Paper IV

Unit I

Romanticism: The French Revolution and After and Romantic Themes

1.1. Introduction

During the second half of the 18th century economic and social changes took place in England. The country went through the so-called Industrial Revolution when new industries sprang up and new processes were applied to the manufacture of traditional products. During the reign of King George III (1760-1820) the face of England changed. The factories were built, the industrial development was marked by an increase in the export of finished cloth rather than of raw material, coal and iron industries developed. Internal communications were largely funded. The population increased from 7 million to 14 million people. Much money was invested in road- and canal-building. The first railway line which was launched in 1830 from Liverpool to Manchester allowed many people inspired by poets of Romanticism to discover the beauty of their own country. Just as we understand the tremendous energizing influence of Puritanism in the matter of English liberty by remembering that the common people had begun to read, and that their book was the bible, so we may understand this age of popular government by remembering that the chief subject of romantic literature was the essential nobleness of common men and the value of the individual.

As we read now that brief portion of history which lies between the Declaration of Independence (1776) and the English Reform Bill of 1832, we are in the presence of such mighty political upheavals that “the age of revolution” is the only name by which we can adequately characterize it. Its great historic movements become intelligible only when we read what was written in this period; for the French Revolution and the American Commonwealth, as well as the establishment of a true democracy in England by the Reform Bill, were the inevitable results of ideas which literature had spread rapidly through the civilized world. Liberty is fundamentally an ideal; and that ideal—beautiful, inspiring, compelling—was kept steadily before men’s minds by a multitude of books and pamphlets as far apart as Burn’s Poems and Thomas Paine’s Rights
of Man—all read eagerly by the common people, all proclaiming the dignity of common life, and all uttering the same passionate cry against every form of class or caste oppression.

First the dream, the ideal in some human soul; then the written word which proclaims it, and impresses other minds with its truth and beauty; then the united and determined effort of men to make the dream a reality—that seems to be a fair estimate of the part that literature plays in the political progress of a country.

Romanticism was the greatest literary movement in the period between 1770-1840. It meant the shift of sensibility in art and literature and was based on interdependence of Man and Nature. It was a style in European art, literature and music that emphasized the importance of feeling, emotion and imagination rather than reason or thought. The Romantic Period of literature came into being in direct reaction against a variety of ideas and historical happenings taking place in England and Europe at that time. These happenings include the Napoleonic Wars and their following painful economic downfalls; the union with Ireland: the political movement known as Chartism, which helped to improve social recognition and conditions of the lower classes: the passage of the Reform Bill which suppressed slavery in the British Colonies, curbed monopolies, lessened poverty, liberalized marriage laws, and expanded educational facilities for the lower classes, it both accepted and despised the current philosophy of utilitarianism, a view in which the usefulness of everything, including the individual was based on how beneficial it was to Society. Finally, the most important factor to impact a change in both thought and literature was that of the Industrial Revolution. The Industrial Revolution brought about vast changes in English society. It helped to create both great fortunes and great hardship. Within a short time England went from being a country of small villages with independent craftsmen to a country of huge factories run by sweat shops full of men, women, and children who lived in overcrowded and dangerous city slums. An industrial England was being born in pain and suffering. The presence of a developing democracy, the ugliness of the sudden growth of cities, the prevalence of human pain, the obvious presence of the "profit motive" all helped to characterize what was in many respects” the best of times...... the worst of times."

In England the Romantic authors were individuals with many contrary views. But all of them were against immoral luxuries of the world, against injustice and inequality of the society, against suffering and human selfishness.
The period of Romanticism in England had its peculiarities. The Romantic writers of England did not call themselves romanticists (like their French and German contemporaries). Nevertheless, they all depicted the interdependence of Man and Nature. The Romantic writers based their theories on the intuition and the wisdom of the heart. On the other hand, they were violently stirred by the suffering of which they were the daily witnesses. They hoped to find a way of changing the social order by their writing, they believed in literature being a sort of Mission to be carried out in order to reach the wisdom of the Universe.

### 1.1.1 The Concept of Romanticism

Throughout history certain philosophies or ideas have helped to shape the themes of literature, art, religion, and politics. The concept of Romanticism was preceded by the philosophy of Neoclassicism. In the writings before this period humans were viewed as being limited and imperfect. A sense of reverence for order, reason, and rules were focused upon. There was distrust for innovation and invention. Society was encouraged to view itself as a group with generic characteristics. The idea of individualism was looked upon with disfavor. People were encouraged through literature, art, religion, and politics to follow the traditional rules of the church and government. However, by the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries a great reaction against this philosophy was noted. It was labeled as Romanticism.

The expression Romantic gained currency during its own time, roughly 1780-1850. However, even within its own period of existence, few Romantics would have agreed on a general meaning. Perhaps this tells us something. To speak of a Romantic era is to identify a period in which certain ideas and attitudes arose, gained currency and in most areas of intellectual endeavor, became dominant. That is, they became the dominant mode of expression. Which tells us something else about the Romantics: expression was perhaps everything to them - expression in art, music, poetry, drama, literature and philosophy. Just the same, older ideas did not simply wither away. Romantic ideas arose both as implicit and explicit criticisms of 18th century Enlightenment thought. For the most part, these ideas were generated by a sense of inadequacy with the dominant ideals of the Enlightenment and of the society that produced them.
Thus, Romanticism was an artistic, literary, and intellectual movement that originated in Europe toward the end of the 18th century and in most areas was at its peak in the approximate period from 1800 to 1850. Partly a reaction to the Industrial Revolution, it was also a revolt against the aristocratic social and political norms of the Age of Enlightenment and a reaction against the scientific rationalization of nature. It was embodied most strongly in the visual arts, music, and literature, but had a major impact on historiography, education and the natural sciences. Its effect on politics was considerable and complex; while for much of the peak Romantic period it was associated with liberalism and radicalism, its long-term effect on the growth of nationalism was probably more significant.

The movement validated intense emotion as an authentic source of aesthetic experience, placing new emphasis on such emotions as apprehension, horror and terror, and awe—especially that which is experienced in confronting the sublimity of untamed nature and its picturesque qualities: both new aesthetic categories. It elevated folk art and ancient custom to a noble status, made spontaneity a desirable characteristic (as in the musical impromptu), and argued for a natural epistemology of human activities, as conditioned by nature in the form of language and customary usage. Romanticism reached beyond the rational and Classicist ideal models to raise a revived medievalism and elements of art and narrative perceived to be authentically medieval in an attempt to escape the confines of population growth, urban sprawl, and industrialism. Romanticism embraced the exotic, the unfamiliar, and the distant, harnessing the power of the imagination to envision and to escape.

1.2. Reaction Against Enlightenment

Romanticism appeared in conflict with the Enlightenment. You could go as far as to say that Romanticism reflected a crisis in Enlightenment thought itself, a crisis which shook the comfortable 18th century philosophe out of his intellectual single-mindedness. The Romantics were conscious of their unique destiny. In fact, it was self-consciousness which appears as one of the keys elements of Romanticism itself.
The philosophe were too objective -- they chose to see human nature as something uniform. The philosophe had also attacked the Church because it blocked human reason. The Romantics attacked the Enlightenment because it blocked the free play of the emotions and creativity. The philosophe had turned man into a soulless, thinking machine -- a robot. In a comment typical of the Romantic thrust, William Hazlitt (1778-1830) asked, "For the better part of my life all I did was think." And William Godwin (1756-1836), a contemporary of Hazlitt's asked, "what shall I do when I have read all the books?" Christianity had formed a matrix into which medieval man situated himself. The Enlightenment replaced the Christian matrix with the mechanical matrix of Newtonian natural philosophy. For the Romantic, the result was nothing less than the demotion of the individual. Imagination, sensitivity, feelings, spontaneity and freedom were stifled -- choked to death. Man must liberate himself from these intellectual chains.

Like one of their intellectual fathers, Jean Jacques Rousseau (1712-1778), the Romantics yearned to reclaim human freedom. Habits, values, rules and standards imposed by a civilization grounded in reason and reason only had to be abandoned. "Man is born free and everywhere he is in chains," Rousseau had written. Whereas the philosophe saw man in common that is, as creatures endowed with Reason the Romantics saw diversity and uniqueness. That is, those traits which set one man apart from another, and traits which set one nation apart from another. Discover yourself -- express yourself, cried the Romantic artist. Play your own music, write your own drama, paint your own personal vision, live, love and suffer in your own way. So instead of the motto, "Sapere aude," "Dare to know!" the Romantics took up the battle cry, "Dare to be!" The Romantics were rebels and they knew it. They dared to march to the tune of a different drummer -- their own. The Romantics were passionate about their subjectivism, about their tendency toward introspection. Rousseau’s autobiography, The Confessions (1781), began with the following words:

I am commencing an undertaking, hitherto without precedent and which will never find an imitator. I desire to set before my fellows the likeness of a man in all the truth of nature, and that man myself. Myself alone! I know the feelings of my heart, and I know men. I am not made like any of those I have seen. I venture to believe that I am not made like any of those who are in existence. If I am not better, at least I am different.
Romanticism was the new thought, the critical idea and the creative effort necessary to cope with the old ways of confronting experience. The Romantic era can be considered as indicative of an age of crisis. Even before 1789, it was believed that the ancien regime seemed ready to collapse. Once the French Revolution entered its radical phase in August 1792, the fear of political disaster also spread. King killing, Robespierre, the Reign of Terror, and the Napoleonic armies all signaled chaos -- a chaos which would dominate European political and cultural life for the next quarter of a century.

Meanwhile, the Industrial Revolution -- in full swing in England since the 1760s -- spread to the Continent in the 1820s, thus adding entirely new social concerns. The old order -- politics and the economy -- seemed to be falling apart and hence for many Romantics, raised the threat of moral disaster as well. Men and women faced the need to build new systems of discipline and order, or, at the very least, they had to reshape older systems. The era was prolific in innovative ideas and new art forms. Older systems of thought had to come to terms with rapid and apparently unmanageable change.

In the midst of what has been called the Romantic Era, an era often portrayed as devoted to irrationality and "unreason," the most purely rational social science -- classical political economy -- carried on the Enlightenment tradition. Enlightenment rationalism continued to be expressed in the language of political and economic liberalism. For example, Jeremy Bentham's (1748-1832) radical critique of traditional politics became an active political movement known as utilitarianism. And revolutionary Jacobinism inundated English Chartism -- an English working class movement of the 1830s and 40s. The political left on the Continent as well as many socialists, communists and anarchists also reflected their debt to the heritage of the Enlightenment.

The Romantics defined the Enlightenment as something to which they were clearly opposed. The philosophes oversimplified. But Enlightenment thought was and is not a simple and clearly identifiable thing. In fact, what has often been identified as the Enlightenment bore very little resemblance to reality. As successors to the Enlightenment, the Romantics were often unfair in their appreciation of the 18th century. They failed to recognize just how much they shared with the philosophes. In doing so, the Romantics were similar to Renaissance humanists in that both failed to perceive the meaning and importance of the cultural period which had
preceded their own. The humanists, in fact, invented a "middle age" so as to define themselves more carefully. As a result, the humanists enhanced their own self-evaluation and prestige in their own eyes. The humanists foisted an error on subsequent generations of thinkers. Their error lay in their evaluation of the past as well as in their simple failure to apprehend or even show a remote interest in the cultural heritage of the medieval world. Both aspects of the error are important.

With the Romantics, it shows first how men make an identity for themselves by defining an enemy, making clear what they oppose, thus making life into a battle. Second, it is evident that factual, accurate, subtle understanding makes the enemy mere men. Even before 1789, the Romantics opposed the superficiality of the conventions of an artificial, urban and aristocratic society. They blurred distinctions between its decadent, fashionable Christianity or unemotional Deism and the irreligion or anti-clericalism of the philosophes. The philosophes, expert in defining themselves in conflict with their enemy -- the Church -- helped to create the mythical ungodly Enlightenment many Romantics so clearly opposed.

It was during the French Revolution and for fifty or sixty years afterward that the Romantics clarified their opposition to the Enlightenment. This opposition was based on equal measures of truth and fiction. The Romantics rejected what they thought the philosophes represented. And over time, the Romantics came to oppose and criticize not only the Enlightenment, but also ideas derived from it and the men who were influenced by it.

The period from 1793 to 1815 was a period of European war. War, yes, but also revolutionary combat -- partisanship seemed normal. Increasingly, however, the Romantics rejected those aspects of the French Revolution -- the Terror and Napoleon -- which seemed to them to have sprung from the heads of the philosophes themselves. For instance, William Wordsworth (1770-1850) was living in Paris during the heady days of 1789 -- he was, at the time, only 19 years old. In his autobiographical poem, The Prelude, he reveals his experience of the first days of the Revolution. Wordsworth read his poem to Samuel Taylor Coleridge (1772-1834) in 1805--I might add that The Prelude is epic in proportion as it weighs in at eight thousand lines. By 1805, the bliss that carried Wordsworth and Coleridge in the 1790s, had all but vanished.
But for some Romantics, aristocrats, revolutionary armies, natural rights and constitutionalism were not real enemies. There were new enemies on the horizon, especially after the Congress of Vienna (1814-1815). The Romantics concentrated their attack on the heartlessness of bourgeois liberalism as well as the nature of urban industrial society. Industrial society brought new problems: soulless individualism, economic egoism, utilitarianism, materialism and the cash nexus. Industrial society came under attack by new critics: the utopian socialists and communists. But there were also men like Benjamin Disraeli (1804-1881) and Thomas Carlyle (1795-1881) who identified the threat of egoism as the chief danger of their times. Egoism dominated the bourgeoisie, especially in France and in England. Higher virtues and social concerns were subsumed by the cash nexus and crass materialism of an industrial capitalist society. Artists and intellectuals attacked the philistinism of the bourgeoisie for their lack of taste and their lack of an higher morality. Ironically, the brunt of their attack fell on the social class which had produced the generation of Romantics.

Romanticism reveals the persistence of Enlightenment thought, the Romantic’s definition of themselves and a gradual awareness of a new enemy. The shift to a new enemy reminds us that the Romantic Age was also an eclectic age. The Enlightenment was no monolithic structure -- neither was Romanticism, however we define it. Ideas of an age seldom exist as total systems. Our labels too easily let us forget that past ideas from the context in which new ideas are developed and expressed. Intellectuals do manage to innovate and their innovations are oftentimes not always recombinations of what they have embraced in their education. Intellectual and geographic contexts differ from state to state -- even though French culture seemed to have dominated the Continent during the early decades of the 19th century. England is the obvious exception. Germany is another example -- the movement known as Sturm und Drang (Storm and Stress) -- was an independent cultural development.

National variations were enhanced when, under the direct effect of the Napoleonic wars, boundaries were closed and the easy international interchange of ideas was inhibited. But war was not the only element that contributed to the somewhat inhibited flow of ideas. Profound antagonism and the desire to create autonomous cultures was also partially responsible. This itself grew out of newly found nationalist ideologies which were indeed characteristic of Romanticism itself. And within each nation state, institutional and social differences provided
limits to the general assimilation of a clearly defined set of ideas. In France, for example, the academies were strong and during the Napoleonic era, censorship was common. Artists and intellectuals alike were prevented from innovating or adopting new ideas. In Germany, on the other hand, things were quite different. The social structure, the heavy academism and specific institutional traits blocked any possibility of learning or expressing new modes of thought.

Most important were the progressive changes in the potential audience artists and intellectuals now faced -- most of them now had to depend upon that audience. Where the audience was very small, as in Austria and parts of Germany, the results often ranged between the extremes of great openness to rigid conservatism. Where the audience was steadily growing, as in France or England, and where urbanization and the growth of a middle class was transforming the expectations of the artist and intellectual, there was room for experiment, innovation and oftentimes, disastrous failure. Here, artists and intellectuals could no longer depend upon aristocratic patronage. Popularity among the new and powerful middle class audience became a rite of passage.

At the same time, intellectuals criticized the tasteless and unreceptive philistine bourgeoisie. Ironically, they were criticizing the same class and the same mentality from which they themselves had emerged and which had supported them. In this respect, the Romantic age was similar to the age of Enlightenment. A free press and careers open to talent provided possibilities of competitive innovation. This led to new efforts to literally train audiences to be receptive to the productions of artists and intellectuals. Meanwhile, literary hacks and Grub Street writers produced popular pot boilers for the masses. All these characteristics placed limits upon the activities of the Romantics. These limits could not be ignored. In fact, these limits often exerted pressures that can be identified as causes of the Romantic movement itself.

There were direct, immediate and forceful events that many British and European Romantics experienced in their youth. The French Revolution was a universal phenomenon that affected them all. And the Napoleonic wars after 1799 also influenced an entire generation of European writers, composers and artists. Those who were in their youth in the 1790s felt a chasm dividing them from an earlier, pre-revolutionary generation. Those who had seen Napoleon seemed different and felt different from those who were simply too young to understand. The difference lay in a great discrepancy in the quality of their experience. Great European events,
such as the Revolution and Napoleon, gave identity to generations and made them feel as one -- a shared experience. As a consequence, the qualities of thought and behavior in 1790 was drastically different from what it was in 1820. In the Romantic era, men and women felt these temporal and experiential differences consciously and intensely. It is obvious, I suppose, that only after Napoleon could the cults of the hero, of hero worship and of the genius take full form. And only after 1815 could youth complain that their time no longer offered opportunities for heroism or greatness -- only their predecessors had known these opportunities.

The intellectual historian or historian of ideas always faces problems. Questions of meaning, interpretation and an acceptance of a particular *Zeitgeist*, or climate of opinion or worldview is serious but difficult stuff. Although we frequently use words like Enlightenment or Romanticism to describe intellectual or perhaps cultural events, these expressions sometimes cause more harm than good. There is, for instance, no 18th century document, no perfect exemplar or *ideal type*, to use Max Weber's word, which can be called "enlightened." There is, unfortunately, no perfect document or ideal type of which we may pronounce, "this is Romantic."

We have seen that one way to define the Romantics is to distinguish them from the *philosophes*. But, for both the *philosophes* and the Romantics, Nature was accepted as a general standard. Nature was natural -- and this supplied standards for beauty and for morality. The Enlightenment’s appreciation of Nature was, of course, derived wholly from Isaac Newton. The physical world was orderly, explicable, regular, logical. It was, as we are all now convinced, a Nature subject to laws which could be expressed with mathematical certainty. Universal truths -- like natural rights -- were the object of science and of philosophy. And the uniformity of Nature permitted a knowledge which was rapidly accumulating as a consequence of man’s rational capacity and the use of science to penetrate the mysteries of nature. The Enlightenment defined knowledge in a Lockian manner--that is, a knowledge based on sense impressions. This was an environmentalist psychology, if you will, a psychology in which men know only what their sense impressions allowed their faculty of reason to understand.

The Enlightenment was rationalist -- it glorified human reason. Reason illustrated the power of analysis -- Reason was the power of associating like experiences in order to generalize about them inductively. Reason was a common human possession -- it was held by all men. Even
American "savages" were endowed with reason, hence the 18th century emphasis on "common sense," and the "noble savage." Common sense -- revealed by reason -- would admit a groundwork for a common morality. As nature was studied in order to discover its universal aspects, men began to accept that what was most worth knowing and what was therefore most valuable, was what they had in common with one another. Society, then, became an object of science. Society revealed self-evident truths about human nature -- self-evident truths about natural rights.

Social and political thought was individualistic and atomistic. As the physical universe was ultimately machinelike, so social organization could be fashioned after the machine. Science pronounced what society ought to become in view of man’s natural needs. These needs were not being fulfilled by the past -- for this reason, the medieval matrix and the ancien regime inhibited man’s progress. The desire was to shape institutions, to change men and to produce a better society -- knowledge, morality and human happiness. The intention was at once cosmopolitan and humanitarian.

The Romantics felt all the opinions of the Enlightenment were fraught with dangerous errors and oversimplifications. Romanticism may then be considered as a critique of the inadequacies of what it held to be Enlightened thought. The critique of the Romantics -- sometime open, sometimes hidden -- can be seen as a new study of the bases or knowledge and of the whole scientific enterprise. It rejected a science based on physics -- physics was inadequate to describe the reality of experience. "O for a life of sensations rather than of thoughts," wrote John Keats (1795-1821). And William Blake (1757-1827) admonished us all to "Bathe in the waters of life." And Keats again, "Beauty is truth, truth beauty, -- that is all/Ye know on earth, and all ye need to know."

The Romantic universe was expanding, evolving, becoming -- it was organic, it was alive. The Romantics sought their soul in the science of life, not the science of celestial mechanics. They moved from planets to plants. The experience was positively exhilarating, explosive and liberating -- liberation from the soulless, materialistic, thinking mechanism that was man. The 18th century had created it. The Romantics found it oppressive , hence the focus on liberation. Listen to the way Percy Bysshe Shelley (1792-1822) put it in Prometheus Unbound:
The joy, the triumph, the delight, the madness!
The boundless, overflowing, bursting gladness,
The vaporous exultation not to be confined!
Ha! Ha! The animation of delight
Which wraps me, like an atmosphere of light,
And bears me as a cloud is borne by its own wind.

