in the 50s of the 20th century as a result of a disillusionment in post-war reality.

Antagonist - A person or force that opposes the protagonist in a story or drama.

Aphorism (афоризм, [икматли сез) - A short statement expressing a wise or clever observation about life.

Bard (бард, бахши) - a professional singer and poet among ancient Celts, whose occupation was to compose and sing verses in honour of heroes and their deeds.

Blank Verse (ор шеър)- Poetry written in unrhymed iambic pentameter. Blank verse attempts to sound like spoken English, so every line need not be perfectly regular.

Canto (решир) - one of the main divisions of a long poem.

Classicism (классисизм, мумтозийлик) - a movement in art and literature which arose in the 17th century in France. It revived the principles of antique Greek and Roman literature and art. Classicists cultivated in their works formal elegance, observance of balance, control of emotions. Their works were marked by strict regulation of genre and styles.

Comedy (комедия) - a play of amusing character, in which either wit or good humour prevails, usually with a happy end.

Didactic (дидактик, панд-наси[ат берувчи, тарбиявий) - moralizing or instructive characteristic of literature.

Enlightenment (маърифатпарварлик). This term characterizes the

development of science and arts and the triumph of reason over ignorance in the 17th and 18th centuries. Enlighteners were given this name because they considered enlightenment to be the only means by which reorganization of society could be brought about. The enlighteners wanted to bring knowledge, that is “light” to the people.

Epic - A long narrative poem in elevated style presenting the adventures of a central hero who possesses superhuman qualities and generally embodies national ideals.

Epiphany - a moment of heightened awareness that can occur as a result of a trivial encounter, object, or event; a moment of enlightenment in which the underlying truth, essential nature, or meaning of something is suddenly made clear.

Existentialism - is a philosophical movement that developed in Europe during the XIX and XX centuries. The movement is called existentialism because most of its members are primarily interested in the nature of existence or being, by which they usually mean human existence.

Fable (масал) - a short simple story, frequently told about animals, and always embodying a moral truth.

Fabliau (фаблио) - a sort of versified story popular in the Middle Ages, marked by wit, coarseness and brevity.

Fiction – (бадий наср) a type of literature drawn from the imagination of the author that tells about imaginary people and happenings. Novels and short stories are fiction.

Flashback - An interruption in a narrative to relate events that have happened earlier.

Folk Ballad - a story told or sung in verse, transmitted orally from generation to generation

Humanism (гуманизм, инсонпарварлик) - a disposition to treat other human beings with kindness, love and compassion. In the period of Renaissance humanism became the new philosophy. It promoted the principles of equality of men irrespective of their social origin, race and religion.

Humour (юмор) - a device used in literature and intended to improve slight imperfections. The object of humour is a funny incident or an odd feature of human character, which we laugh at good-naturedly. It should not be confused with irony and satire, the latter being aimed at ridiculing grave vices, mostly from the sphere of social life.

Metaphysical Poetry - highly intellectual verse filled with complex and far-fetched metaphors. Metaphysical poets wrote both love lyrics and meditative poems that displayed their wit and learning.

Narrative Poetry ([икоя гилувчи шеърият) - poems that tell a story. The epic is an example of a long narrative poem, and the folk ballad is a short narrative poem.

Naturalism (натурализм) is accurate representation of nature literature and art, drawing and painting of things in a way true to nature.

Pamphlet (памфлет, брошюра) - a book of a few sheets of print, commonly with a paper cover.

Pastoral (гишлог [аётига баишланган шеър)- a conventional form of lyric poetry presenting an idealized picture of rural life.

Prologue (пролог, мугаддима) - a section preceding the main body of a work and serving as an introduction.

Protagonist (асар га[рамони, персонаж) - the leading character or hero in a literary work.

Rationalism - a philosophy that emphasized the role of reason rather than of sensory experience and faith in answering basic questions of human existence. It was most influential during the Age of Reason (1660-1780).

Realism (реализм) in literature is showing of real life, facts, etc in a true way, omitting nothing that is ugly or painful, and idealizing nothing.

Renaissance (уйуониш даври) - a time of cultural development in Europe between the 14th and 16th centuries.

Restoration (реставрация, гайта тикланиш) - the period of re-establishment of monarchy in 1660.

Romanticism (романтизм) - a literary movement which came into being in English literature at the beginning of the 19th century. Imagination and emotion played a leading role in the works of the representatives of this trend. Unlike realism, it tends to portray the uncommon. The material selected tends to deal with extraordinary people in unusual setting having unusual experiences.

Satire (сатира) - use of ridicule, irony, sarcasm in writing or speech for the purpose of exposing some moral or social vice.

Science fiction (илмий фантастика)- a fictional literary work that uses scientific and technological facts and hypotheses as a basis for stories about such subjects as extraterrestrial beings, adventures in the future or on other planets, and travel through time. Science fiction is a form of fantasy.

Sentimentalism (сентиментализм) - a literary movement of the second half of the 18th century, which marked a new stage in the evolution of the Enlightenment. The term is taken from the French word “sentiment” which means “feeling”. Sentimentalists paid much attention to the description of the inner world of the characters, they believed in innate virtue of man and his ability of moral improvement. They considered that civilization was harmful to humanity, that man should live close to nature and be free from the corrupting influence of town life.

Sonnet (сонет) is a poem of 14 lines divided into two quatrains (4-line groups) and two tercets (3-line groups). It was brought to perfection by the great Italian poet Francesco Petrarca (1304-1374). During the period of Renaissance sonnets in English Literature were written by Wyatt, Surrey and Shakespeare. Among the foremost English masters of the sonnet during later centuries, are John Milton, William Wordsworth, John Keats, Dante Gabriel Rossetty, Algernon Charles Swinburne and Oscar Wilde.

Stream of consciousness (сезги огими) is a technique in which a writer moves directly inside character’s minds with complete omniscience. Inner feelings, memories, ideas and observations are portrayed as occurring simultaneously with external experience.

Symbolism (символизм) - a trend in literature which appeared in France at

the end of the 19th century. Symbolists aimed at representing ideas and emotions by indirect suggestions rather than direct expressions. The symbolists attached symbolic meaning to particular images, words, sounds.

Tragedy (трагедия, фожиа) - a dramatic composition, treating of sor-rowful or terrible events in a serious and dignified style, with an unhappy or disastrous ending.

Victorians (викторианлар) - a conventional term applied to the English writers who lived and worked in the so-called Victorian age (1837-1901)

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