The Romantics returned God to Nature -- the age revived the unseen world, the supernatural, the mysterious, the world of medieval man. It is no accident that the first gothic novel appears early in the Romantic Age. Nature came to be viewed historically. The world was developing, it was a world of continuous process, it was a world in the process of becoming. And this continuous organic process could only be understood through historical thought. And here we have come almost full circle to the views expressed by Giambattista Vico a century earlier. This is perhaps the single most revolutionary aspect of the Romantic Age. An admiration for all the potency and diversity of living nature superseded a concern for the discovery of its universal traits. In a word, the Romantics embraced relativism. They did not seek universal abstract laws as Immanuel Kant (1724-1804) had. Instead, they saw history as a process of unfolding, a becoming. Was not this the upshot of what G. W. F. Hegel (1770-1831) had argued in his philosophy of history? And look at the time frame: Kant - 1780s, Hegel - 1820s and 30s.

The Romantics sought Nature’s glorious diversity of detail -- especially its moral and emotional relation to mankind. On this score, the Romantics criticized the 18th century. The philosophe was cold, mechanical, logical and unfeeling. There was no warmth in the heart. For the Romantics, warmth of heart was found and indeed enhanced by a communion with Nature. The heart has reasons that Reason is not equipped to understand. The heart was a source of knowledge -- the location of ideas "felt" as sensations rather than thoughts. Intuition was equated with that which men feel strongly. Men could learn by experiment or by logical process—but men could learn more in intuitive flashes and feelings, by learning to trust their instincts. The Romantics distrusted calculation and stressed the limitations of scientific knowledge. The rationality of science fails to apprehend the variety and fullness of reality. Rational analysis destroys the naïve experience of the stream of sensations and in this violation, leads men into error.
One power possessed by the Romantic, a power distinct and superior to reason, was imagination. Imagination might apprehend immediate reality and create in accordance with it. And the belief that the uncultured—that is, the primitive -- know not merely differently but best is an example of how the Romantics reinterpreted the irrational aspect of reality -- the Imagination. The Romantics did not merely say that there were irrational ways of intuiting reality. They rejected materialism and utilitarianism as types of personal behavior and as philosophies. They sought regeneration -- a regeneration we can liken to that of the medieval heretic or saint. They favored selfless enthusiasm, an enthusiasm which was an expression of faith and not as the product of utilitarian calculation. Emotion -- unbridled emotion -- was celebrated irrespective of its consequences.

The 18th century life of mind was incomplete. The Romantics opted for a life of the heart. Their relativism made them appreciative of diversity in man and in nature. There are no universal laws. There are certainly no laws which would explain man. The philosophe congratulated himself for helping to destroy the ancien regime. And today, we can perhaps say, "good job!" But after all the destruction, after the ancient idols fell, and after the dust had cleared, there remained nothing to take its place. In stepped the Romantics who sought to restore the organic quality of the past, especially the medieval past, the past so detested by the pompous, powdered-wig philosophe.

Truth and beauty were human attributes. A truth and beauty which emanated from the poet’s soul and the artist’s heart. If the poets are, as Shelley wrote in 1821, the "unacknowledged legislator’s of the world," it was world of fantasy, intuition, instinct and emotion. It was a human world.

1.2.2 Industrial Revolution

The Industrial Revolution of the late 18th and early 19th centuries was revolutionary because it changed -- revolutionized -- the productive capacity of England, Europe and United States. But the revolution was something more than just new machines, smoke-belching
factories, increased productivity and an increased standard of living. It was a revolution which transformed English, European, and American society down to its very roots. Like the Reformation or the French Revolution, no one was left unaffected. Everyone was touched in one way or another -- peasant and noble, parent and child, artisan and captain of industry. The Industrial Revolution serves as a key to the origins of modern Western society. As Harold Perkin has observed, "the Industrial Revolution was no mere sequence of changes in industrial techniques and production, but a social revolution with social causes as well as profound social effects" [The Origins of Modern English Society, 1780-1880 (1969)].

The INDUSTRIAL REVOLUTION can be said to have made the European working-class. It made the European middle-class as well. In the wake of the Revolution, new social relationships appeared. As Ben Franklin once said, "time is money." Man no longer treated men as men, but as a commodity which could be bought and sold on the open market. This "commodification" of man is what bothered Karl Marx -- his solution was to transcend the profit motive by social revolution.

There is no denying the fact that the Industrial Revolution began in England sometime after the middle of the 18th century. England was the "First Industrial Nation." As one economic historian commented in the 1960s, it was England which first executed "the takeoff into self-sustained growth." And by 1850, England had become an economic titan. Its goal was to supply two-thirds of the globe with cotton spun, dyed, and woven in the industrial centers of northern England. England proudly proclaimed itself to be the "Workshop of the World," a position that country held until the end of the 19th century when Germany, Japan and United States overtook it.

More than the greatest gains of the Renaissance, the Reformation, Scientific Revolution or Enlightenment, the Industrial Revolution implied that man now had not only the opportunity and the knowledge but the physical means to completely subdue nature. No other revolution in modern times can be said to have accomplished so much in so little time. The Industrial Revolution attempted to effect man's mastery over nature. This was an old vision, a vision with a history. In the 17th century, the English statesman and "Father of Modern Science, Francis Bacon (1561-1626), believed that natural philosophy (what we call science) could be applied to the solution of practical problems, and so, the idea of modern technology was born. For Bacon,
the problem was this: how could man enjoy perfect freedom if he had to constantly labor to supply the necessities of existence? His answer was clear -- machines. These labor saving devices would liberate mankind, they would save labor which then could be utilized elsewhere. "Knowledge is power," said Bacon, and scientific knowledge reveals power over nature.

The vision was all-important. It was optimistic and progressive. Man was going somewhere, his life has direction. This vision is part of the general attitude known as the idea of progress, that is, that the history of human society is a history of progress, forever forward, forever upward. This attitude is implicit throughout the Enlightenment and was made reality during the French and Industrial Revolutions. With relatively few exceptions, the philosophes of the 18th century embraced this idea of man's progress with an intensity I think unmatched in our own century. Human happiness, improved morality, an increase in knowledge were now within man's reach. This was indeed the message, the vision, of Adam Smith, Denis Diderot, Voltaire, Thomas Jefferson and Ben Franklin.

Engines and machines, the glorious products of science began to revolutionize the idea of progress itself. If a simple machine can do the work of twenty men in a quarter of the time formerly required, then could the New Jerusalem be far behind? When you view the Industrial Revolution alongside the democratic revolutions of 1776 and 1789, we cannot help but be struck by the optimism so generated. Heaven on Earth seemed reality and no one was untouched by the prospects. But, as we will soon see, while the Industrial Revolution brought its blessings, there was also much misery. Revolutions, political or otherwise, are always mixed blessings. If we can thank the Industrial Revolution for giving us fluoride, internal combustion engines, and laser guided radial arm saws, we can also damn it for the effect it has had on social relationships. We live in the legacy of the Industrial Revolution, the legacy of the "cash nexus," as the mid-19th century Scottish critic Thomas Carlyle (1795-1881) put it, where the only connection between men is the one of money, profit and gain.

The origins of the Industrial Revolution in England are complex and varied and, like the French Revolution, the Industrial Revolution is still a subject of a vast historical debate over origins, developments, growth and end results. This debate has raged among historians since at least 1884, when Arnold Toynbee (1852-1883), an English historian and social reformer, published the short book, Lectures on the Industrial Revolution in England. Toynbee was in a
fairly good position to assess the revolution in industry -- England had, by the 1880s, endured more than a century of industrialization.

The Industrial Revolution refers to a series of significant shifts in traditional practices of agriculture, manufacturing, and transportation, as well as the development of new mechanical technologies that took place between the late 18th and 19th centuries in much of the Western world. During this time, the United Kingdom, as well as the rest of Europe and the United States soon after, underwent drastic socio-economic and cultural changes during this time. These changes in part gave rise to the English Romantic spirit, especially in the United Kingdom. During the late 18th century, the United Kingdom’s economic system of manual and animal based labor shifted toward a system of machine manufacturing while more readily navigable roads, canals, and railroads for trade began to develop. Steam power underpinned the dramatic increase in production capacity, as did the rather sudden development of metal tools and complex machines for manufacturing purposes.

The Industrial Revolution had a profound effect upon society in the United Kingdom. It gave rise to the working and middle classes and allowed them to overcome the long-standing economic oppression that they had endured for centuries beneath the gentry and nobility. However, while employment opportunities increased for common working people throughout the country and members of the middle class were able to become business owners more easily, the conditions workers often labored under were brutal. Further, many of them were barely able to live off of the wages they earned. During this time, the industrial factory was created (which, in turn, gave rise to the modern city). Conditions within these factories were often dirty and, by today’s standards, unethical: children were frequently used and abused for labor purposes and long hours were required for work. A group of people in the United Kingdom known as the Luddites felt that industrialization was ultimately inhumane and took to protests and sometimes sabotaging industrial machines and factories. While industrialization led to incredible technological developments throughout the Western world, many historians now argue that industrialization also caused severe reductions in living standards for workers both within the United Kingdom and throughout the rest of the industrialized Western world. However, the new middle and working classes that industrialism had established led to urbanization throughout
industrial cultures, drastic population increases, and the introduction of a relatively new economic system known as capitalism.

The Romantic Movement developed in the United Kingdom in the wake of, and in some measure as a response to, the Industrial Revolution. Many English intellectuals and artists in the early 19th century considered industrialism inhumane and unnatural and revolted—sometimes quite violently—against what they felt to be the increasingly inhumane and unnatural mechanization of modern life. Poets such as Lord Byron (particular in his addresses to the House of Lords) and William Blake (most notably in his poem “The Chimney Sweeper”) spoke out—and wrote extensively about—the psychological and social affects of the newly industrial world upon the individual and felt rampant industrialization to be entirely counter to the human spirit and intrinsic rights of men. Many English Romantic intellectuals and artists felt that the modern industrial world was harsh and deadening to the senses and spirit and called for a return, both in life and in spirit, to the emotional and natural, as well as the ideals of the pre-industrial past.

Aided by revolutions in agriculture, transportation, communications and technology, England was able to become the "first industrial nation." This is a fact that historians have long recognized. However, there were a few other less-tangible reasons which we must consider. These are perhaps cultural reasons. Although the industrial revolution was clearly an unplanned and spontaneous event, it never would have been "made" had there not been men who wanted such a thing to occur. There must have been men who saw opportunities not only for advances in technology, but also the profits those advances might create. Which brings us to one very crucial cultural attribute -- the English, like the Dutch of the same period, were a very commercial people. They saw little problem with making money, nor with taking their surplus and reinvesting it. Whether this attribute has something to do with their "Protestant work ethic," as Max Weber put it, or with a specifically English trait is debatable, but the fact remains that English entrepreneurs had a much wider scope of activities than did their Continental counterparts at the same time.
1.3 French Revolution and English Literature

1.3.1 Introduction

The French Revolution is widely recognized as one of the most influential events of late eighteenth- and early nineteenth-century Europe, with far reaching consequences in political, cultural, social, and literary arenas. Although scholars such as Jeremy Popkin point to more concrete political issues as grounds for the upheaval, supporters of the Revolution rallied around more abstract concepts of freedom and equality, such as resistance to the King’s totalitarian authority as well as the economic and legal privileges given to the nobility and clergy. It is in this resistance to monarchy, religion, and social difference that Enlightenment ideals of equality, citizenship, and human rights were manifested. These beliefs had profound influence on the Romantic poets.

The Revolution affected first- and second-generation Romantics in different ways. First-generation poets such as William Wordsworth, Samuel Taylor Coleridge, and Robert Southey, the most well-known members of the “Lake District” school of poetry, initially sympathized with the philosophical and political principles of the Revolution, particularly as expressed by William Godwin in his *Inquiry into Political Justice* (1793). Wordsworth famously chronicled his response to the war in his *Prelude*, although the relevant passages were not published in full until after his death in 1850. One shorter section, however, made its way into print in 1809 under the title “French Revolution, as it Appeared to Enthusiasts at Its Commencement.” The phrasing of the title indicates Wordsworth’s turn toward more conservative politics later in life, particularly after the bloody turn of the revolution.

According to Simon Bainbridge, Wordsworth and Coleridge translated the Revolution’s emphasis on man’s equality into the “language of the common man” and “low” subject matter found in *Lyrical Ballads*. Wordsworth’s everyday language and subject choices look like a literary revolution that mirrors the historical revolution by breaking down the boundaries that separated poetry - with its elevated characters, plots, and diction - from ordinary representation.

While first-generation Romantics saw their revolutionary fervor tempered by the gruesome turn of the revolution from the execution of Louis XVI through the Reign of Terror,
second-generation Romantics such as Lord Byron and Percy Shelley held to the Revolution’s principles in a more idealistic, if somewhat cautious way. Shelley, for instance, portrays rebellious events in poems such as *Prometheus Unbound* (1820), *Swellfoot the Tyrant* (1820), and *Hellas* (1822), yet he avoids direct representation of revolutionary action through a mythological framework. This framework, according to Jeffrey Cox, serves a two-fold purpose: to avoid the appearance of promoting violent revolutionary action and instilling despair in those who still promoted the cause of liberty throughout Europe. The latter Shelley sees as the primary fault with Wordsworth’s abandonment of radical libertarian ideals and adoption of more passive solutions, while the former is characteristic of Shelley’s critique of Byron’s representations of revolution as deteriorating into predestined violence and despondency. Shelley, above all, sought to promote the ideals of liberty and equality through non-violent revolution. Furthermore, Cox argues that Byron’s portrayal of inevitable, cyclical patterns of violence is representative of an inability to break free of the past. In this way, Cox interprets the revolution in *Marino Faliero* as doomed by the hero’s inability to overcome the past, which leads the rebels to mimic the actions of the aristocracy which they are trying to overthrow. This cynical view of radical action is reflective of Byron’s own attitudes toward the French Revolution, particularly his youthful idolization of Napoleon Bonaparte, whom he later criticized for regressing from liberty and democracy into monarchical dictatorship.

1.3.2 Origins

The French Revolution, along with the Industrial Revolution, has probably done more than any other revolution to shape the modern world. Not only did it transform Europe politically, but also, thanks to Europe's industries and overseas empires, the French Revolution's ideas of liberalism and nationalism have permeated nearly every revolution across the globe since 1945. In addition to the intense human suffering as described above, its origins have deep historic and geographic roots, providing the need, means, and justification for building the absolute monarchy of the Bourbon Dynasty which eventually helped trigger the revolution.
The need for absolute monarchy came partly from France's continental position in the midst of hostile powers. The Hundred Years War (1337-1453) and then the series of wars with the Hapsburg powers to the south, east, and north (c.1500-1659) provided a powerful impetus to build a strong centralized state. Likewise, the French wars of Religion (1562-98) underscored the need for a strong monarchy to safeguard the public peace. The means for building a monarchy largely came from the rise of towns and a rich middle class. They provided French kings with the funds to maintain professional armies and bureaucracies that could establish tighter control over France. Justification for absolute monarchy was based on the medieval custom of anointing new kings with oil to signify God's favor. This was the basis for the doctrine of Divine Right of Kings. In the late 1600's, all these factors contributed to the rise of absolutism in France.

Louis XIV (1643-1715) is especially associated with the absolute monarchy, and he did make France the most emulated and feared state in Europe, but at a price. Louis' wars and extravagant court at Versailles bled France white and left it heavily in debt. Louis' successors, Louis XV (1715-74) and Louis XVI (1774-89), were weak disinterested rulers who merely added to France's problems through their neglect. Their reigns saw rising corruption and three ruinously expensive wars that plunged France further into debt and ruined its reputation. Along with debt, the monarchy's weakened condition led to two other problems: the spread of revolutionary ideas and the resurgence of the power of the nobles.

Although the French kings were supposedly absolute rulers, they rarely had the will to censor the philosophes' new ideas on liberty and democracy. Besides, in the spirit of the Enlightenment, they were supposedly "enlightened despots" who should tolerate, if not actually believe, the philosophes' ideas. As a result, the ideas of Voltaire, Rousseau, and Montesquieu on liberty and democracy spread through educated society.

Second, France saw a resurgence of the power of the nobles who still held the top offices and were trying to revive and expand old feudal privileges. By this time most French peasants were free and as many as 30% owned their own land, but they still owed such feudal dues and services as the corvee (forced labor on local roads and bridges) and captaineries (the right of nobles to hunt in the peasants' fields, regardless of the damage they did to the crops). Naturally,
these infuriated the peasants. The middle class likewise resented their inferior social position, but were also jealous of the nobles and eagerly bought noble titles from the king who was always in need of quick cash. This diverted money from the business sector to much less productive pursuits and contributed to economic stagnation.

Besides the Royal debt, France also had economic problems emanating from two main sources. First of all, while the French middle class was sinking its money into empty noble titles, the English middle class was investing in new business and technology. For example, by the French Revolution, England had 200 waterframes, an advanced kind of waterwheel. France, with three times the population of England, had only eight. The result was the Industrial Revolution in England, which flooded French markets with cheap British goods, causing business failures and unemployment in France. Second, a combination of the unfair tax load on the peasants (which stifled initiative to produce more), outdated agricultural techniques, and bad weather led to a series of famines and food shortages in the 1780's.

All these factors (intellectual dissent, an outdated and unjust feudal social order, and a stagnant economy) created growing dissent and reached a breaking point in 1789. It was then that Louis XVI called the Estates General for the first time since 1614. What he wanted was more taxes. What he got was revolution.

1.3.3 Poetry and Politics

The conditions prevailing in England at that time made her particularly receptive to the new ideas generated by the Revolution. In literature the French Revolution was instrumental in the creation of a new interest in nature and the elemental simplicities of life. It accelerated the approach of the romantic era and the close of the Augustan school of poetry which was already moribund in the age of Wordsworth.

The age of Wordsworth was an age of revolution in the field of poetry as well as of politics. In both these fields the age had started expressing its impatience of set formulas and traditions, the tyranny of rules and the bondage of convention. From the French Revolution the age imbibed a spirit of revolt asserting the dignity of the individual spirit and hollowness of the
time-honoured conventions which kept it in check. Thus both in the political and the poetic fields the age learnt from the Revolution the necessity of emancipation—in the political field, from tyranny and social oppression; and in the poetic, from the bondage of rules and authority. The French Revolution, in a word, exerted a democratising influence, both on politics and poetry. Inspired by the French Revolution, poets and politicians alike were poised for an onslaught on old, time-rusted values. It was only here and there that some conservative critics stuck to their guns and eyed all zeal for change and liberation with suspicion and distrust. (Thus, for instance, Lord Jeffrey wrote in the *Edinburgh Review* that poetry had something common with religion in that its standards had been fixed long ago by certain inspired writers whose authority it would be ever unlawful to question.) But such views did not represent the spirit of the age which had come under the liberating influence of the French Revolution.

It is perhaps quite relevant to point out here the folly of the belief that the new literary and political tendencies, which had a common origin and were almost contemporaneous with each other, always influenced a given person equally strongly, that a person could not be a revolutionary in politics without being a revolutionary in literature, and *vice versa*. Scott, for example, was a romantic, but a Tory. Hazlitt, on the contrary, was a chartist in politics but was pleased to call himself an “aristocrat” in literature. Keats did not bother about the French Revolution, or even politics, at all. Wordsworth and Coleridge, the two real pioneers of the Romantic Movement in England, started as radicals and ended as tenacious Tories.

### 1.3.3. The Three Phases of the French Revolution

It is wrong to think of the French Revolution as a sudden coup unrelated to what had gone before it. In fact, the seeds of the Revolution had been sown long before they sprouted in 1789. We can distinguish three clear phases of the French Revolution, which according to Compton-Rickett, are as follows:

1. The Doctrinaire phase—the age of Rousseau;
2. The Political phase—the age of Robespierre and Danton;
3. The Military phase—the age of Napoleon.”

All these three phases considerably influenced the Romantic Movement in England.
1.3.4. Influence of the Doctrinaire Phase

The doctrinaire phase of the French Revolution was dominated by the thinker Rousseau. His teachings and philosophic doctrines were the germs that brought about an intellectual and literary revolution all over England. He was, fundamentally considered, a naturalist who gave the slogan “Return to Nature.” He expressed his faith in the elemental simplicities of life and his distrust of the sophistication of civilisation which, according to him, had been curbing the natural (and good) man. He revived the cult of the “noble savage” untainted by the so-called culture. Social institutions were all condemned by him as so many chains. He raised his powerful voice against social and political tyranny and exhorted the downtrodden people to rise for emancipation from virtual slavery and almost hereditary poverty imposed upon them by an unnatural political system which benefitted only a few. Rousseau’s primitivism, sentimentalism, and individualism had their influence on English thought and literature. In France they prepared the climate for the Revolution.

Rousseau’s sentimental belief in the essential goodness of natural man and the excellence of simplicity and even ignorance found a ready echo in Blake and, later, Wordsworth and Coleridge. The love of nature and the simplicities of village life and unsophisticated folk found ample expression in their poetic works. Wordsworth’s love of nature was partly due to Rousseau’s influence. Rousseau’s intellectual influence touched first Godwin and, through him, Shelley. Godwin in *Political Justice* embodied a considerable part of Rousseauistic thought. Like him he raised his voice for justice and equality and expressed his belief in the essential goodness of man. Referring reverently to *Political Justice* Shelley wrote that he had learnt “all that was valuable in knowledge and virtue from that book.”

1.3.5. The Influence of the Political Phase and the Military Phase

The political phase of the Revolution, which started with the fall of the Bastille, sent a wave of thrill to every young heart in Europe. Wordsworth became crazy for joy, and along with him, Southey and Coleridge caught the general contagion. All of them expressed themselves in
pulsating words. But such enthusiasm and rapture were not destined to continue for long. The Reign of Terror and the emergence of Napoleon as an undisputed tyrant dashed the enthusiasm of romantic poets to pieces. The beginning of the war between France and England completed their disillusionment, and Wordsworth, Coleridge, and Southey, who had started as wild radicals, ended as well-domesticated Tories. The latter romantics dubbed them as renegades who had let down the cause of the Revolution. Wordsworth, in particular, had to suffer much criticism down to the days of Robert Browning who wrote a pejorative poem on him describing him as “the lost leader.”

The modern era has unfolded in the shadow of the French Revolution. French society itself underwent a transformation as feudal, aristocratic, and religious privileges disappeared and old ideas about tradition and hierarchy were abruptly overthrown under the mantra of "Liberté, égalité, fraternité". Globally, the Revolution accelerated the rise of republics and democracies, the spread of liberalism, nationalism, socialism and secularism, the development of modern political ideologies, and the practice of total war. Some of its central documents, like the Declaration of the Rights of Man, expanded the arena of human rights to include women and slaves.

1.4. Literary Characteristics of the Age

Literature was the first branch of art to be influenced by the waves of Romanticism, although the concepts remain the same in all the art forms. It is one of the curiosities of literary history that the strongholds of the Romantic Movement were England and Germany, not the countries of the romance languages themselves. Thus it is from the historians of English and German literature that we inherit the convenient set of terminal dates for the Romantic period, beginning in 1798, the year of the first edition of Lyrical Ballads by Wordsworth and Coleridge and of the composition of Hymns to the Night by Novalis, and ending in 1832, the year which marked the deaths of both Sir Walter Scott and Goethe. However, as an international movement affecting all the arts, Romanticism begins at least in the 1770's and continues into the second half of the nineteenth century, later for American literature than for European, and later in some of the arts,
like music and painting, than in literature. This extended chronological spectrum (1770-1870) also permits recognition as Romantic the poetry of Robert Burns and William Blake in England, the early writings of Goethe and Schiller in Germany, and the great period of influence for Rousseau's writings throughout Europe.

The early Romantic period thus coincides with what is often called the "age of revolutions"--including, of course, the American (1776) and the French (1789) revolutions--an age of upheavals in political, economic, and social traditions, the age which witnessed the initial transformations of the Industrial Revolution. A revolutionary energy was also at the core of Romanticism, which quite consciously set out to transform not only the theory and practice of poetry (and all art), but the very way we perceive the world. Some of its major precepts are as follows:

1. **Imagination:** The imagination was elevated to a position as the supreme faculty of the mind. This contrasted distinctly with the traditional arguments for the supremacy of reason. The Romantics tended to define and to present the imagination as our ultimate "shaping" or creative power, the approximate human equivalent of the creative powers of nature or even deity. It is dynamic, an active, rather than passive power, with many functions. Imagination is the primary faculty for creating all art. On a broader scale, it is also the faculty that helps humans to constitute reality, for (as Wordsworth suggested), we not only perceive the world around us, but also in part create it. Uniting both reason and feeling (Coleridge described it with the paradoxical phrase, "intellectual intuition"), imagination is extolled as the ultimate synthesizing faculty, enabling humans to reconcile differences and opposites in the world of appearance. The reconciliation of opposites is a central ideal for the Romantics. Finally, imagination is inextricably bound up with the other two major concepts, for it is presumed to be the faculty which enables us to "read" nature as a system of symbols.

2. **Nature:** The Romantics greatly emphasized the importance of nature and the primal feelings of awe, apprehension and horror felt by man on approaching the sublimeness of it. This was mainly because of the industrial revolution, which had shifted life from the peaceful, serene countryside towards the chaotic cities, transforming man's natural order.
Nature was not only appreciated for its visual beauty, but also revered for its ability to help the urban man find his true identity. While particular perspectives with regard to nature varied considerably—nature as a healing power, nature as a source of subject and image, nature as a refuge from the artificial constructs of civilization, including artificial language—the prevailing views accorded nature the status of an organically unified whole. It was viewed as "organic," rather than, as in the scientific or rationalist view, as a system of "mechanical" laws, for Romanticism displaced the rationalist view of the universe as a machine (e.g., the deistic image of a clock) with the analogue of an "organic" image, a living tree or mankind itself. At the same time, Romantics gave greater attention both to describing natural phenomena accurately and to capturing "sensuous nuance"—and this is as true of Romantic landscape painting as of Romantic nature poetry. Accuracy of observation, however, was not sought for its own sake. Romantic nature poetry is essentially a poetry of meditation.

3. **Symbolism and Myth:** Symbolism and myth were given great prominence in the Romantic conception of art. In the Romantic view, symbols were the human aesthetic correlatives of nature's emblematic language. They were valued too because they could simultaneously suggest many things, and were thus thought superior to the one-to-one communications of allegory. Partly, it may have been the desire to express the "inexpressible"—the infinite—through the available resources of language that led to symbol at one level and myth (as symbolic narrative) at another.

4. **Emotion v/s Rationality:** Consequently, the Romantics sought to define their goals through systematic contrast with the norms of "Versailles neoclassicism." In their critical manifestoes—the 1800 "Preface" to Lyrical Ballads, the critical studies of the Schlegel brothers in Germany, the later statements of Victor Hugo in France, and of Hawthorne, Poe, and Whitman in the United States—they self-consciously asserted their differences from the previous age (the literary "ancien regime"), and declared their freedom from the mechanical "rules." Certain special features of Romanticism may still be highlighted by this contrast. We have already noted two major differences: the replacement of reason by the imagination for primary place among the human faculties and the shift from a
mimetic to an expressive orientation for poetry, and indeed all literature. In addition, neoclassicism had prescribed for art the idea that the general or universal characteristics of human behavior were more suitable subject matter than the peculiarly individual manifestations of human activity. From at least the opening statement of Rousseau's *Confessions*, first published in 1781--"I am not made like anyone I have seen; I dare believe that I am not made like anyone in existence. If I am not superior, at least I am different."--this view was challenged. Unlike the age of Enlightenment, which focused on rationality and intellect, Romanticism placed human emotions, feelings, instinct and intuition above everything else. While the poets in the era of rationality adhered to the prevalent rules and regulations while selecting a subject and writing about it, the Romantic writers trusted their emotions and feelings to create poetry. This belief can be confirmed from the definition of poetry by William Wordsworth, where he says that poetry is the spontaneous overflow of powerful feelings. The emphasis on emotions also spread to the music created in that period, and can be observed in the compositions made by musicians like Weber, Beethoven, Schumann, etc. Beethoven played an important role in the transition of Western music from the classical to the Romantic age.

5. **Artist, the Creator:** As the Romantic period emphasized on human emotions, the position of the artist or the poet also gained supremacy. In the earlier times, the artist was seen as a person who imitated the external world through his art. However, this definition was mooted in the Romantic era and the poet or the painter was seen as a creator of something which reflected his individuality and emotions. The Romantic perception of the artist as the creator is best encapsulated by Caspar David Friedrich, who remarked that "the artist's feeling is his law". It was also the first time that the poems written in the first person were being accepted, as the poetic persona became one with the voice of the poet.

6. **Nationalism:** The Romantics borrowed heavily from the folklore and the popular local art. During the earlier eras, literature and art were considered to belong to the high-class educated people, and the lower classes were not considered fit to enjoy them. Also, the language used in these works used to be highly lyrical, which was totally different from
what was spoken by people. However, Romantic artists took no shame from being
influenced by the folklore that had been created by the masses or the common people,
and not by the literary works that were popular only among the higher echelons of the
society. Apart from poetry, adopting folk tunes and ballads was one of the very important
characteristics of Romantic music. As the Romantics became interested and focused upon
developing the folklore, culture, language, customs and traditions of their own country,
they developed a sense of Nationalism which reflected in their works. Also, the language
used in Romantic poems was simple and easy to understand by the masses.

7. **The Everyday and the Exotic:** The attitude of many of the Romantics to the everyday,
social world around them was complex. It is true that they advanced certain realistic
techniques, such as the use of "local color" (through down-to-earth characters, like
Wordsworth's rustics, or through everyday language, as in Emily Bronte's northern
dialects or Whitman's colloquialisms, or through popular literary forms, such as folk
narratives). Yet social realism was usually subordinate to imaginative suggestion, and
what was most important were the ideals suggested by the above examples, simplicity
perhaps, or innocence. Earlier, the 18th-century cult of the noble savage had promoted
similar ideals, but now artists often turned for their symbols to domestic rather than
exotic sources--to folk legends and older, "unsophisticated" art forms, such as the ballad,
to contemporary country folk who used "the language of common men," not an artificial
"poetic diction," and to children (for the first time presented as individuals, and often
idealized as sources of greater wisdom than adults).

Simultaneously, as opposed to everyday subjects, various forms of the exotic in time
and/or place also gained favor, for the Romantics were also fascinated with realms of
existence that were, by definition, prior to or opposed to the ordered conceptions of
"objective" reason. Often, both the everyday and the exotic appeared together in
paradoxical combinations. In the Lyrical Ballads, for example, Wordsworth and
Coleridge agreed to divide their labors according to two subject areas, the natural and the
supernatural: Wordsworth would try to exhibit the novelty in what was all too familiar,
while Coleridge would try to show in the supernatural what was psychologically real,
both aiming to dislodge vision from the "lethargy of custom." The concept of the
beautiful soul in an ugly body, as characterized in Victor Hugo's Hunchback of Notre Dame and Mary Shelley's Frankenstein, is another variant of the paradoxical combination.

8. **Supernatural:** Another characteristic of this movement is the belief in the supernatural. The Romantics were interested in the supernatural and included it in their works. Gothic fiction emerged as a branch of Romanticism after Horace Walpole's 1764 novel The Castle of Otranto. This fascination for the mysterious and the unreal also led to the development of Gothic romance, which became popular during this period. Supernatural elements can also be seen in Coleridge's Kubla Khan', The Rime of the Ancient Mariner and Keats' La Belle Dame Sans Merci. As no Romantic artist followed any strict set of rules or regulations, it is difficult to define the characteristics of this movement accurately. Nevertheless, some of these characteristics are reflected in the works of that period. Though many writers and critics have called this movement "irrational", it cannot be denied that it was an honest attempt to portray the world, especially the intricacies of the human nature, in a paradigm-shifting way.

1.5. **Poets of the Romantic Age**

1.5.1. **William Wordsworth**

William Wordsworth (1770-1850) brought a completely new approach to the writing of English poetry. His objections to an over-stylized poetic diction, his attitude to nature, his choice of simple incidents and humble people as the subjects of his poetry—these well known characteristics of his, are all but, minor aspects of his revolutionary achievements. No, earlier English poet, had held such a view, nor in spite of Wordsworth’s undoubted influence on later poetry, any subsequent poet, has held it in its purity. Thus, Wordsworth is unique in the history of English poetry.

In 1791 he graduated from Cambridge, and traveled abroad to France. The spirit of the French Revolution had strongly influenced Wordsworth, and he returned (1792) to England, imbued with the principles of Rousseau and Republicanism. In 1793, were
published, “An Evening Walk” and “Descriptive Sketches”, written in a stylized idiom and vocabulary of the 18th century. The outbreak of the Reign of Terror, prevented Wordsworth’s return to France, and after gaining several small legacies, he settled with his sister, Dorothy in Dorsetshire.

In Dorsetshire Wordsworth became an intimate friend with Samuel Taylor Coleridge, and together they wrote the *Lyrical Ballads* (1798), where they sought to use the language of ordinary people in poetry; it includes Wordsworth’s poem *Tintern Abbey*. The work introduced Romanticism into England and became a manifesto for Romantic poets. In 1800, the second edition of the *Lyrical Ballads* was published, which included the critical essay outlining Wordsworth’s poetic principles. In its Preface, Wordsworth describes poetry as the “spontaneous overflow of powerful feelings.”

*The Prelude*, his long autobiographical poem, was completed in 1805, but was not published until his death. His next collection: Poems in two volumes (1807) include the famous, “Ode to Duty” and the “Ode: Intimations of Immortality”, and few other sonnets.

Wordsworth’s personality and poetry were deeply influenced by his love of nature, especially of the sights and scenes of the Lake District, where he spent the mature part of his life. A profoundly, original and sincere thinker, Wordsworth displayed a high seriousness comparable, at times, to Milton’s but tempered with tenderness and love of simplicity.

Wordsworth’s earlier works show the poetic beauty of common place things and people in works like “Margaret”, “Peter Bell”, “Michael”, and “The Idiot Boy”. His other well known poems are, “Lucy”, “The Solitary Reaper”, “Daffodils”, “The Rainbow”, “Resolution and Independence”, and the sonnet, “The World is Too Much with Us”.

Though his use of ordinary speech was highly criticized but it helped to get rid of the artificial conventions in poetry of the 18th century diction. Wordsworth—the profound, original and sincere thinker, is considered to be the greatest of English poets, but above all, he would be remembered as the creator of a new poetic tradition.
1.5.2. Samuel Taylor Coleridge

Coleridge (1772-1834), an English poet and a Man of Letters, was the most influential, brilliant and versatile figure, of the Romantic Movement in English literature.

Although Coleridge had been busy and productive in writing both poetry and topical prose, it was not until his friendship with Wordsworth, that he wrote his best poems. In 1798, Wordsworth and Coleridge published the volume *Lyrical Ballads*, whose poems and Preface have made it a seminal work and a manifesto of the Romantic Movement in English literature.

Coleridge’s main contribution to the volume was the haunting, dream-like ballad, *The Rime of the Ancient Mariner*. This long poem was well as *Kubla Khan* and *Christabel*, written during the same period are two of his best known works. The three works make use of exotic images and supernatural themes. *Dejection: An Ode*, published in 1802, is the last of Coleridge’s great poems. It shows the influence of (or the affinity to) Wordsworth’s poetic ideals, notably, the meditation upon self, nature, and the relationship among emotion, sense, experience and understanding. His confessions of an *Enquiring Spirit* was published posthumously in 1840.

His shorter poems include *Youth and Age, Fears in Solitude, Work without Hope*, etc. Coleridge worked for many years on his *Biographia Literaria* (1817), containing accounts of his literary life, and critical essays on philosophical and literary subjects. It presents Coleridge’s theories of creative imagination, but its debt to other writers, notably the German idealist philosophers, is often so heavy that the line between legitimate borrowing and plagiarism is blurred. This borrowing tendency, evident in some of his poetry, together with Coleridge’s notorious inability to complete projects, and his suggestions of impractical ones, made him a problematic figure. His most profound work is the philosophical *Aids to Reflection*.

Coleridge’s lifelong friend, Charles Lamb called him a “damaged Archangel”. Indeed, 20th century editorial scholarship has unearthed additional evidence of plagiarism, thus Coleridge is still a controversial figure. However, the originality and beauty of his poems, and his enormous influence on the intellectual and aesthetic life of his time, can hardly be questioned. He was the most brilliant conversationalist, and his *Lectures on Shakespeare*, remain among the most important statements in literary criticism.
1.5.3. Robert Southey (1774-1843)

Closely associated with Wordsworth and Coleridge is Robert Southey; and the three, on account of their residence in the northern lake district, were referred to contemptuously as the “Lakers” by the Scottish magazine reviews. Southey holds his place in this group more by personal association than by his literary gifts. He was born at Bristol, in 1774; studied at Westminster School, and at Oxford, where he found himself in perpetual conflict with the authorities on account of his independent views. He finally left the university and joined Coleridge in his scheme of a Pantisocracy. For more than 50 years he labored steadily at literature, refusing to consider any other occupation.

Southey gradually surrounded himself with one of the most extensive libraries in England, and set himself to the task of writing something every working day. The results of his industry were one hundred and nine volumes, besides some hundred and fifty articles for the magazines, most of which are now utterly forgotten. His most ambitious poems are Thalaba, a tale of Arabian enchantment; The Curse of Kehama, a medley of Hindu mythology; Madoc, a legend of a Welsh prince who discovered the Western world; and Roderick, a tale of the last of the Goths. Southey wrote far better prose than poetry, and his admirable Life of Nelson is still often read. Besides there are his Lives of British Admirals, his lives of Cowper and Wesley, and his histories of Brazil and of the Peninsular War.

Southey was made Poet Laureate in 1813, and was the first to raise that office from the low estate into which it had fallen since the death of Dryden. A few of his best known short poems include, “The Scholar”, “Auld Cloots”, “The Well of St. Keyne”, “The Inchcape Rock”, and “Lodore”.

1.5.4. Percy Bysshe Shelley (1792-1822)

Shelley was of that second generation of Romantic poets that did not live to be old and respectable. Shelley, in many respects was a Romantic poet par excellence. His strange, and brief
life with its eccentric unworldliness, his moods of ecstasy and lagour, his swooning idealism, combined to produce a popular image of Romanticism.

Shelley’s life continued to be dominated by his desire of a political and social reform, and he was constantly publishing pamphlets. When he was at the university, he wrote several extraordinary pamphlets, one such work, *The Necessity of Atheism*, caused him to be expelled from Oxford. His first important poem, *Queen Mab*, privately published in 1813, st forth a radical system of curing social ills by advocating the destruction of various established institutions.

In 1814, Shelley left England for France, with Mary Godwin, daughter of William Godwin. During their first year together, they were plagued by social ostracism and financial difficulties. However, in 1815, Shelley’s grandfather died and left him an annual income. *Laon and Cynthna* appeared in 1817, but was withdrawn and reissued the following year as The *Revolt of Islam*; it is a long poem in Spenserian stanzas that tells of a revolution and illustrates the growth of the human mind aspiring toward perfection.

Shelley composed the great body of his poetry in Italy. *The Cenci*, a tragedy in verse exploring moral deformity, was published in 1819, followed by his masterpiece, *Prometheus Unbound* (1820). In this lyrical drama, Shelley put forth all his passions and beliefs, which were modeled after the ideas of Plato. *Epipsychidion* (1821) is a poem addressed to Emilia Viviani, whom Shelley met in Pisa, and developed a brief but close friendship.

His great elegy, *Adonais* (1821), written in memory of Keats, asserts the immortality of beauty. *Hellas* (1822), a lyrical drama was inspired by the Greek struggle for independence. His other poems include, *Alastor or the Spirit of Solitude* (1816), it is a long poem in blank verse and is a kind of spiritual autobiography. “Ode to the West Wind”, “To a Skylark”, “Ozymandias”, “The Indian Serenade”, and “When the Lamp is Shattered” are his shorter poems.

Most of Shelley’s poetry reveals his philosophy, a combination of belief in the power of human love and reason, and faith in the perfectibility and ultimate progress of man. His lyric poems are superb in their beauty, grandeur and mastery of language. Although Matthew Arnold labeled him an “ineffectual angel”, 20th century critics have taken Shelley seriously, recognizing his wit, his gifts as a satirist, and his influence as a social and political thinker.
1.5.5. John Keats (1795-1821)

John Keats is perhaps the greatest of the second generation Romantic poets who blossomed early and died young. Indeed one of the most striking things about Keats is the independence with which he worked out his poetic destiny, the austere devotion with which he undertook his own artistic training.

Apprenticed to a surgeon (1811), Keats came to know Leigh Hunt and his literary circle, and in 1816 he gave up surgery to write poetry. His first volume of poems appeared in 1817. It included, “I Stood tip-toe Upon a Little Hill”, “Sleep and Poetry”, and the famous sonnet, “On First Looking into Chapman’s Homer.”

*Endymion*, a long poem, was published in 1818. Although faulty in structure, it is nevertheless full of rich imagery and color. Keats returned from a walking tour in the Highlands to find himself attacked in *Blackwood’s Magazine*—an article berated him for belonging to Leigh Hunt’s “Cockney School” of poetry—and in the *Quarterly Review*. The critical assaults of 1818 marked a turning point in Keats’ life; he was forced to examine his work carefully, and as a result the influence of Hunt was diminished.

With his friend, the artist Joseph Severn, Keats sailed for Italy shortly after the publication of “Lamia”, “Isabella; or the Pot of Basil”, “The Eve of St. Agnes”, and other poems (1820), which contains most of his important work and is probably the greatest single volume of poetry published in England in the 19th century. He died in Rome (1821) at the age of twenty-five.

In spite of his tragically brief career, Keats is one of the most important English poets. He is also among the most personally appealing. Noble, generous, and sympathetic, he was capable not only of passionate love but also of warm, steadfast friendship. Keats is ranked with Shelley and Byron, as one of the three great Romantic poets. Such poems as “Ode to a Nightingale”, “Ode on a Grecian Urn”, “To Autumn”, and “Ode on Melancholy” are unequaled for dignity, melody and richness of sensuous imagery.
Keats’ posthumous pieces include “La Belle Dame Sans Merci”, in its way is an evocation of Romantic medievalism as “The Eve of St. Agnes”. Among his sonnets, familiar ones are, “When I Have Fears that I May Cease to be”. “Lines on the Mermaid Tavern”, “Fancy”, and “Bards of Passion and of Mirth” are delightful short poems.

Some of Keats’ finest work is the unfinished epic Hyperion. In recent years critical attention has focused on Keats’ philosophy, which involves not abstract thought but rather absolute receptivity to experience. This attitude is indicated in his celebrated term “negative capability—to let the mind be a thoroughfare for all thought.”

1.5.6. George Gordon, Lord Byron (1788-1824)

Lord Byron, the third of the trio of second generation Romantic poets, was the master of colloquial tone in verse and the inventor of a species of discursive narrative poetry.

His first volume, Fugitive Pieces (1806) was suppressed, revised and expanded, and later appeared as Poems on Various Occasions in 1807. This was followed by Hours of Idleness (1807), which provoked such severe criticism from the Edinburgh Review that Byron replied with, English Bards and Scotch Reviewers (1809), a satire in heroic couplets reminiscent of Pope, which brought him immediate fame.

Byron left England the same year for a grand tour through Spain, Portugal, Italy and the Balkans. He returned in 1811 with Cantos I and II of Childe Harold (1812), a melancholy, philosophic poem in Spenserian stanzas, which made him the social lion of London. It was followed by the verse tales, The Giaour (1813), The Bride of Abydos (1813), The Corsair (1814), Lara (1814), The Siege of Corinth (1816), and Parisina (1816).

In 1816, Byron left England, never to return. He passed sometime with Shelley in Switzerland, writing Canto III of Childe Harold and The Prisoner of Chillon. Settling in Venice (1817), Byron led for a time a life of dissipation, but produced Canto IV of Childe Harold (1818), Beppo (1818), and Mazeppa (1819) and began Don Juan.
Ranked with Shelley and Keats as one of the great Romantic poets, Byron became famous throughout Europe as the embodiment of Romanticism. His good looks, his lameness, and his flamboyant lifestyle all contributed to the formation of the Byronic legend. By the mid 20th century, his reputation as a poet had been eclipsed by growing critical recognition of his talent as a wit and satirist.

Byron’s poetry covers a wide range. In *English Bards and Scotch Reviewers* and in *The Vision of Judgement* (1822) he wrote 18th century satire. He also created the Byronic Hero, who appears consummately in the Faustian tragedy *Manfred* (1817)—a mysterious, lonely, defiant figure whose past hides some great crime. *Cain* (1821) raised a storm of abuse for its skeptical attitude towards religion. The verse tale, *Beppo* is in the ottava rima, that Byron later used for his acknowledged masterpiece, *Don Juan* (1814-24), an epic satire combing Byron’s art as a storyteller, his lyricism, his cynicism, and his detestation of convention.

### 1.6 Prose Writers of the Romantic Age

Though the Romantic period specialized in poetry, there also appeared a few prose-writers—Lamb, Hazlitt and De Quincey who rank very high. There was no revolt of the prose-writers against the eighteenth century comparable to that of the poets, but a change had taken place in the prose-style also.

Whereas many eighteenth century prose-writers depended on assumptions about the suitability of various prose styles for various purposes which they shared with their relatively small but sophisticated public; writers in the Romantic period were rather more concerned with subject matter and emotional expression than with appropriate style. They wrote for an ever-increasing audience which was less homogeneous in its interest and education than that of their predecessors. There was also an indication of a growing distrust of the sharp distinction between matter and manner which was made in the eighteenth century, and of a Romantic preference for spontaneity rather than formality and contrivance. There was a decline of the ‘grand’ style and of most forms of contrived architectural prose written for what may be called public or didactic purposes. Though some Romantic poets—Coleridge, Shelley, Keats, Byron—wrote excellent prose in their critical writings, letters and journals, and some of the novelists like Scott and Jane
Austen were masters of prose-style, those who wrote prose for its own sake in the form of the essays and attained excellence in the art of prose-writing were Lamb, Hazlitt and De Quincey.

1.6.1. Charles Lamb (1775-1834)

Charles Lamb is one of the most lovable personalities in English literature. He lived a very humble, honest, and most self-sacrificing life. He never married, but devoted himself to the care of his sister Mary, ten years his senior, who was subject to mental fits, in one of which she had fatally wounded her mother. In his *Essays of Elia* (1823) and *Last Essays* (1833), in which is revealed his own personality, he talks intimately to the readers about himself, his quaint whims and experiences, and the cheerful and heroic struggle which he made against misfortunes. Unlike Wordsworth who was interested in natural surroundings and shunned society, Lamb who was born and lived in the midst of London street, was deeply interested in the city crowd, its pleasures and occupations, its endless comedies and tragedies, and in his essays he interpreted with great insight and human sympathy that crowded human life of joys and sorrows.

Lamb belongs to the category of intimate and self-revealing essayists, of whom Montaigne is the original, and Cowley the first exponent in England. To the informality of Cowley he adds the solemn confessional manner of Sir Thomas Browne. He writes always in a gentle, humorous way about the sentiments and trifles of everyday. The sentimental, smiling figure of ‘Elia’ in his essays is only a cloak with which Lamb hides himself from the world. Though in his essays he plays with trivialities, as Walter Pater has said, “We know that beneath this blithe surface there is something of the domestic horror, of the beautiful heroism, and devotedness too, of the old Greek tragedy.”

The style of Lamb is described as ‘quaint’, because it has the strangeness which we associate with something old-fashioned. One can easily trace in his English the imitations of the 16th and 17th century writers he most loved—Milton, Sir Thomas Browne, Fuller, Burton, Issac Walton. According to the subject he is treating, he makes use of the rhythms and vocabularies of these writers. That is why, in every essay Lamb’s style changes. This is the secret of the charm of his style and it also prevents him from ever becoming monotonous or tiresome. His style is also full of surprises because his mood continually varies, creating or suggesting its own style, and calling into play some recollection of this or that writer of the older world.
Lamb is the most lovable of all English essayists, and in his hand the Essay reached its perfection. His essays are true to Johnson’s definition; ‘a loose sally of the mind.’ Though his essays are all criticisms or appreciations of the life of his age and literature, they are all intensely personal. They, therefore, give us an excellent picture of Lamb and of humanity. Though he often starts with some purely personal mood or experience he gently leads the reader to see life as he saw it, without ever being vain or self-assertive. It is this wonderful combination of personal and universal interest together with his rare old style and quaint humour, which have given his essays his perennial charm, and earned for him the covetable title of “The Prince among English Essayists”.

1.6.2 William Hazlitt (1778-1830)

As a personality Hazlitt was just the opposite of Lamb. He was a man of violent temper, with strong likes and dislikes. In his judgment of others he was always downright and frank, and never cared for its effect on them. During the time when England was engaged in a bitter struggle against Napoleon, Hazlitt worshipped him as a hero, and so he came in conflict with the government. His friends left him one by one on account of his aggressive nature, and at the time of his death only Lamb stood by him.

Hazlitt wrote many volumes of essays, of which the most effective is The Spirit of the Age (1825) in which he gives critical portraits of a number of his famous contemporaries. This was a work which only Hazlitt could undertake because he was outspoken and fearless in the expression of his opinion. Though at times he is misled by his prejudices, yet taking his criticism of art and literature as a whole there is not the least doubt that there is great merit in it. He has the capacity to see the whole of his author most clearly, and he can place him most exactly in relation to other authors. In his interpretation of life in the general and proper sense, he shows an acute and accurate power of observation and often goes to the very foundation of things. Underneath his light and easy style there always flows an undercurrent of deep thought and feeling.

The style of Hazlitt has force, brightness and individuality. Here and there we find passages of solemn and stately music. It is the reflection of Hazlitt’s personality—outspoken, straightforward and frank. As he had read widely, and his mind was filled with great store of
learning, his writings are interspersed with sentences and phrases from other writers and there are also echoes of their style. Above all, it vibrates with the vitality and force of his personality, and so never lapses into dullness.

1.6.3 Thomas de Quincey (1785-1859)

De Quincey is famous as the writer of ‘impassioned prose’. He shared the reaction of his day against the severer classicism of the eighteenth century, preferring rather the ornate manner of Jeremy Taylor, Sir Thomas Browne and their contemporaries. The specialty of his style consists in describing incidents of purely personal interest in language suited to their magnitude as they appear in the eyes of the writer. The reader is irresistibly attracted by the splendour of his style which combines the best elements of prose and poetry. In fact his prose works are more imaginative and melodious than many poetical works. There is revealed in them the beauty of the English language. The defects of his style are that he digresses too much, and often stops in the midst of the fine paragraph to talk about some trivial thing by way of jest. But in spite of these defects his prose is still among the few supreme examples of style in the English language.

De Quincey was a highly intellectual writer and his interests were very wide. Mostly he wrote in the form of articles for journals and he dealt with all sorts of subjects—about himself and his friends, life in general, art, literature, philosophy and religion. Of his autobiographical sketches the best-known is his Confessions of an English Opium-Eater, in which he has given us, in a most interesting manner, glimpses of his own life under the influence of opium. He wrote fine biographies of a number of classical, historical and literary personages, of which the most ambitious attempt is The Caerars. His most perfect historical essay is on Joan of Arc. His essays on principle of literature are original and penetrating. The best of this type is the one where he gives the distinction between the literature of knowledge and of power. On the Knocking at the Gate in Macbeth is the most brilliant. He also wrote very scholarly articles on Goethe, Pope, Schiller and Shakespeare. Besides these he wrote a number of essays on science and theology.

In all his writings De Quincey asserts his personal point of view, and as he is a man of strong prejudices, likes and dislikes, he often gives undue emphasis on certain points. The result is that we cannot rely on his judgment entirely. But there is no doubt that his approach is always original and brilliant which straightway captures the attention of the reader. Moreover, the
splendour of his ‘poetic prose’ which is elaborate and sonorous in its effects, casts its own special spell. The result is that De Quincey is still one of the most fascinating prose-writers of England.

1.6.4 Walter Savage Landor (1775-1864)

While Hazlitt, Lamb, de Quincey, and other Romantic critics went back to early English literature for their inspiration, Landor shows a reaction from the prevailing Romanticism by his imitation of the ancient classic writers. His life was an extraordinary one and, like his work, abounded in sharp contrasts. On the one hand, there are his egoism, his uncontrollable anger, his perpetual lawsuits, and the last sad tragedy with his children, which suggests King Lear and his daughters; on the other hand there is his steady devotion to the classics and to the cultivation of the deep wisdom of the ancients, which suggests Pindar and Cicero. His works show the wild extravagance of Gebir, followed by the superb classic style and charm of Pericles and Aspasia. Such was Landor, a man of high ideals, perpetually at war with himself and the world.

Landor’s reaction from Romanticism is all the more remarkable in view of his early efforts, such as Gebir, a wildly romantic poem, which rivals any work of Byron or Shelley in its extravagance. Notwithstanding its occasional beautiful and suggestive lines, the work was not and never has been successful; and the same may be said of all his poetical works. His first collection of poems was published in 1795, his last full half century later, in 1846. In the latter volume, The Hellenics—which included some translations of his earlier Latin poems, called Idyllia Heroica. In all these poem the impressive feature is the strikingly original figures of speech which Landor uses to emphasize his meaning.

It is by his prose works, largely, that Landor has won a place in English literature; partly because of their intrinsic worth, their penetrating thought and severe classic style; and partly because of their profound influence upon the writers of the present age. The most noted of his prose works are his six volumes of Imaginary Conversations (1824-1846). For these conversations Landor brings together, sometimes in groups, sometimes in couples, well-known characters, or rather shadows, from the four corners of the earth and from the remotest ages of recorded history. Thus Diogenes talks with Plato, Aesop with a young slave girl in Egypt, Henry VIII with Anne Boleyn in prison, Dante with Beatrice, Leofric with Lady Godiva—all these and
many others, from Epictetus to Cromwell are brought together and speak of life and love and death, each from his own viewpoint. Occasionally, as in the meeting of Henry and Anne Boleyn, the situation is tense and dramatic; but as a rule the characters simply meet and converse in the same quiet strain, which becomes, after much reading, somewhat monotonous. On the other hand, one who reads Imaginary Conversations is lifted at once into a calm and noble atmosphere which braces and inspires him, making him forget petty things, like a view from a hilltop. By its combination of lofty thought and severely classic style the book has won, and deserves, a very high place among the English literary records.

The same criticism applies to Pericles and Aspasia, which is a series of imaginary letters, telling the experiences of Aspasia, a young lady from Asia Minor, who visits Athens at the summit of its fame and glory, in the great age of Pericles. This is considered to be the best of all of Landor’s works, one gets from it not only Landor’s classic style, but—what is worthwhile—a better picture of Greece in the days of its greatness than can be obtained from many historical volumes.

1.7 Novelists of the Romantic Age

The great novelists of the Romantic period are Jane Austen and Scott, but before them there appeared some novelists who came under the spell of medievalism and wrote novels of ‘terror’ or the ‘Gothic novels’. The origin of this type of fiction can be ascribed to Horace Walpole’s (1717-97) *The Castle of Otranto* (1746). Here the story in set in medieval Italy and it includes a gigantic helmet that can strike dead its victims, tyrants, supernatural intrusions, mysteries and secrets. There were a number of imitators of such a type of novel during the eighteenth century as well as in the Romantic period.

1.7.1 The Gothic Novel

The most popular of the writers of the ‘terror’ or ‘Gothic’ novel during the Romantic age was Mrs. Ann Radcliffe (1764-1823), of whose five novels the best-known are *The Mysteries of Udolpho* and *The Italian*. She initiated the mechanism of the ‘terror’ tale as practiced by Horace Walpole and his followers, but combined it with sentimental but effective description of scenery.
The Mysteries of Udolpho relates the story of an innocent and sensitive girl who falls in the hands of a heartless villain named Montoni. He keeps her in a grim and isolated castle full of mystery and terror. The novels of Mrs. Radcliffe became very popular, and they influenced some of the great writers like Byron and Shelley. Later they influenced the Bronte sisters whose imagination was stimulated by these strange stories.

Though Mrs. Radcliffe was the prominent writer of ‘Gothic’ novels, there were a few other novelists who earned popularity by writing such novels. They were Mathew Gregory (‘Monk’) Lewis (1775-1818). Who wrote The Monk, Tales of Terror and Tales of Wonder; and Charles Robert Maturin whose Melmoth the Wanderer exerted great influence in France. But the most popular of all ‘terror’ tales was Frankenstein (1817) written by Mrs. Shelley. It is the story of a mechanical monster with human powers capable of performing terrifying deeds. Of all the ‘Gothic’ novels it is the only one which is popular even today.

1.7.2. Jane Austen (1775-1817)

Jane Austen brought good sense and balance to the English novel which during the Romantic age had become too emotional and undisciplined. Giving a loose rein to their imagination the novelist of the period carried themselves away from the world around them into a romantic past or into a romantic future. The novel, which in the hands of Richardson and Fielding had been a faithful record of real life and of the working of heart and imagination, became in the closing years of the eighteenth century the literature of crime, insanity and terror. It, therefore, needed castigation and reform which were provided by Jane Austen. Living a quiet life she published her six novels anonymously, which have now placed her among the front rank of English novelists. She did for the English novel precisely what the Lake poets did for English poetry—she refined and simplified it, making it a true reflection of English life. As Wordsworth made a deliberate effort to make poetry natural and truthful, Jane Austen also from the time she started writing her first novel—Pride and Prejudice, had in her mind the idea of presenting English country society exactly as it was, in opposition to the romantic extravagance of Mrs. Radcliffe and her school. During the time of great turmoil and revolution in various fields, she quietly went on with her work, making no great effort to get a publisher, and, when a publisher was got, contenting herself with meagre remuneration and never permitting her name to appear on a title page. She is one of the sincerest examples in English literature of art for art’s sake.
In all Jane Austen wrote six novels—*Pride and Prejudice, Sense and Sensibility, Emma, Mansfield Park, Northanger Abbey* and *Persuasion*. Of these *Pride and Prejudice* is the best and most widely read of her novels. *Sense and Sensibility, Emma* and *Mansfield* are now placed among the front rank of English novels. From purely literary point of view *Northanger Abbey* gets the first place on account of the subtle humour and delicate satire it contains against the grotesque but popular ‘Gothic’ novels.

As a novelist Jane Austen worked in a narrow field. She was the daughter of a humble clergyman living in a little village. Except for short visits to neighbouring places, she lived a static life but she had such a keen power of observation that the simple country people became the characters of her novels. The chief duties of these people were of the household, their chief pleasures were in country gatherings and their chief interest was in matrimony. It is the small, quiet world of these people, free from the mighty interests, passions, ambitious and tragic struggles of life that Jane Austin depicts in her novels. But in spite of these limitations she has achieved wonderful perfection in that narrow field on account of her acute power of observation, her fine impartiality and self-detachment, and her quiet, delicate and ironical humour. Her circumstances helped her to give that finish and delicacy to her work, which have made them artistically prefect. Novel-writing was a part of her everyday life, to be placed aside should a visitor come, to be resumed when he left, to be pursued unostentatiously and tranquilly in the midst of the family circle. She knew precisely what she wanted to do, and she did it in the way that suited her best. Though in her day she did not receive the appreciation she deserved, posterity has given her reward by placing this modest, unassuming woman who died in her forties, as one of the greatest of English novelists.

Among her contemporaries only Scott, realized the greatness and permanent worth of her work, and most aptly remarked: “That young lady has a talent for describing the involvements and feelings and characters of ordinary life which is to me the most wonderful I ever met with. The big bowbow strain I can do myself, like any now going, but the exquisite touch which renders ordinary commonplace things and characters interesting from the truth of the description and the sentiment, is denied to me, what a pity such a gifted creature died so early!”
1.7.3 Walter Scott (1771-1832)

Walter Scott’s qualities as a novelist were vastly different from those of Jane Austen. Whereas she painted domestic miniatures, Scott depicted pageantry of history on broader canvases. Jane Austen is precise and exact in whatever she writes; Scott is diffusive and digressive. Jane Austen deals with the quiet intimacies of English rural life free from high passions, struggles and great actions; Scott, on the other hand, deals with the chivalric, exciting, romantic and adventurous life of the Highlanders—people living on the border of England and Scotland, among whom he spent much of his youth, or with glorious scenes of past history.

During his first five or six years of novel-writing Scott confined himself to familiar scenes and characters. The novels which have a local colour and are based on personal observations are *Guy Mannering*, *The Antiquary*, *Old Mortality* and *The Heart of Midlothian*. His first attempt at a historical novel was *Ivanhoe* (1819) followed by *Kenilworth* (1821), *Quentin Durward* (1823), and *The Talisman* (1825). He returned to Scottish antiquity from time to time as in *The Monastery* (1820) and *St. Ronan’s Well* (1823).

In all these novels Scott reveals himself as a consummate storyteller. His leisurely unfolding of the story allows of digression particularly in the descriptions of natural scenes or of interiors. Without being historical in the strict sense he conveys a sense of the past age by means of a wealth of colourful descriptions, boundless vitality and with much humour and sympathy. The historical characters which he has so beautifully portrayed that they challenge comparison with the characters of Shakespeare include Queen Elizabeth and Mary Queen of Scott. Besides these he has given us a number of imperishable portraits of the creatures of his imagination. He is a superb master of the dialogue which is invariably true to character.

The novels of Scott betray the same imaginative joy in the recreation of the past as his poetry, but the novel offered him a more adaptable and wider field than the narrative poem. It gave him a better opportunity for the display of his varied gifts, his antiquarian knowledge, his observation of life and character, his delight in popular as well as courtly scenes, and his rich humour.

Scott is the first English writer of the historical novel, and he made very enduring contributions to its development in England as well as in Europe. He was by temperament and
training perfectly suited to the accomplishment of this task. In the first place he had acquired a profound knowledge of history by his copious reading since his earliest youth. He had the zest of the story-teller, and a natural heartiness which made him love life in all its manifestations. He had an innate sense of the picturesque, developed by his passion for antiquarianism. His conservative temper which turned him away from the contemporary revolutionary enthusiasm, gave him a natural sympathy for the days of chivalry. In the Romantic age, Scott was romantic only in his love of the picturesque and his interest in the Middle Ages.

Scott was the first novelist in Europe who made the scene an essential element in action. He knew Scotland, and loved it, and there is hardly an event in any of his Scottish novels in which we do not breathe the very atmosphere of the place, and feel the presence of its moors and mountains. He chooses the place so well and describes it so perfectly, that the action seems almost to be result of natural environment.

Though the style of Scott is often inartistic, heavy and dragging; the love interest in his novels is apt to be insipid and monotonous; he often sketches a character roughly and plunges him into the midst of stirring incidents; and he has no inclinations for tracing the logical consequences of human action—all these objections and criticisms are swept away in the end by the broad, powerful current of his narrative genius. Moreover, Scott’s chief claim to greatness lies in the fact that he was the first novelist to recreate the past in such a manner that the men and women of the bygone ages, and the old scenes became actually living, and throbbing with life. Carlyle very pertinently remarked about Scott’s novels: “These historical novels have taught this truth unknown to the writers of history, that the bygone ages of the world were actually filled by living men, not by protocols, state papers, controversies, and abstractions of men.”

1.8 Summary of the Age of Romanticism

This period extends from the war with the colonies, following the Declaration of Independence in 1776 to the accession of Victoria in 1837. During the first part of the period especially, England was in a continual turmoil, produced by political and economic agitation at home, and by the long wars that covered two continents and the wide sea between them. The
mighty changes resulting from these two causes have given this period the name of the Age of Revolution. The storm center of all the turmoil in England and abroad was the French Revolution, which had a profound influence on the life and literature of all Europe. On the Continent the overthrow of Napoleon at Waterloo (1815) apparently checked the progress of liberty, which had started with the French Revolution, but in England the case was reversed. The agitation for popular liberty, which at one time threatened a revolution, went steadily forward till it resulted in the final triumph of democracy, in the Reform Bill of 1832, and in a number of exceedingly important reforms, such as the extension of manhood suffrage, the removal of the last unjust restrictions against Catholics, the establishment of a national system of schools, followed by a rapid increase in popular education, and the abolition of slavery in all English colonies (1833). To this added the changes produced by the discovery of steam and the invention of machinery, which rapidly changed England from an agricultural to a manufacturing nation, introduced the factory system, and caused this period to be known as the Age of Industrial Revolution.

In the most basic sense, Romanticism, which is loosely identified as spanning the years of 1783-1830, can be distinguished from the preceding period called the Enlightenment by observing that the one elevated the role of spirit, soul, instinct, and emotion, while the other advocated a cool, detached scientific approach to most human endeavors and dilemmas. In short, Romanticism in literature was a rejection of many of the values movements such as the Enlightenment and Scientific Revolution held as paramount.

Romanticism, initiated by the English poets such as Coleridge and Wordsworth, as well as Blake, Keats, Shelley, was concentrated primarily in the creative expressions of literature and the arts; however, the philosophy and sentiment characteristic of the Romanticism movement would spread throughout Europe and would ultimately impact not only the arts and humanities, but the society at large, permanently changing the ways in which human emotions, relationships, and institutions were viewed, understood, and artistically and otherwise reflected.

The Enlightenment was the name given to the period that preceded the Romantic Age, and it is in understanding the key features of the Enlightenment that one can best understand how the characteristics of Romanticism came to be, and how they differed so radically from those of the industrialized era. The Enlightenment had developed and championed logic and reason above
all other qualities and there was little room in this worldview for the emotion-based nature that would define Romanticism. According the Enlightenment view, people and their relationships, roles, institutions, and indeed, their whole societies, could be understood best if organized and approached with a scientific perspective.

During this time in the history of the romanticism movement in literature, it was believed that objectivity was not only desirable, but also achievable. Subjective emotions, contemplation of nature, and the creative impulse felt by individuals were all of far lesser importance than building the physical and commercial infrastructure of a country that had new resources, techniques, and capital with which to experiment. The literary products of the period reflected the priorities and values of the time, focusing mainly on political and economic themes. Philosophical writings similarly reflected the mechanistic preoccupations of the age and dealt more so than ever with the individual human experience as well as personal thoughts.

Romanticism, then, emerged as a reaction against what was perceived to be a cultural climate that had been lacking in spontaneity, creativity, and individuality. Indeed, some of the earliest and most profound writings of the Romantic period were not the poems themselves, but manifestos and discourses on the nature of human beings and creative expression, such as Coleridge’s *Biographia Literaria*, Shelley’s *A Defence of Poetry*, and Wordsworth’s *Preface to Lyrical Ballads*. In these three exemplary prose pieces, the Romantic poets promote their vision of what poetry, and by extension, society, should be. Their vision was quite distinct from that of the Enlightenment, and in these pieces, the major characteristics of Romanticism were developed and disseminated. One of these characteristics, as articulated by Wordsworth in the *Preface* was the belief that “ordinary things [were worth writing about] and should be presented to the mind in an unusual way”. The Romantics believed that through close attention, the most ordinary, quotidian objects, emotions, and experiences could be elevated to the extraordinary.

Another characteristic of Romanticism, as expressed by Shelley in his *Defence*, was the belief that emotions and relationships were not just important, but were the very currency of life. Rather than functioning as a cog in a wheel, mechanically and unaware of the other parts comprising the whole machine, Shelley argued that: The great secret of mortals is love…and an identification of ourselves with the beautiful which exists in thought, action, or person, not our own. A man, to be greatly good, must imagine intensely and comprehensively; he must put
himself in the place of another and of many others; the pains and pleasures of his species must become his own. While some of the Romantics were more inwardly focused than the kind of engagement that Shelley called for so passionately in his *Defence*, they tended to agree on the major characteristics of Romanticism: the valuation of intensely felt emotion, the importance of creative expression, and the possibility of transcending ordinary experience, which was referred to as achieving a state of sublimity.

Romanticism was, above all, an experimental project of self and social quest, a quest for intense experiences that were felt deeply, a quest for connection, a quest for transcendence, and a quest to know the self—and, by extension, others—more profoundly. The quest did not occur, nor could it have occurred, by creating a plan to achieve it. Rather, it was through constant observation and alertness, and the devotion of attention to the most minute and seemingly unimportant details of daily life, that the self, and therefore society, had the possibility of transmuting itself into something greater. Bloom and Trilling refer to Romanticism as a “health-restoring revival of the instinctual life”. Rather than trust in machines, industry, and scientifically-based progress, Romanticism encouraged people to look inward, trusting themselves and their own intuition. Romantics also directed their own and others’ attention to nature, where all organic processes could be observed, celebrated, and from which lessons could be learned. Through these shifts in focus, the Romantics argued, it would become possible for people to know themselves and the world better and more fully.

Whereas the preceding age of Enlightenment had promised that reason, logic, and scientific processes would lead to knowledge, success, and a better society, the Romantics challenged that notion, and changed the equation. It was no longer necessary to follow traditional formulae; rather, new literary forms and new modes of expression could be created. “The major Romantic questers,” write Bloom and Trilling, offered through their own examples the possibility of “engage[ing] in the extraordinary enterprise of seeking to re-beget their own selves, as though through the imagination a man might hope to become his own father, or at least his own heroic precursor”. Perhaps Romanticism was adopted so quickly and on such a widespread scale across Europe and then, not long after, to America, because it was an antidote to the hyper-accelerated period of change that the Industrial Revolutions had ushered in during the previous epoch. Given that the Industrial Revolution had caused such dramatic shifts in all aspects of
society, changing the ways that people thought, felt, worked, and related with one another, it would not be unreasonable to hypothesize that such a shift in paradigm and in practice created a sort of cognitive dissonance. Such dissonance might only have been possible to resolve by embracing the backlash that Romanticism represented to the Enlightenment ideas and ideals. Whereas the Enlightenment could be interpreted as having drained the creativity and spontaneity out of life, making tasks and relationships predictable through mechanization, Romanticism offered the hope of restoration through small and unexpected pleasures. Romanticism invited people to dream again, to imagine, to give in to flights of fancy, to explore the border between conscious experience and unconscious dreams and desires.

These ideals of Romanticism, first articulated by the English poets, spread to other artistic genres, including music and the visual arts, as well as to other countries. For those countries which had not yet coalesced in terms of their own national identity, the Romanticism offered a creative framework for defining and expressing what was unique to that region, for Romanticism was inherently creative and imaginative, inviting its adherents to envision possibilities that might never have been entertained before. As a result, the value of the individual, of the arts, and of emotional expression, was able to regain a place in thought and practice, tempering the logic-bound tendencies of science with the shifting philosophies of emotion. As Bloom and Trilling observe, the contributions of the Romantics remain valuable and relevant in contemporary life. Perhaps, they write, “romanticism is…endemic in human nature,” for “all men and women are questers to some degree.”

Sources/Suggested Reading

1. A Short History of English Literature by Ifor Evans

2. English Literature: Its History and Significance by William J Long

3. History of English Literature by Edward Albert
4. The French Revolution: From its Origins to 1793 by Georges Lefebvre


1.0. Introduction

The Victorian Age in English literature began in second quarter of the nineteenth century and ended by 1900. Though strictly speaking, the Victorian age ought to correspond with the reign of Queen Victoria, which extended from 1837 to 1901, yet literary movements rarely coincide with the exact year of royal accession or death. From the year 1798 with the publication of the Lyrical Ballads till the year 1820 there was the heyday of Romanticism in England, but after that year there was a sudden decline.

Wordsworth, who after his early effusion of revolutionary principles had relapsed into conservatism and positive opposition to social and political reforms, produced nothing of importance after the publication of his White Doe of Rylstone in 1815, though he lived till 1850. Coleridge wrote no poem of merit after 1817. Scott was still writing after 1820, but his work lacked the fire and originality of his early years. The Romantic poets of the younger generation unfortunately all died young—Keats in 1820, Shelley in 1822, and Byron in 1824.

Though the Romantic Age in the real sense of the term ended in 1820, the Victorian Age started from 1832 with the passing of the first Reform Act, 1832. The years 1820-1832 were the years of suspended animation in politics. It was a fact that England was fast turning from an agricultural into a manufacturing country, but it was only after the reform of the Constitution which gave right of vote to the new manufacturing centers, and gave power to the middle classes, that the way was opened for new experiments in constructive politics. The first Reform Act of 1832 was followed by the Repeal of the Corn Laws in 1846 which gave an immense advantage to the manufacturing interests, and the Second Reform Act of 1867. In the field of literature also the years 1820-1832 were singularly barren. As has already been pointed out, there was sudden decline of Romantic literature from the year 1820, but the new literature of England, called the Victorian literature, started from 1832 when Tennyson’s first important volume, Poems,
appeared. The following year saw Carlyle’s *Sartor Resartus*, and Dickens’ earliest work, *Sketches by Boz*. The literary career of Thackeray began about 1837, and Browning published his *Dramatic Lyrics* in 1842. Thus the Victorian period in literature officially starts from 1832, though the Romantic period ended in 1820, and Queen Victoria ascended the throne in 1837.

The Victorian Age is so long and complicated and the great writers who flourished in it are so many, that for the sake of convenience it is often divided into two periods—Early Victorian Period and Later Victorian Period. The earlier period which was the period of middle class supremacy, the age of ‘laissez-faire’ or free trade, and of unrestricted competition, extended from 1832 to 1870. The great writers of this period were Tennyson, Browning, Matthew Arnold, Carlyle, Ruskin, Dickens and Thackeray. All these poets, novelists and prose-writers form, a certain homogenous group, because in spite of individual differences they exhibit the same approach to the contemporary problems and the same literary, moral and social values. But the later Victorian writers who came into prominence after 1870—Rossetti, Swinburne, Morris, George Eliot, Meredith, Hardy, Newman and Pater seem to belong to a different age. In poetry Rossetti, Swinburne and Morris were the protagonists of new movement called the Pre-Raphaelite Movement, which was followed by the Aesthetic Movement. In the field of novel, George Eliot is the pioneer of what is called the modern psychological novel, followed by Meredith and Hardy. In prose Newman tried to revolutionize Victorian thought by turning it back to Catholicism, and Pater came out with his purely aesthetic doctrine of ‘Art for Art’s Sake’, which was directly opposed to the fundamentally moral approach of the prose-writers of the earlier period—Carlyle, Arnold, and Ruskin. Thus we see a clear demarcation between the two periods of Victorian literature—the early Victorian period (1832-1870) and the later Victorian period (1870-1900).

But the difference between the writers of the two periods is more apparent than real. Fundamentally they belong to one group. They were all the children of the new age of democracy, of individualism, of rapid industrial development and material expansion, the age of doubt and pessimism, following the new conceptions of man which was formulated by science under the name of Evolution. All of them were men and women of marked originality in outlook and character or style. All of them were the critics of their age, and instead of being in sympathy with its spirit, were its very severe critics. All of them were in search of some sort of balance,
stability, a rational understanding, in the midst of the rapidly changing times. Most of them favored the return to precision in form, to beauty within the limits of reason, and to values which had received the stamp of universal approval. It was in fact their insistence on the rational elements of thought, which gave a distinctive character to the writings of the great Victorians, and which made them akin, to a certain extent, to the great writers of the neo-Classical school. All the great writers of the Victorian Age were actuated by a definite moral purpose. Tennyson, Browning, Carlyle, Ruskin, Arnold wrote with a superb faith in their message, and with the conscious moral purpose to uplift and to instruct. Even the novel broke away from Scott’s romantic influence. Dickens, Thackeray, George Eliot wrote with a definite purpose to sweep away error and reveal the underlying truth of humanity. For this reason the Victorian Age was fundamentally an age of realism rather than of romance.

But from another point of view, the Victorian Age in English literature was a continuation of the Romantic Age, because the Romantic Age came to a sudden and unnatural and mainly on account of the premature deaths of Byron, Shelley and Keats. If they had lived longer, the Age of Romanticism would have extended further. But after their death the coherent inspiration of romanticism disintegrated into separate lines of development, just as in the seventeenth century the single inspiration of the Renaissance broke into different schools. The result was that the spirit of Romanticism continued to influence the innermost consciousness of Victorian Age. Its influence is clearly visible on Tennyson, Browning, Arnold, Dickens, Thackeray, Ruskin, Meredith, Swinburne, Rossetti and others. Even its adversaries, and those who would escape its spell, were impregnated with it. While denouncing it, Carlyle does so in a style which is intensely charged with emotional fire and visionary colouring. In fact after 1870 we find that the romantic inspiration was again in the ascendent in the shape of the Pre-Raphaelite and Aesthetic movements.

There was also another reason of the continuation of Romanticism in the Victorian Age. There is no doubt that the Reform Act set at rest the political disturbances by satisfying the impatient demand of the middle classes, and seemed to inaugurate an age of stability. After the crisis which followed the struggle against the French Revolution and Napoleon, England set about organizing herself with a view to internal prosperity and progress. Moreover, with the advent to power of a middle class largely imbued with the spirit of Puritanism, and the accession
of a queen to the throne, an era of self-restraint and discipline started. The English society
accepted as its standard a stricter conventional morality which was voiced by writers like
Carlyle. But no sooner had the political disturbances subsided and a certain measure of stability
and balance had been achieved then there was fresh and serious outbreak in the economic world.
The result was that the Victorian period, quiet as it was, began to throb with the feverish tremors
of anxiety and trouble, and the whole order of the nation was threatened with an upheaval. From
1840 to 1850 in particular, England seemed to be on the verge of a social revolution, and its
disturbed spirit was reflected, especially in the novel with a purpose. This special form of
Romanticism which was fed by the emotional unrest in the social sphere, therefore, derived a
renewed vitality from these sources. The combined effect of all these causes was the survival and
prolongation of Romanticism in the Victorian Age which was otherwise opposed to it.

Moreover, Romanticism not only continued during the Victorian Age, but it appeared in
new forms. The very exercise of reason and the pursuit of scientific studies which promoted the
spirit of classicism, stirred up a desire for compensation and led to a reassertion of the
imagination and the heart. The representatives of the growing civilization of the day—
economists, masters of industry, businessmen—were considered as the enemies of nobility and
beauty and the artisans of hopeless and joyless materialism. This fear obsessed the minds of
those writers of the Victorian Age, to whom feelings and imagination were essentials of life
itself. Thus the rationalistic age was rudely shaken by impassioned protestations of writers like
Newman, Carlyle and Ruskin who were in conflict with the spirit of their time.

The Victorian Age, therefore, exhibits a very interesting and complex mixture of two
opposing elements—Classicism and Romanticism. Basically it was inclined towards classicism
on account of its rational approach to the problems of life, a search for balance and stability, and
a deeply moral attitude; but on account of its close proximity to the Romantic Revival which had
not completely exhausted itself, but had come to a sudden end on account of the premature
deaths of Byron, Shelley and Keats, the social and economic unrest, the disillusionment caused
by industrialization and material prosperity, the spirit of Romanticism also survived and
produced counter currents.
2.0. **Historical Summary**

2.1. **Democracy**

Amid the multitude of social and political forces of this great age, four things stand out clearly. First, the long struggle of the Anglo-Saxons for personal liberty is definitely settled, and democracy becomes the established order of the day. The king, who appeared in an age of popular weakness and ignorance, and the peers, who came with the Normans in triumph, are both stripped of their power and left as figureheads of a past civilization. The last vestige of personal government and of the divine right of rulers disappears; the House of Commons becomes the ruling power in England; and a series of new reform bills rapidly extend suffrage, until the whole body of English people choose for themselves the men who shall represent them.

2.2. **Social Unrest**

Second, because it is an age of democracy, it is an age of popular education, of religious tolerance, of growing brotherhood, and of profound social unrest. The slaves had been freed in 1833; but in the middle of the century England awoke to the fact that slaves are not necessarily negroes, stolen in Africa to be sold like cattle in the market place, but that multitudes of men, women, and little children in the mines and factories were victims of a more terrible industrial and social slavery. To free these slaves also, the unwilling victims of the unnatural competitive methods, has been the growing purpose of the Victorian Age until the present day.

2.3. **The Ideal of Peace**

Third, because it is an age of democracy and education, it is an age of comparative peace. England begins to think less of the pomp and false glitter of fighting, and more of its moral evils, as the nation realizes that it is the common people who bear the burden and the sorrow and the poverty of war, while the privileged classes reap most of the financial and political rewards. Moreover, with the growth of trade and of friendly foreign relations, it becomes evident that the
social equality for which England was contending at home belongs to the whole race of men; that brotherhood is universal, not insular; that a question of justice is never settled by fighting; and that war is generally unmitigated horror and barbarism. Tennyson, who came of age when the great Reform Bill occupied attention, expresses the ideals of the Liberals of his day who proposed to spread the gospel of peace, “Till the war-drum throbb’d no longer, and the battle-flags were furled/In the parliament of Man, the Federation of the world…”

2.4. **Arts and Sciences**

The Victorian Age is especially remarkable because of its rapid progress in all the arts and sciences and in mechanical inventions. A glance at any record of the industrial achievements of the nineteenth century will show how vast they are, and it is necessary to repeat here the list of the inventions, from spinning looms to steamboats, and from matches to electric lights. All those material things, as well as the growth of education, have their influence upon the life of a people, and it is inevitable that they should react upon its prose and poetry; though as yet one is too much absorbed in the sciences and mechanics to determine accurately their influence upon literature. When these new things shall by long use have become familiar as country roads, or have been replaced by newer and better things, then they also will have their associations and memories, and a poem on the railroads maybe as suggestive as Wordsworth’s sonnet on Westminster Bridge; and the busy, practical working men who to-day throng the streets and factories may seem, to a future and greater age, as quaint and poetical as the slow toilers of the Middle Ages seem now.

3.0 Darwinism

The Victorian Age marked a period of great transition in many aspects of human life. The onset of the industrial revolution changed the way people made and sold goods, which in turn changed the way people lived. Industry and agriculture flourished, creating economic prosperity. Laws were passed to improve the working conditions of the laborers in the mills and factories. Literature written during this period was changing as a result of the events that were happening.
Religious beliefs were being challenged by many different viewpoints. The idea of utilitarianism was introduced which believed that people’s actions should be judged by their moral good, the greatest pleasure for the greatest number. The ideas of historians were also considered where they viewed the Bible as a record of historical events rather than a spiritual handbook. Lastly, the geologic and astronomic discoveries made by scientists introduced a new, non-spiritual belief. By the end of the Victorian period the values that were characteristic of this time were fading away.

In 1859 (mid-way through the Victorian Age), Charles Darwin published a work that opposed the conventional way of thinking about religion. *The Origin of Species* proposed the theory that man actually evolved from a lower species rather than having been created by a higher power. The idea of this notion was devastating to many Victorians. Darwin’s work was responsible for a huge cultural debate between the old way of thinking and the new. A conflict arose because Darwin eliminated the possibility of a designing God.

Darwinism is a theory of biological evolution developed by Charles Darwin and others, stating that all species of organisms arise and develop through the natural selection of small, inherited variations that increase the individual’s ability to compete, survive, and reproduce. Also called Darwinian theory. It originally included the broad concepts of transmutation of species or of evolution which gained general scientific acceptance when Charles Robert Darwin published *On the Origin of Species*, including concepts which predated Darwin's theories, but subsequently referred to specific concepts of natural selection, the Weismann barrier or in genetics the central dogma of molecular biology. Though it usually refers strictly to biological evolution, the term has been used by creationists to refer to the origin of life, and has even been applied to concepts of cosmic evolution, both of which have no connection to Darwin's work. It is therefore considered the belief and acceptance of Darwin's, and his predecessors, work in place of other theories including divine design and extraterrestrial origins.

The meaning of "Darwinism" has changed over time, and varies depending on its context. In the United States, the term "Darwinism" is often used by creationists as a pejorative term in reference to beliefs such as atheistic naturalism, but in the United Kingdom the term has no negative connotations, being freely used as a shorthand for the body of theory dealing with evolution, and in particular, evolution by natural selection.
The term was coined by Thomas Henry Huxley in April 1860, and was used to describe evolutionary concepts in general, including earlier concepts such as Spencerism. Many of the proponents of Darwinism at that time, including Huxley, had reservations about the significance of natural selection, and Darwin himself gave credence to what was later called Lamarckism. The strict neo-Darwinism of August Weismann gained few supporters in the late 19th century. During this period, which has been called "the eclipse of Darwinism", scientists proposed various alternative evolutionary mechanisms which eventually proved untenable. The development of the modern evolutionary synthesis from the 1930s to the 1950s, incorporating natural selection with population genetics and Mendelian genetics, revived Darwinism in an updated form.

"Darwinism" soon came to stand for an entire range of evolutionary (and often revolutionary) philosophies about both biology and society. One of the more prominent approaches, summed in the 1864 phrase "survival of the fittest" by the philosopher Herbert Spencer, later became emblematic of Darwinism even though Spencer's own understanding of evolution (as expressed in 1857) was more similar to that of Jean-Baptiste Lamarck than to that of Darwin, and predated the publication of Darwin's theory in 1859. What is now called "Social Darwinism" was, in its day, synonymous with "Darwinism" — the application of Darwinian principles of "struggle" to society, usually in support of anti-philanthropic political agenda. Another interpretation, one notably favoured by Darwin's half-cousin Francis Galton, was that "Darwinism" implied that because natural selection was apparently no longer working on "civilized" people, it was possible for "inferior" strains of people (who would normally be filtered out of the gene pool) to overwhelm the "superior" strains, and voluntary corrective measures would be desirable — the foundation of eugenics.

In Darwin's day there was no rigid definition of the term "Darwinism," and it was used by opponents and proponents of Darwin's biological theory alike to mean whatever they wanted it to in a larger context. The ideas had international influence, and Ernst Haeckel developed what was known as Darwinismus in Germany, although, like Spencer's "evolution", Haeckel's "Darwinism" had only a rough resemblance to the theory of Charles Darwin, and was not centred on natural selection at all. In 1886 Alfred Russel Wallace went on a lecture tour across the
United States, starting in New York and going via Boston, Washington, Kansas, Iowa and Nebraska to California, lecturing on what he called "Darwinism" without any problems.

3.1. Darwin’s Theory of Evolution

Charles Darwin’s revolutionary idea of evolution sparked dramatic debate in the scientific and, most especially, religious communities, as well as inspiring a new wave of thought in the minds of the world. There was also plenty of controversy, particularly from the many believers of creationism during the Victorian era. But by denying creationism with his own theories, Darwin “made room for strictly scientific explanations of all natural phenomena,” and as a result, initiated a “powerful intellectual and spiritual revolution” whose effects last to this day. Its profound impact meant that “nearly every field of social and cultural life was affected by the idea of evolution.”

Charles Darwin is best known as the father of evolutionary biology and the theory of evolution by natural selection. In 1859, he published his most important and most influential work, *On the Origin of Species*, which was an immediate success, selling most of its 1,250 copies on the first day. In it, Darwin described the theory of evolution and natural selection. Through natural selection, the organisms that are most suited to their environment will be more likely to survive over their competition, improving the species over time. It can also be called the “survival of the fittest,” as only the most capable will ultimately survive. Darwin was not the first to introduce the idea of evolution, which had been around long before his birth and was first presented to the public by Robert Chambers in “*Vestiges of the Natural History of Creation*”. However, Darwin was the first to carry out extensive research to back up the theory, as well as expanded upon other theories by suggesting the idea of evolution through random natural selection.

In this time of the Victorian era, almost all leading scientists and philosophers were Christian men who believed in creationism and that God had designed creatures to fit their environment perfectly. These Victorians, especially conservative theologians, strongly opposed his theories and continued to uphold the Bible’s creationist teachings. Even some of the greatest minds of the era scoffed at evolution, including Albert Einstein, who, at the idea that randomness
plays a vital role in natural selection, expressed his disapproval in his statement, “God does not play dice.” Darwin pointed out that every aspect of these perfect designs could be explained through natural selection and that creation was contradicted by every part of the natural world. Evolution “dispelled any belief in the Christian dogma of creation” as it eliminated the need for some supernatural force as a creator or designer.

Darwin’s idea of natural selection also helped to explain social evolution and development. More organized social groups would be stronger than less organized ones, and through natural selection be more likely to survive through wars or disasters. Inferior organization would thus be eliminated from the human ancestry, allowing the more developed groups to pass on their skills to the next generation.

In *Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde*, Stevenson explains to the reader through Jekyll that man has a basic dual nature with both a calm, civilized side and a troglodytic, primitive being. In a way, his novel is a comment on Darwin’s evolutionary theories. As Petri Liukkonen puts it, when attempting (and failing) to separate the two basic sides of himself, Dr. Jekyll “turns in his experiment the evolution backwards,” revealing the “primitive background of a cultured human being.” It is no coincidence that the book, published 27 years after Darwin’s *On the Origin of Species*, inherits a corollary of evolution as the core of its plot. Stevenson turns the idea that we are animals into a man’s struggle to separate that ancestry, only to find out that he can isolate it but cannot eliminate it.

“Charles Darwin's evolutionary theory shocked Victorians with the idea that humans are basically animals. Hyde represents the primitive, animal side of human nature, which is closer than Victorians liked to think.” Aside from the effects on religion and science, the theory of evolution itself brought up another point – we humans are simply animals that evolved in the same way as every other animal. Charles Darwin once said: “Animals, whom we have made our slaves, we do not like to consider our equal.” We want to think of us as superior to the animals surrounding us, but evolution shows that we really are animals ourselves.

What was then a rebellious thought, Darwinism has now become nearly unanimously accepted by science. It has also become the basis of the modern philosophy of biology. But the most important contribution to both science and to society is that it, in a way, offers an
explanation of the world around us. “The living world, through evolution, can be explained without recourse to supernaturalism.” Darwin shows us a new way of thinking that in essence changes the world from God’s playing field into a game of chance. No longer does the difference in religious beliefs tie up an effort to rationalize what seems to be an irrational universe, as natural selection allows us to simplify life, the universe, and everything into time, location, and a little bit of luck.

3.2. Victorian Crisis of Faith

The Victorian Era was one of change and growth, which both helped and hurt society as a whole. The change and growth was seen in railway construction, a boom in factory and industry, a female Queen, scientific discoveries, and higher education for females. These factors showed advancements in several areas, but these advancements brought about many questions and concerns. Children as young as nine were working, instead of going to school, to help support their families, regular churchgoers were beginning to question their faith due to Darwinism, and women were leaving their role as caregiver to pursue an education.

The Victorian Era was known as the “age of energy and invention; the age of doubt in faith and industry; the age of reform in politics and social class status, along with the reform of a woman’s role; the age of empire; the age of reading; and the age of self-scrutiny” (Longman, 1102-1117). But, for the most part, this era was the age of prosperity and economic expansion which caused the Victorians to struggle with many questions and doubts about religion, and life as they once knew it. This doubt led to the writing of much poetry centering on the faith crisis, including “Dover Beach” by Matthew Arnold and “God’s Grandeur” by Gerard Manley Hopkins, both of which contemplate religion and science during their era.

Victorian England was extremely religious. Families during this time period were usually large, hard-working, respectable, and were taught religion at home. They were frequent church goers and read the Bible regularly. While church attendance during this era contributed to a family’s social standing, the lower middle and upper working class felt left out because they were not socially accepted at churches with the upper class citizens who formed the Anglican Church or Church of England. To profess to be Roman Catholic during this era was to proclaim that you were poor and low class. You “were excluded from political office and suffered other
penalties” (xxxi). This caused the two lower classes of citizens to form the Methodist and Nonconformist churches that are still prominent in today’s society. Although Nonconformists and Anglicanism was always an option in religion, many people became Methodists when they left home and branched out on their own. These new churches were run by Evangelicals and middle-class philanthropists. They attracted the working-class who were taught to read the Bible, and gave them the opportunity to socialize with the opposite sex, which was largely unheard of at this time. Although the churches were fuller than before, most middle and working-class people still felt that they were not welcome; therefore, attending church could bring them attention they did not want because they did not have the money to give the church like the upper class did. Many people today still do not attend church for this same reason. Certain churches are still considered for the “wealthy only” and those with a poorer background do not feel that they would be welcome. Religion was considered a middle-class proprietary or luxury, although most were still married in a church and children were still christened there.

During this time, churches began programs to help provide food, clothing, shelter, monetary assistance, and a copy of their own Bible in an attempt to help the working class rise above their situation. This is equivalent to the programs now run by, not only churches in this area, but Agape, Good Samaritan and the Jesus Community Center which provides food, shelter, clothing, and financial assistance to the working poor in Logan County. The down-side to this was the fact that the working poor began to learn how to “work the system” to their advantage because they were felt that they were owed what the churches gave to them. After working as a church secretary for several years, I realized that those who are still considered the working class or working poor, along with those caught up in the welfare system, still feel that they are owed certain rights from the church and “work the system” to take advantage of things that will benefit them.

Geologists, physicists, and other scientists started delving into religion, questioning the writings of the oldest book known to man, the Bible. This was very hard on the people of this time because science and religion had once worked hand in hand; making it seem like the world was in harmony. Now, all that they held near and dear was causing great debate. Charles Darwin did not make things any better with his work, “The Origin of Species”, better known as the Darwinism theory. Darwinism is a theory of biological evolution stating that, “all species of
organisms arise and develop through the natural selection of small, inherited variations that increase the individual's ability to compete, survive, and reproduce.” (Webster Online) This brought about the term ‘survival of the fittest’, or predominance by any one species, from British economist Herbert Spencer, who paralleled his ideas of economics with Charles Darwin's theories of evolution by what Darwin termed natural selection. Survival of the fittest enhanced the belief that fate knew that people would not be able to handle every little thing that is thrown at them; therefore, for the sake of survival people don’t always say what they want. People wear masks, observe boundaries, and say some things to some people and other things to other people in order to not reveal too much about themselves. This theory added to the belief from the Romantic Age that people should not have more children than they can afford to raise on what little money they made. Darwinism, coupled with the new science discoveries being made, posed serious problems for the church and society, causing people to challenge their religious beliefs and have many doubts. Although Darwinism has been refuted and proven to be wrong, the speculation and questioning has continued from the nineteenth century, all the way through to the twenty-first century.

Although Arnold and Hopkins both try to find some sort of religious truth in their poems by using vivid imagery, setting the tone and discussing their view of religion, both manage to arrive at different conclusions. Arnold’s poem almost spells doom for the world, whereas Hopkins’ poem gives one a feeling of hope.

The poem, “Dover Beach” by Matthew Arnold, is about religion. It seems to talk about the lack of spiritual values during that the era and the loss of faith due to existentialism, materialism, socialism, and Darwinism caused a downward spiral in the Christian faith. Arnold uses the sea to demonstrate a promise of eternity, continuity, and stability; his real view of the church, but the crisis comes in the poem when he talks about the “melancholy, long, withdrawing roar, retreating…” (1662). These lines give a feeling of lost hope, abandoned faith, and a longing to return to the days of old before faith as he knew it is gone forever. The “…pebbles which the wave draw back, and fling…” (Longman, 1662) symbolizes the people in that, ‘what goes out always come back in’. People may leave the church, or their religion and faith behind because of the waves of science, but someway and somehow, they are always drawn back to their beliefs for some reason. Arnold mentions Sophocles and compares Sophocles’ belief that the water is like
human emotion as he states, “…the turbid ebb and flow of human misery…” (Longman, 1662), because the sound of the waves is compared to human sorrow, which is a reference to Sophocles’ Antigone. The sea is also unpredictable, and Darwin’s theory of evolution caused more disillusion to the crisis of religious faith they were already going through. “Dover Beach” tries to show that the world would be a sad place if people stopped believing in the existence of God and took the side of science. Arnold tried to express, through this poem, that philosophy and religion should be a comfort in a world where there are no guarantees.

Gerard Manley Hopkins also used his poem, “God’s Grandeur”, to talk about the negative turn Victorian people had taken from God and religion, but he offers hope by speaking of how things could get better. He begins by talking about the world being “…charged with the grandeur of God…shining from shook foil…” (Longman, 1792). This is a metaphor for God’s light in reference to electricity or flashes of light as in lightning bolts, but the Biblical meaning would include:

“Your word is a lamp to my feet and a light for my path.” (NIV, Psalm 119:105)

His next symbol of Biblical meaning, “…the ooze of oil crushed…” means richness, and refers to the sacrament of olives that were used for food, medicine, lamplight, and religious purposes. This is evident in the following verse:

“…olive oil for the light…” (NIV, Exodus 35:8)

So far, Hopkins’ poem is very light in discussing God’s presence in our world. He then tells the world to beware as he states, “…Why do men then now not reck his rod? Generations have trod, have trod, have trod…” (Longman, 1792). Hopkins reminds us that “…nature is never spent…” (Longman, 1793), which reminds us that there are always things to remind us of the beauty God has put on earth, it is continually renewed each season, and God promised us His grace through rebirth with each season. Hopkins uses nature, and the abuse of nature from each
generation, to lay blame and show us what needs to be changed in order for God to bless His children again.

Science, industry, and religion all played vital roles in the Victorian Era, but while science and industry were on the rise, religion felt a terrible decline. Scientists were finding advances in medicine; geologists were finding that the earth was older than previously thought and disputing all Biblical teachings; the theory of Darwinism put further religious doubt into their minds; and industry was moving more toward machines which caused the working class to have to work harder and longer hours. These factors managed to keep all but the higher social classes out of church. Although new labor laws, amendments, and acts were introduced, it did very little to diminish the stereotype of the working poor. With twelve hour workdays for men, women, and children of the lower class, there was often little time left over for religion; and what little faith they did have was diminished by their social status.

Arnold and Hopkins used their poetry to convey to the world, through words, imagery, and symbols, to urge the Victorians to return to the religious ways of the Romantic Era. They stress that the abuse of previous generations, along with the modernization of science, technology, industry, and the Darwinism theory, are to blame for the deterioration of religion and faith. All of these factors are still true today. God continues to have his hand on the world, and His people, but He is slowly withdrawing it due to the moral dilemmas that we face without seeking His guidance.

3.3. Expression in English Literature

The theory of evolution by natural selection, devised by Charles Darwin, caused considerable intellectual ferment in mid- and late Victorian England. After having read Charles Lyell’s The Principles of Geology (1830-1833) and The Poetical Works of John Milton during his voyage on the Beagle, Darwin concluded that the physical world had been and still was subject to continuous change through the action of natural forces, and man is the product of these forces. No book has so profoundly affected the modern view of man than Darwin’s The Origin of the Species (1859), although some groundwork of evolutionary theory was earlier done by a number of scientists, including Darwin’s grandfather, Erasmus, and Robert Chambers, the author of Vestiges of the Natural History of Creation (1844). The publication of Darwin’s book, which
cast strong doubts on the traditional belief in the origins of life, also prompted a sharp reorientation of philosophical and moral attitudes.

Until 1859, all evolutionary theories were teleological — that is, they indicated some development of the chain of being towards perfection. In the “Great Chain of Being” human beings appeared in the superior position. Furthermore, man, consisting of body, mind and soul, as described in Genesis, was totally unrelated to other species. Darwin questioned this orthodox view. He saw no final purpose of evolution. His doctrine of “survival of the fittest” (a term later coined by Darwin’s contemporary, Herbert Spencer) treats the world as an incessant struggle for survival. It is a sinister world where everybody “fights” against everybody, but “survival of the fittest” does not literally mean fighting better, or making more money, or dominating others thanks to one’s higher intelligence. Instead, it refers solely to reproductive fitness. In other words, whichever group or individual reproduces more successfully is most fit.

Darwin, who observed a continuing struggle for existence in the natural world, showed that the determining factors of life are chance and necessity in the “survival of the fittest.” Darwin’s theory of evolution thereby undermined the value of traditional religion and morality, which had been accepted for centuries as the guiding principle of mankind, because it implied that man was no more than a “talking monkey”, and no God was necessary to create him. It revolutionized man’s conception of himself: Darwin thus started a new anthropocentrism that deprived man of his unique position in the world. In the light of Darwin’s theory, man appears left alone in the universe without any divine power which should — or could — protect him. When Darwin’s followers realized that man is no more or no less than a “naked ape”, they concluded that such close similarities between man and the rest of the animal world destroyed any purpose of human existence other than that which all animals have. Darwin’s theory claimed that since the individual is merely a servant to his species, the overall purpose of existence is the necessity of reproduction. Sexuality therefore becomes the most important motivation for human behaviour: Each individual is only a black box that carries and transmits the biological features of his species to progeny.
Darwin’s *Origin of Species* denied a divine hand in creation. In consequence, those who read it inferred that no absolute good or absolute evil exists. Moral norms, which had seemed universal, proved to be relative and dependent on the societies which had created them at definite time in history. Moral norms were thus man-made constructs and not universal truths. On this view, man began to feel more lonely and isolated in an infinite and indifferent universe. Man was irrevocably thrown off the supreme pedestal on which he had been placed by former philosophical and religious systems. But as a matter of fact, according to Darwin, man does not need supernatural protection because he is endowed with a faculty to which previous philosophical systems hardly alluded. Darwin believed that in the deterministic world man is free to be what he wants to be. Homo sapiens is the only species which developed various forms of culture and genuine ethical systems. Paradoxically, the development of human society was an attempt to escape from the natural selection. Human beings create social systems in order to protect themselves from the uncontrollable forces of nature.

Evolutionary theory provoked in Victorian letters a wave of pessimism and scepticism about the human condition. Darwin made it necessary to re-evaluate the most essential concepts which humanity had created for the last 2000 years: man, nature, consciousness, God, soul, and so on. Mankind had been proud of these concepts because they put man in a superior position in relation to the world of nature, but Darwin shattered them by one theory. Darwin’s theory of evolution appealed not only to eminent scientists, such as the biologist Thomas Henry Huxley, the botanist Joseph Dalton Hooker, the anthropologist and eugenicist Francis Galton, but also to novelists and poets. As a result, many Victorian writers dramatically modified their opinions about man’s origins and the physical aspect of man’s existence.

Darwin’s works provoked a continuing moral and existential debate which also found expression in English literature, although it must be admitted that the two poems associated with evolutionary theory, Alfred Tennyson’s *In Memoriam* and Matthew Arnold’s “Dover Beach”, were written before 1859 — Tennyson's two decades earlier! A number of Victorian novelists absorbed some tenets of Darwinian theory and provided varied, often contradictory interpretations. They introduced to their fictions lay scientists who contested traditional religious beliefs about the natural world. In her last, unfinished novel, *Daughters and Wives* (1866) Elizabeth Gaskell modeled one of her characters, Roger Hamley, on Charles Darwin,
incidentally, a cousin of Gaskell on her mother’s side. Gaskell’s naturalist hero represents a new moral authority based on scientific research which is relevant to the modern world.

George Eliot and Thomas Hardy, who had a particular interest in science, were close readers of Darwin’s works. Eliot’s *Middlemarch* is regarded by some as an exemplification of the ideas of social Darwinism. For many late Victorians, including Thomas Hardy, the traditional teleological interpretation of the world lost its sense. They realized that religion and science, which were mutually supportive in the eighteenth century, in the nineteenth century fell into open conflict. Inspired by Darwin’s biologism, Thomas Hardy showed that man is the only animal for whom existence is a problem that he has to solve by his own choice and from which he cannot escape. Hardy adapted Darwin’s ideas to his later fiction showing characters to be at the mercy of their environment, heredity and adaptability rather than more in control of fate. His two novels, *Tess of the d’Urbervilles* and *Jude the Obscure*, depict a ruthless Darwinian world in which protagonists fail to survive because they cannot adapt to the changing social environment.

An intellectual ferment caused by evolutionary theory in mid- and late Victorian England led to an ongoing controversy over religion and science. Although some liberal theologians, including the Rev. Charles Kingsley, were not hostile to the theory of evolution, clergymen accused scientists of impudence, whereas scientists revealed ignorance of the clergy. This intellectual ferment made the mid- and late Victorian periods a time of a great reappraisal in both the natural and social sciences. As a result, traditional natural philosophy professed by amateurs became transformed into modern science developed by professional scientists who base their competence and authority on rigid theoretical and practical research.

### 4.0 Literary Characteristics

#### 4.1 An Age of Prose

Victorian literature embraces the whole realm of Saxon and Norman life—the strength and ideals of the one, and the culture and refinement of the other. The romantic revival had done its work, and England had entered upon a new free period, in which every form of literature, from pure romance to gross realism, struggled for expression. Although the age produced many poets, nevertheless, this is emphatically an age of prose. And since the number of readers had increased a thousand fold with the spread of popular education, it was the age of the newspaper,
the magazine and the modern novel—the first two being the story of the world’s daily life, and the last being the pleasantest form of literary entertainment, as well as the most successful method of presenting modern problems and modern ideals. The novel in the Victorian age filled a place which the drama held in the days of Elizabeth; and never before, in any age or language, had the novel appeared in such numbers and in such perfection.

### 4.2. Moral Purpose

The second marked characteristic of the age was that literature, both in prose and in poetry, seemed to depart from the purely artistic standard, of ‘art for art’s sake’, and was actuated by a definite moral purpose. Tennyson, Browning, Carlyle, Ruskin—became the teachers of England, not vaguely but definitely, with superb faith in their message, and with the conscious moral purpose to uplift and to instruct. Even the novel broke away from Scott’s romantic influence, and first studied life as it is, and then pointed out what life may and ought to be. Whether it is the fun and sentiment of Dickens, the social miniatures of Thackeray, or the psychological studies of George Eliot, in almost every case there is a definite purpose to sweep away error and to reveal the underlying truth of human life. So the novel sought to do for society in the Victorian age precisely what Lyell and Darwin sought to do for science, that is, to find the truth, and to show how it could be used to uplift humanity. Perhaps for this reason the Victorian age is emphatically an age of realism rather than of romance—not the realism of Zola and Ibsen, but a deeper realism that strived to tell the whole truth, showing moral and physical diseases as they were, but holding up health and hope as the normal conditions of humanity.

### 4.3. Idealism

It is somewhat customary to speak of this age as an age of doubt and pessimism, following the new conception of man and of the universe which was formulated by science under the name of Evolution. It is also called as a prosaic age, lacking in great ideals. “The judgment that this age is too practical for great ideals may be only a description of the husk that hides a very full ear of corn. It is well to remember that Spenser and Sidney judged their own age (Elizabethan) to be altogether given over to materialism, and to be incapable of literary greatness. Just as time has made us smile at their blindness, so the next century may correct our judgment of this as a material age, and looking upon the enormous growth of charity and
brotherhood among us, and at the literature which expresses our faith in men, may judge the Victorian age to be, on the whole, the noblest and most inspiring in the history of the world.”
(William J. Long)

5.0. Poets of the Victorian Age

The most important poets during the early Victorian period were Tennyson and Browning, with Arnold occupying a somewhat lower position. After the passing away of Keats, Shelley and Byron in the early eighteen twenties, for about fifteen years the fine frenzy of the high romantics subsided and a quieter mood ensued. With the abatement of the revolutionary fervour, Wordsworth’s inspiration had deserted him and all that he wrote in his later years was dull and insipid.

There appeared a host of writers of moderate talent like John Clare, Thomas Love Peacock, Walter Savage Landor and Thomas Hood. The result was that from 1820 till the publication of Tennyson’s first important work in 1833 English poetry had fallen into the hands of mediocrities. It was in fact by the publication of his two volumes in 1842 that Tennyson’s position was assured as, in Wordsworth’s language, “decidedly the greatest of our living poets.” Browning’s recognition by the public came about the same time, with the appearance of Dramatic Lyrics (1842), although Paracelsus and Sordello had already been published. The early Victorian poetry which started in 1833, therefore, came to its own, in the year 1842.

The early poetry of both Tennyson and Browning was imbued with the spirit of romanticism, but it was romanticism with a difference. Tennyson recognized an affinity with Byron and Keats; Browning with Shelley, but their romanticism no longer implied an attitude of revolt against conventional modes. It had itself become a convention. The revolutionary fervor which inspired the poetry of the great Romantic poets had now given place to an evolutionary conception of progress propagated by the writings of Darwin, Bentham and their followers. Though the writers of the new age still persisted in deriving inspiration from the past ages, yet under the spell of the marvels of science, they looked forward rather than backward. The dominant note of the early Victorian period was therefore, contained in Browning’s memorable lines: “The best is yet to be.” Tennyson found spiritual consolation in contemplating the “One far off divine event/To which the whole creation moves.” Faith in the reality of progress was thus
the main characteristic of the early Victorian Age. Doubt, skepticism and questioning became the main characteristic of the later Victorian Age.

5.1. Alfred Tennyson (1809-1892)

Tennyson is the most representative poet of the Victorian Age. His poetry is a record of the intellectual and spiritual life of the time. Being a careful student of science and philosophy he was deeply impressed by the new discoveries and speculations which were undermining the orthodox religion and giving rise to all sorts of doubts and difficulties. Darwin’s theory of Evolution which believed in the “struggle for existence” and “the survival of the fittest” specially upset and shook the foundations of religious faith. Thus there was a conflict between science and religion, doubt and faith, materialism and spirituality. These two voices of the Victorian age are perpetually heard in Tennyson’s work. In In Memoriam, more than in any other contemporary literary work, we read of the great conflict between faith and doubt. Though he is greatly disturbed by the constant struggle going on in Nature which is “red in tooth and claw”, his belief in evolution steadies and encourages him, and helps him to look beyond the struggle towards the “one far off divine event to which the whole creation moves.”

Tennyson’s poetry is so much representative of his age that a chronological study of it can help us to write its history. Thus his Locksly Hall of 1842 reflects the restless spirit of ‘young England’ and its faith in science, commerce and the progress of mankind. In Locksly Hall Sixty Years After (1866) the poet gives expression to the feeling of revulsion aroused against the new scientific discoveries which threatened the very foundations of religion and against commerce and industry which had given rise of some very ugly problems as a result of the sordid greed of gain. In The Princess, Tennyson dealt with an important problem of the day—that of the higher education of women and their place in the fast changing conditions of modern society. In Maud, he gave expression to the patriotic passion aroused on account of the Crimean War. In Idylls of Kings, in spite of its medieval machinery, contemporary problems were dealt with by the poet. Thus in all these poems the changing moods of the Victorian Age are successively represented—doubts, misgivings, hopefulness etc.

Taking Tennyson’s poetry as a whole, we find that in spite of varieties of moods, it is an exposition of the cautious spirit of Victorian liberalism. He was essentially the poet of law and
order as well as of progress. He was a great admirer of English traditions, and though he believed in divine evolution of things:

The old order changeth, yielding place to new,
And God fulfills himself in many ways
Lest one good custom should corrupt the world,

he was, like a true Englishman, against anything that smacked of revolution.

But the real greatness of Tennyson as a poet lies in his being a supreme artist. The ideas contained in his poems are often condemned by his critics as commonplace, and he is berated as a shallow thinker. But no one can deny his greatness as an artist. He is, perhaps, after Milton, the most conscientious and accomplished poetic artist in English literature. He is noteworthy for the even perfection of his style and his wonderful mastery of language which is at once simple and ornate. Moreover, there is an exquisite and varied music in his verse. In poetic style he has shown a uniform mastery which is not surpassed by any other English poet except Shakespeare. As an artist, Tennyson has an imagination less dramatic than lyrical, and he is usually at his best when he is kindled by personal emotion, personal experience. It is his fine talent for lyric which gives him a high place among the masters of English verse. Some of his shorter pieces, such as “Break, break, break”; “Tear, idle tears”; “Crossing the Ba’r are among the finest English songs on account of their distinction of music and imagery.

Tennyson is a master of imaginative description, which is seen at its best in The Lotos Eaters. Words can hardly be more beautiful or more expressive than in such a stanza as this:

A land of stream! some, like a downward smoke,
Slow-dropping, veils of thinnest lawn did go;
And some thro’ wavering lights and shadows broke,
Rolling a slumberous sheet of foam below.
They saw the gleaming river seaward flow
From the inner land; for off, three mountain tops,
Three silent pinnacles of aged snow,
Stood sunset flush’d and dew’d with showery drops.
Up clomb the shadowy pine above the woven copse.
During his lifetime Tennyson was considered as the greatest poet of his age, but after his death a reaction started against him, and he was given a much lower rank among the English poets. But with the passage of time Tennyson’s poetry regained its lost position, and at present his place as one of the greatest poets of England is secure mainly on account of the artistic perfection of his verse.

5.2. Robert Browning (1812-1889)

During his lifetime Browning was not considered as great a poet as Tennyson, but after that the opinion of the critics has changed in favor of Browning, who, on account of his depth and originality of thoughts, is ranked superior to Tennyson. Browning and Tennyson were contemporaries and their poetic careers ran almost parallel to each other, but as poets they presented a glaring contrast. Whereas Tennyson is first the artist and then the teacher, with Browning the message is always the important thing, and he is very careless of the form in which it is expressed. Tennyson always writes about subjects which are dainty and comely; Browning, on the other hand, deals with subjects which are rough and ugly, and he aims to show that truth lies hidden in both the evil and the good. In their respective messages the two poets differed widely. Tennyson’s message reflects the growing order of the age, and is summed up in the word ‘law’. He believes in disciplining the individual will and subordinating it to the universal law. There is a note of resignation struck in his poetry, which amounts to fatalism. Browning, on the other hand, advocates the triumph of the individual will over the obstacles. In his opinion self is not subordinate but supreme. There is a robust optimism reflected in all his poetry. It is in fact because of his invincible will and optimism that Browning is given preference over Tennyson whose poetry betrays weakness and helpless pessimism. Browning’s boundless energy, his cheerful courage, his faith in life and in the development that awaits beyond the portals of death, give a strange vitality to his poetry. It is his firm belief in the immortality of the soul which forms the basis of his generous optimism, beautifully expressed in the following lines of *Pippa Passes*:

The year’s at the spring,

And day’s at the morn;

Morning’s at seven;
The hill side’s dew pearled;

The lark’s on the wing;

The snails on the thorn,

God’s in his heaven—

All’s right with the world.

Thus is an age when the minds of men were assailed by doubt, Browning spoke the strongest words of hope and faith:

Grow old along with me!

The best is yet to be.

The last of life, for which the first was made.

(Rabbi Ben Ezra)

In another way also Browning presents a contrast to Tennyson. Whereas Tennyson’s genius is mainly lyrical. Browning’s is predominantly dramatic, and his greatest poems are written in the form of the dramatic monologue. Being chiefly interested in the study of the human soul, he discusses in poem after poem, in the form of monologue or dialogue, the problems of life and conscience. And in all of them Browning himself is the central character, and he uses the hero as his own mouthpiece. His first poem Pauline (1833) which is a monologue addressed to Pauline, on “the incidents in the development of a soul”, is autobiographical—a fragment of personal confession under a thin dramatic disguise. His Paracelsus (1835) which is in form a drama with four characters, is also a story of ‘incidents in the development of a soul’, of a Renaissance physician in whom true science and charlatanism were combined. Paracelsus has the ambition of attaining truth and transforming the life of man. For this purpose he discards emotion and love, and fails on account of this mistake. Browning in this poem also uses the hero as a mouthpiece of his own ideas and aspiration. Paracelsus was followed by Sordello, (1840) which is again ‘the study of a soul’. It narrates in heroic verse the life of a little-known Italian poet. On account of its involved expression its obscurity has become
proverbial. In *Pipa Passes* (1841) Browning produced a drama partly lyrical and consisting of isolated scenes. Here he imagined the effect of the songs of a little working girl, strolling about during a holiday, on the destiny of the very different persons who hear them in turn.

It was with the publication of a series of collections of disconnected studies, chiefly monologues, that Browning’s reputation as a great poet was firmly established. These volumes were—*Dramatic Lyrics* (1842), *Dramatic Romances and Lyrics* (1845), *Men and Women* (1855), *Dramatis Personae* (1864), *Dramatic Idylls* (1879-80). The dramatic lyrics in these collections were a poetry of a new kind in England. In them Browning brings the most varied personages to make their confessions to us. Some of them are historical, while others are the product of Browning’s imagination, but all of them while unravelling the tangled web of their emotions and thoughts give expression to the optimistic philosophy of the poet. Some of the important dramatic lyrics are *Bishop Blougram’s Apology*, *Two in a Gondola*, *Porphyria’s Lover*, *Fra Lippo Lippi*, *The last Ride Together*, *Childe Roland to a Dark Tower Came*, *A Grammarian’s Funeral*, *Rabbi Ben Ezra*, *Prospice* and *My Last Duchess*. All of them have won for Browning the applause of readers who value “thought” in poetry. In (1868-69) Browning brought out four successive volumes of *The Ring and the Book*, which is his masterpiece. Here different persons concerned in a peculiarly brutal set of murders, and many witnesses give their own versions of the same events, varying them according to their different interests and prejudices. The lawyers also have their say, and at the end the Pope sums up the case. The ten long successive monologues contain the finest psychological studies of characters ever attempted by a poet.

During the last twenty years of his life Browning wrote a number of poems. Though they do not have much poetic merit, yet they all give expression to his resolute courage and faith. In fact Browning is mainly remembered for the astonishing vigor and hope that characterize all his work. He is the poet of love, of life, and of the will to live, here and beyond the grave, as he says in the song of David in his poem *Soul*:

> How good is man’s life, the mere living! how fit to employ
> All the heart and the soul and the senses for ever in joy.

The chief fault of Browning’s poetry is obscurity. This is mainly due to the fact that his thought is often so obscure or subtle that language cannot express it perfectly. Being interested in
the study of the individual soul, never exactly alike in any two men, he seeks to express the hidden motives and principles which govern individual action. Thus in order to understand his poems, the reader has always to be mentally alert; otherwise he fails to understand his fine shades of psychological study. To a certain extent, Browning himself is to be blamed for his obscurity, because he is careless as an artist. But in spite of his obscurity, Browning is the most stimulating poet, in the English language. His influence on the reader, who is prepared to sit up, and think and remain alert when he reads his poetry, is positive and tremendous. His strength, his joy of life, his robust faith and his invincible optimism enter into the life of a serious reader of his poetry, and make him a different man. That is why, after thirty years of continuous work, his merit was finally recognized, and he was placed beside Tennyson and even considered greater. In the opinion of some critics he is the greatest poet in English literature since Shakespeare.

5.3 Matthew Arnold (1822-88)

Another great poet of the early Victorian period is Matthew Arnold, though he is not so great as Tennyson and Browning. Unlike Tennyson and Browning who came under the influence of Romantic poets, Arnold, though a great admirer of Wordsworth, reacted against the ornate and fluent Romanticism of Shelley and Keats. He strove to set up a neo-classical ideal as against the Romantic. He gave emphasis on ‘correctness’ in poetry, which meant a scheme of literature which picks and chooses according to standards, precedents and systems, as against one which gives preference to an abundant stream of original music and representation. Besides being a poet, Arnold was a great critic of poetry, perhaps the greatest critics during the Victorian period, and he belongs to that rare category of the critic who is a poet also.

Though Arnold’s poetry does not possess the merit of the poetry of Tennyson and Browning, when it is at its best, it has wonderful charm. This is especially the case with his early poetry when his thought and style had not become stereotyped. Among his early poems the sonnet on Shakespeare deserves the highest place. It is the most magnificent epigraph and introduction to the works of Shakespeare. Another poem of great charm and beauty is Requiescat, which is an exquisite dirge. In his longer poems—Strayed Reveller, Empedocles on Etna, Sohrab and Rustum, The Scholar Gipsy, Thyrsis (an elegy on Clough, which is considered of the same rank as Milton’s Lycidas and Shelley’s Adonais)—it is the lyrical strain into which the poet breaks now and then, which gives them a peculiar charm. It is the same lyrical note in
the poems—*The Forsaken Mormon*, which is a piece of exquisite and restrained but melodic passionate music; *Dover Beach* which gives expression to Arnold’s peculiar religious attitude in an age of doubt; the fine *Summer Night*, the *Memorial Verses* which immediately appeals to the reader.

Most of the poetry of Arnold gives expression to the conflict of the age—between spontaneity and discipline, emotion and reason, faith and scepticism. Being distressed by the unfaith, disintegration, complexity and melancholy of his times, Arnold longed for primitive faith, wholeness, simplicity, and happiness. This melancholy note is present throughout his poetry. Even in his nature poems, though he was influenced by the ‘healing power’ of Wordsworth, in his sterner moods he looks upon Nature as a cosmic force indifferent to, or as a lawless and insidious foe of man’s integrity. In his most characteristic poem *Empedocles on Etna* Arnold deals with the life of a philosopher who is driven to suicide because he cannot achieve unity and wholeness; his skeptical intellect has dried up the springs of simple, natural feeling. His attitude to life is very much in contrast with the positive optimism of Browning whose *Ben Ezra* grows old on the belief that “The best is yet to be!”

As a critic Arnold wants poetry to be plain, and severe. Though poetry is an art which must give aesthetic pleasure, according to Arnold, it is also a criticism of life. He looks for ‘high seriousness’ in poetry, which means the combination of the finest art with the fullest and deepest insight, such as is found in the poetry of Homer, Dante and Shakespeare. Arnold’s own poetry was greatly affected by his critical theories, and we find that whereas Tennyson’s poetry is ornate and Browning’s grotesque, Arnold’s poetry on the whole is plain and prosaic. In setting forth his spiritual troubles Arnold seeks first of all to achieve a true and adequate statement, devoid of all non-essential decorations. The reader gets the impression that the writing is neither inspired nor spontaneous. It is the result of intellectual effort and hard labour. But there are occasions in the course of his otherwise prosaic poems, when Arnold suddenly rises from the ground of analysis and diagnosis into sensuous emotion and intuitions, and then language, imagery, and rhythm fuse into something which has an incomparable charm and beauty.
6.0 Minor Poets of the Victorian Age

Besides Tennyson, Browning and Arnold there were a number of minor poets during the early Victorian period. Of these Mrs. Browning and Clough are well-known. Elizabeth Barrett (1806-61) became Mrs. Browning in 1846. Before her marriage she had won fame by writing poems about the Middle Ages in imitation of Coleridge. She also gave voice to sensitive pity in *Cowper’s Grave* and to passionate indignation in *The Cry of Children* which is an eloquent protest against the employment of children in factories. But she produced her best work after she came in contact with Browning. Her *Sonnets from the Portuguese*, which were written before her marriage with Browning, tell in a most delicate and tender manner her deep love for, and passionate gratitude to Browning who brought her, who was sick and lonely, back to health of life. The rigid limit of the sonnet form helped her to keep the exuberance of her passion under the discipline of art. Her other great work, *Aurora Leigh* (1857), is written in the form of an epic on a romantic theme. Written in blank verse which is of unequal quality, the poem is full of long stretches of dry, uninteresting verse, but here and there it contains passages of rare beauty, where sentiment and style are alike admirable.

Arthur Hugh Clough (1819-1861), a friend of Arnold, came under the influence of Wordsworth in his early years, but later he cut himself off from Wordsworthian narrow piety, and moved towards a religious faith free from all dogma. He searched for a moral law which was in consonance with the intellectual development of the age. In his *Dipsychus*, ‘the double-souled’ (1850), he attempted to reconcile the special and the idealistic tendencies of the soul. His best known work, however, is *The Bothie of Toberna Vuolich*, in which he has given a lively account of an excursion of Oxford students in the Highlands. Here he, like Wordsworth, emphasizes the spiritualizing and purifying power of Nature. The importance of Clough as a poet lies mainly in the quality of his thought and the frank nobility of his character which is beautifully expressed in the following memorable lines:

It matters not how strait the gate,
How charged with punishment the scroll:
I am the master of my fate,
I am the captain of my soul!
6.1 The Pre-Raphaelites (Rossetti, Morris, Swinburne)

The Pre-Raphaelite Movement, which simply means Italian painters before Raphael, is generally applied to an artistic movement in the middle of the nineteenth century. The Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood was originally a painters’ movement, founded in 1848 by Dante Gabriel Rossetti (1828-82), Holman Hunt, W.M. Rossetti, and others in revolt against the eighteenth century academism which still prevailed in official artistic quarters where the achievements of, for example, Blake, Turner, Constable, and Samuel Palmer were ignored.

The movement believed in simplicity and accuracy of detail, in freshness and directness, and precision, and it looked to medieval art to find them. Thus, there evolves a paradox that the Pre-Raphaelites began both as realists and medievalists. One side of pre-Raphaelite theory based the desire for naturalness and directness on the need for truth and the claims of science. But it was not really the interests of science that the Pre-Raphaelites were anxious to serve; the more interesting of them at least were concerned to give to things as well as to characters and situations the kind of symbolic reality they had to the medieval mind. Some of the exponents of the Pre-Raphaelite Movement are discussed below.

6.2. Dante Gabriel Rossetti (1828-82)

Rossetti turned to poetry from painting, his mind nourished on Dante and the early Italian poets, his Italian heredity and background strongly felt. His first poems appeared in the short-lived Pre-Raphaelite periodical, The Germ (1850), and others in the Oxford and Cambridge Magazine (1856), which also printed the early work of William Morris. His Hand and Soul, a delicate prose study, and his famous The Blessed Damozel, with its simplicity and exquisite spiritual quality, are characteristic of the ideals of the Pre-Raphaelites. His translations of The Early Italian Poets appeared in 1861 and again in a new arrangement as Dante and his Circle in 1874. His first volume of original poems appeared in 1870, he published only one other new volume, Ballads and Sonnets in 1881, the year before his death.

It was Rossetti’s early study of Dante which familiarized him with the symbolizing and sacramentalizing aspect of the medieval mind, and his own temperament also encouraged a tendency to identify the concretely physical with the permanently spiritual. This habit of mind
was not one which came easily to the Victorians, with the result that Pre-Raphaelite influence in poetry apart from Rossetti’s often led only to pseudo-medieval attitudinizing, coy archaisms and pictorial lushness. The attempt to reduce everything to an idea or an essence is one of the main characteristic of his poetry. Rossetti remains an impressive, if in some respects a puzzling poet, who possessed energy, even a savagery, that is very unlike anything, that is found in other Pre-Raphaelite poets.

6.3. William Morris (1834-96)

Morris began writing poetry as a Pre-Raphaelite, under Rossetti’s influence. Poetry was only one of his many interests; architecture, painting, and most of all the “lesser arts” of decoration progressively took up his attention. *The Defence of Guinevere* (1858) is Pre-Raphaelite in manner and for the most part medieval in subject. Morris’ long narrative poems—*The Life and Death of Jason* (1867), *The Earthly Paradise* (1868-70), *Sigurd the Volsung* (1876)—show him trying a variety of poetic styles and following a variety of models. He considered Chaucer his master in narrative verse. A considerable amount of Morris’ later verse was inspired by his socialist faith. *The Pilgrims of Hope* and other poems appeared in *The Common Weal*, the organ of the Socialist League, which Morris founded and edited.

Pre-Raphaelite, medievalist, romantic storyteller, lover of the fierce Norse legends, Socialist worker and fighter, and all the time craftsman and propagandist for the arts, Morris seems at first sight to be an inexplicable mixture. For him, craftsmanship, supreme in the Middle Ages, was the heritage and the guarantee of free men everywhere; poetry was a craft like any other, and he was prepared to weave carpets.

6.4. Algernon Charles Swinburne (1837-1909)

Swinburne began to write poetry as a friend and admirer of Rossetti and the Pre-Raphaelites, but he soon developed his own style, making his own use of influences from Greek, Elizabethan, and Jacobean drama. *Atlanta in Calydon* (1865), an attempt at an English version of an ancient Greek tragedy, was his first considerable effort in poetic form, and it attracted notice at once. *Poems and Ballads* (1866), a second extraordinary book, was owing to its choice of unconventional subjects, criticized at being wicked. His other works include, *Songs before
Sunrise (1871), a collection of poems chiefly in praise of Italian liberty; Erechtheus (1876), a further and less successful effort at Greek tragedy; and Tristram and Other Poems (1882), a narrative of much passion and force, composed in the heroic couplet.

He continued to write and publish until the year of his death. But his first volume of Poems and Ballads remains his most significant monument. Swinburne developed to an extreme a tendency that was implicit in the whole romantic tradition.

7.0. Novelists of the Victorian Age

In the early Victorian period the novel made a rapid progress. Novel-reading was one of the chief occupations of the educated public, and material had to be found for every taste. The result was that the scope of the novel, which during the eighteenth century dealt mainly with contemporary life and manners, was considerably enlarged. A number of brilliant novelists showed that it was possible to adapt the novel to almost all purposes of literature whatsoever. In fact, if we want to understand this intellectual life of the period.

We need hardly go outside the sphere of fiction. The novels produced during the period took various shapes—sermons, political pamphlets, philosophical discourses, social essays, autobiographies and poems in prose. The theatre which could rival fiction had fallen on evil days, and it did not revive till the later half of the nineteenth century. So the early Victorian period saw the heyday of the English novel.

The two most outstanding novelists of the period were Dickens and Thackeray. Besides them there were a number of minor novelists, among whom the important ones were Disraeli, Bronte Sisters, Mrs. Gaskell, Charles Kingsley, Charles Reade, Wilkie Collins and Trollope. All these novelists had a number of points of similarity. In the first place, they identified themselves with their age, and were its spokesmen, whereas the novelists of the latter Victorian period were critical, and even hostile to its dominant assumptions. This sense of identity with their time is of cardinal importance in any consideration of the early Victorian novelists. It was the source alike of their strengths and their weaknesses, and it distinguished them from their successors. It is not that these novelists were uncritical of their country and age, but their criticisms are much less radical than those of Meredith and Hardy. They accepted the society in which they criticized it as
many of their readers were doing in a light hearted manner. They voiced the doubts and fears of the public, but they also shared their general assumptions.

Now let us examine these general assumptions of the early Victorians which these novelists shared. In the first place, in spite of the fact that they were conscious of the havoc caused by the industrial revolution, the presence of mass poverty, and accumulation of riches in a few hands, yet they believed like the common Victorians that these evils would prove to be temporary, that on the whole England was growing prosperous, which was evident from the enormous increase in material wealth and the physical amenities of civilization, and that there was no reason why this progress should not continue indefinitely.

Another important view which these novelists shared with the public was the acceptance of the idea of respectability, which attached great importance to superficial morality in business as well as in domestic and sexual relations. ‘Honesty is the best policy’, ‘Nothing for nothing’ were the dictums which the Victorians honored in their business relations. Their attitude to sex had undergone a great change. Frank recognition and expression of sex had become tabooed. Fielding’s *Tom Jones* was kept out of way of women and children, and in 1818 Thomas Bowlder published his *Family Shakespeare* which contained the original text of Shakespeare’s plays from which were omitted those expression which could not be with propriety read aloud in a family.

The reading public of the early Victorian period was composed of ‘respectable’ people, and it was for them that the novelists wrote. As the novelist themselves shared the same views of ‘respectability’ with the public, it gave them great strength and confidence. As they were artists as well as public entertainers, they enjoyed great power and authority. Moreover, as they shared the pre-occupations and obsessions of their time, they produced literature which may be termed as truly national.

7.1. Charles Dickens (1812-1870)

Dickens is the chief among the early Victorian novelists and is in fact the most popular of all English novelists so far. It was at the age of twenty-five with the publication of *Pickwick Papers* that Dickens suddenly sprang into fame, and came to be regarded as the most popular of English novelists. In his early novels, *Pickwick* (1837) and *Nicholas Nickleby* for instance, Dickens followed the tradition of Smollett. Like Smollett’s novels they are mere bundles of
adventure connected by means of character who figure in them. In his *Martin Chuzzlewit* (1843), *Dombey and Son* (1846-48), and *David Copperfield* (1849-50) he made some effort towards unifications but even here the plots are loose. It was in *Bleak House* (1852-53) that he succeeded in gathering up all the diverse threads of the story in a systematic and coherent plot. His later novels—*Little Dorrit* (1855-57), *A Tale of Two Cities* (1864-65), and the unfinished *Edwin Drood*—were also like *Bleak House* systematically planned. But, on the whole Dickens was not every successful in building up his plots, and there is in all of them a great deal of mere episodical material.

During the early Victorian period there was a swing from romance or a coldly picturesque treatment of life to depicting the heart had the affections. The novels which during the Romantic period and passed through a phase of adventure, reverted in the hands of Dickens to the literature of feeling. Too much emphasis on feelings often led Dickens to sentimentalism as it happened in the case of Richardson. His novels are full of pathos, and there are many passages of studied and extravagant sentiment. But Dickens’s sentimentalism, for which he is often blamed, is a phase of his idealism. Like a true idealist Dickens seeks to embody in his art the inner life of man with a direct or implied moral purpose. His theme is the worth of man’s thought, imaginings, affections, and religious instincts, the need of a trust in his fellowmen, a faith in the final outcome of human endeavor and a belief in immortality. He values qualities like honor, fidelity, courage magnanimity. The best example of Dickens’s idealism is found in *A Tale of Two Cities*, where he preaches a sermon on the sublime text: “Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends.”

Another phase of Dickens’s idealism was his implicit belief that this is the best of all possible worlds. In spite of pain, dirt and sin with which his novels are full, they leave an impression on the reader of the unwavering optimism and buoyant temper of Dickens. He shared to the full, the sanguine spirit of his age, and despite the hardness of heart and the selfishness of those in high places, their greed and hypocrisy, and the class prejudices which had divided man from man, Dickens believed that the world was still a very good world to live in. He had faith in the better element of human beings who live and struggle for a period, and then fall unremembered to give place to other. All his characters come out of the pit of suffering and distress as better men, uncontaminated and purer than before like Pip in *Great Expectations*. 
But the most delightful manifestation of the idealism of Dickens is his humour, which is almost irresistible. It is clearly manifest in his first novel, *Pickwick*, and in the succeeding novels it broadened and deepened. Dickens has the knack of uniting humour with pathos in a sort of tragic-comedy, which is especially noticeable in certain sections of *Old Curiosity Shop* and *Martin Chuzzlewit*. The best examples of Dickens pure comedy are the Peggotty and Barkis episodes in *David Copperfield*.

It is especially in the delineations of characters that the humour of Dickens is supreme. Like Smollett he was on the lookout for some oddity which for his purpose he made more odd than it was. All his characters are humours highly idealized and yet retaining so much of the real that we recognize in them some disposition of ourselves and of the men and women we met. The number of these humorous types that Dickens contributed to fiction runs into thousands. In fact there is no other writer in English literature, except only Shakespeare, who has created so many characters that have become permanent elements of the humorous tradition of the English race.

Besides being an idealist, Dickens was also a realist. He began his literary career as a reporter, and his short *Sketches by Boz* have the air of the eighteenth century quiet observer and news writer. This same reportorial air is about his long novels, which are groups of incidents. The main difference is that, while in his sketches he writes down his observation fresh from experience, in his novels he draws upon his memory. It is his personal experiences which underlie the novels of Dickens, not only novels like *David Copperfield* where it is so obvious, but also *Hard Times* where one would least expect to find them. One very important aspect of Dickens’s realism is this richness of descriptive detail, based upon what Dickens had actually seen.

It was Dickens’s realism which came as a check to medievalism which was very popular during the Romantic period. He awakened the interest of the public in the social conditions of England. The novels of Dickens were full of personal experiences (like *Oliver Twist*), anecdotes, stories from friends, and statistics to show that they were founded upon facts. The result was that after Dickens began writing, knights and ladies and tournaments became rarer in the English novel. They were replaced by agricultural labourers, miners, tailors and paupers.
The novels of Dickens were also the most important product and expression in fiction of the humanitarian movement of the Victorian era. From first to last he was a novelist with a purpose. He was a staunch champion of the weak, the outcast and the oppressed, and in almost all his novels he attacked one abuse or the other in the existing system of things. It is, therefore, no exaggeration to say that humanitarianism is the key-note of his work and on account of the tremendous popularity that he enjoyed as a novelist, Dickens may justly be regarded as one of the foremost reformers of his age.

7.2. William Makepeace Thackeray (1811-1863)

Thackeray who was Dickens’s contemporary and great rival for popular favour, lacked his weaknesses and his genius. He was more interested in the manners and morals of the aristocracy than in the great upheavals of the age. Unlike Dickens who came of a poor family and had to struggle hard in his boyhood, Thackeray was born of rich parents, inherited a comfortable fortune, and spent his young days in comfort. But whereas Dickens, in spite of his bitter experiences retained a buoyant temperament and a cheerful outlook on life, Thackeray, in spite of his comfortable and easy life, turned cynical towards the world which used him so well, and found shames, deceptions, vanities everywhere because he looked for them. Dickens was more interested in plain, common people; Thackeray, on the other hand, was more concerned with high society. The main reason of this fundamental difference between the two was not, however, of environment, but of temperament. Whereas Dickens was romantic and emotional and interpreted the world largely through his imagination; Thackeray was the realist and moralist and judged solely by observation and reflection. Thus if we take the novels of both together, they give us a true picture of all classes of English society in the early Victorian period.

Thackeray is, first of all, a realist, who paints life as he sees it. As he says of himself, “I have no brains above my eyes; I describe what I see.” He gives in his novels accurate and true picture especially of the vicious elements of society. As he possesses an excessive sensibility, and a capacity for fine feelings and emotions like Dickens, he is readily offended by shams, falsehood and hypocrisy in society. The result is that he satirizes them. But his satire is always tempered by kindness and humour. Moreover, besides being a realist and satirist, Thackeray is also a moralist. In all his novels he definitely aims at creating a moral impression and he often behaves in an inartistic manner by explaining and emphasizing the moral significance of his
work. The beauty of virtue and the ugliness of vice in his character is so obvious on every page that we do not have to consult our conscience over their actions. As a writer of pure, simple and charming prose Thackeray the reader by his natural, easy and refined style. But the quality of which Thackeray is most remembered as a novelist is the creation of living characters. In this respect he stands supreme among English novelists. It is not merely that he holds up the mirror to life, he presents life itself.

It was with the publication of *Vanity Fair* in 1846 that the English reading public began to understand what a star had risen in English letters. Vanity Fair was succeeded in 1849 by *Pendennis* which, as an autobiography, holds the same place among his works as *David Copperfield* does among those of Dickens. In 1852 appeared the marvelous historical novel of *Henry Esmond* which is the greatest novel in its own special kind ever written. In it Thackeray depicted the true picture of the Queen Anne period and showed his remarkable grasp of character and story. In his next novel *Newcomes* (1853-8) he returned to modern times, and displayed his great skill in painting contemporary manners. By some critics *Newcomes* is considered to be his best novel. His next novel, *The Virginians*, which is a sequel of *Esmond*, deals with the third quarter of the eighteenth century. In all these novels Thackeray has presented life in a most realistic manner. Every act, every scene, every person in his novels is real with a reality which has been idealized up to, and not beyond, the necessities of literature. Whatever the acts, the scenes and the personages may be in his novels, we are always face to face with real life, and it is there that the greatness of Thackeray as a novelist lies.

### 7.3. Later Victorian novelists

The novel in the later Victorian period took a new trend, and the novels written during this period may be called ‘modern’ novels. George Eliot was the first to write novels in the modern style. Other important novelists of the period were Meredith and Hardy. The year 1859 saw the publication not only of George Eliot’s *Adam Bede* but also of Meredith’s *The Ordeal of Richard Feveral*. Though they are vastly different from each other, they stand in sharp contrast to the works of established novelists that appeared the same year—as Dickens’s *A Tale of Two Cities* and Thackeray’s *Virginians*. 
The novelists of the early Victorian period—Dickens, Thackeray, Trollope and others—had followed the tradition of English novel established by Defoe, Richardson and Fielding. Their conception of themselves was modest, and their conscious aim nothing much more elevated than Wilkie Collins’s “make them laugh, make them cry, make them wait.” Set against this innocent notion of the novelist’s function, the new novelists of England as well of other countries of Europe, began to have high ambitions of making the novel as serious as poetry. The Russian novelists—Turgenev, Tolstoy and Dostoevsky and the French novelists like Flaubert, all began to look upon the novel as a medium of conveying profound thoughts. Flaubert especially arrogated to himself the rights and privileges of the poet, and he talked about his talent and medium as seriously as poets do theirs. He stated his ambition as a novelist thus: “To desire to give verse rhythm to prose, yet to leave it prose and very much prose, and to write about ordinary life as histories and epics are written, yet without falsifying the subject. It is perhaps an absurd idea. But it may also be a great experiment and very original”. These words of Flaubert show that the European novelists in the middle of the nineteenth century were making the same claims about their vocation as the Romantic poets in England did in the beginning of the century. The seriousness of these European novelists was both moral and aesthetic, and it came to English fiction with George Eliot and Meredith. Both of them were intellectuals and philosophers and had associates among such class of people. On the other hand, their predecessors, Dickens and Thackeray, had association with journalists, artists and actors, and they themselves belonged to their group. George Eliot lived in a much larger world of ideas. These ideas conditioned her views of fiction, determined the shape of her novels and the imagery of her prose. Meredith who was partly educated in Germany and was influenced by French writers, developed a highly critical view of England and its literature. Thus specially equipped, these two novelists—George Eliot and Meredith—gave a new trend to the English novel, and made it ‘modern’. They were followed by Hardy who extended the scope of the novel still further.

7.4. George Eliot (1819-1880)

The real name of George Eliot was Mary Ann Evans. For a long time her writings was exclusively critical and philosophic in character and it was when she was thirty-eight that her first work of fiction Scenes of Clerical Life (1857) appeared. It was followed by Adam Bede
George Eliot was born in Warwickshire, where she lived till her father’s death in 1849. It was her Warwickshire experience—the life of an English village before the railway came to disturb it, which provided the substance of most of her novels. Gifted with a wonderful faculty of observation, she could reproduce faithfully the mannerism of rustic habit and speech. Having a thorough knowledge of the countryside and the country people, their hierarchies and standards of value, she could give a complete picture of their life. Moreover, she could beautifully portray the humour and pathos of these simple folk as no English novelist had done before. Just as we look to Dickens for pictures of the city streets and to Thackeray for the vanities of society, we look to George Eliot for the reflection of the country life in England.

In George Eliot the novel took its modern form. Every story derives its unity from its plot. The different episodes are all related to one another and subordinated to the main story. The chief appeal to the emotions of the reader is made by the inevitable catastrophe towards which the whole action moves. This unity of plot construction was lacking in the English novel before George Eliot appeared on the scene. This was a singular contribution of hers to the development of the English novel. Another important feature of George Eliot’s novels is that they reflect more clearly than any other Victorian novels the movement of contemporary thought. They specially appeal to the mind which is troubled by religious and ethical difficulties. The mood of much of her work is like that of Matthew Arnold’s poems. She shares also with him his melancholy and depressing mood.

In her novels George Eliot takes upon herself the role of a preacher and moralizer. Though profoundly religious at heart, she was greatly affected by the scientific spirit of the age; and finding no religious creed or political system satisfactory, she fell back upon duty as the supreme law of life. In all her novels she shows in individuals the play of universal moral forces, and establishes the moral law as the basis of human society. The principle of law which was in the air during the Victorian era and which deeply influenced Tennyson, is with George Eliot like fate. It is to her as inevitable and automatic as gravitation and it overwhelms personal freedom and inclination.
All the novels of George Eliot are examples of psychological realism. She represents in them, like Browning in his poetry, the inner struggle of a soul, and reveals the motives, impulses and hereditary influences which govern human action. But unlike Browning who generally stops short when he tells a story, and either lets the reader draw his own conclusion or gives his in a few striking lines, George Eliot is not content until she has minutely explained the motives of her characters and the moral lessons to be learned from them. Moreover, the characters in her novels, unlike in the novels of Dickens, develop gradually as we came to know them. They go from weakness to strength or from strength to weakness, according to the works that they do and the thoughts that they cherish. For instance, in *Romola* we find that Tito degenerates steadily because he follows selfish impulses, while Romola grows into beauty and strength with every act of self-renunciation.

7.5. George Meredith (1829-1909)

Another great figure not only in fiction, but in the general field of literature during the later Victorian period, was Meredith who, though a poet at heart expressed himself in the medium of the novel, which was becoming more and more popular. The work of Meredith as a novelist stands apart from fiction of the century. He did not follow any established tradition, nor did he found a school. In fact he was more of a poet and philosopher than a novelist. He confined himself principally to the upper classes of society, and his attitude to life is that of the thinker and poet. In his novels, he cared little for incident or plot on their account, but used them principally to illustrate the activity of the ‘Comic Spirit’. Comedy he conceives of as a Muse watching the actions of men and women, detecting and pointing out their inconsistencies with a view to their moral improvement. She never laughs loud, she only smiles at most; and the smile is of the intellect, for she is the handmaid of philosophy. Meredith loves to trace the calamities which befall those who provoke Nature by obstinately running counter to her laws. A certain balance and sanity, a fine health of body and soul are, in his view, the means prescribed by Nature for the happiness of man.

*The Ordeal of Richard Feveral*, which is one of the earliest of Meredith’s novels, is also one of his best. Its theme is the ill-advised bringing up of an only son, Richard Feveral, by his well-meaning and officious father, Sir Austen Feveral. In spite of his best intentions, the father adopts such methods as are unsuited to the nature of the boy, with the result that he himself
becomes the worst enemy of his son, and thus an object of ridicule by the Comic Spirit. Besides containing Meredith’s philosophy of natural and healthy development of the human personality the novel also has some fines passages of great poetic beauty. *Evan Harrington* (1861) is full of humorous situations which arise out of the social snobbery of the Harrington family. *Rhoda Fleming* (1865), *Sandra Belloni* (1864), *Harry Richmond* (1871) and *Beauchamp’s Career* (1876) all contain the best qualities of Meredith’s art—intellectual brilliance, a ruthless exposure of social weaknesses, and an occasional poetic intensity of style. In all of them Meredith shows himself as the enemy of sentimentality. In *The Egoists* which is the most perfect illustration of what he meant by ‘comedy’, Meredith reached the climax of his art. The complete discomfiture of Sir Willoughby Patterne, the egoist, is one of the neatest things in English literature. This novel also contains Meredith’s some of the best drawn characters—the Egoist himself, Clara Middleton, Laetitia Dale, and Crossjay Patterne.

Like George Eliot, Meredith is a psychologist. He tries to unravel the mystery of the human personality and probe the hidden springs there. Being at heart a poet, he introduced in his earlier novels passages of unsurpassable poetic beauty. A master of colour and melody when he wills, Meredith belongs to the company of Sterne, Carlyle and Browning who have whimsically used the English language. He seldom speaks directly, frequently uses maxims and aphorisms in which are concentrated his criticism of contemporary life. Like Browning, Meredith preaches an optimistic and positive attitude to life. Influenced by the theory of Evolution, he believes that the human race is evolving towards perfection. This process can be accelerated by individual men and women by living a sane balanced and healthy life. They should follow the golden mean and steer clear of ‘the ascetic rocks and sensual whirlpools’. On account of this bracing and refreshing philosophy, the novels of Meredith, though written in a difficult style, have a special message for the modern man who finds himself enveloped in a depressing atmosphere.

**7.6. Thomas Hardy (1840-1928)**

The greatest novelist of the later Victorian period was Thomas Hardy. Like Meredith, he was at heart a poet, and expressed himself also in verse. But unlike Meredith whose attitude to life is optimistic, and who has written comedies, Hardy’s attitude to life is rather pessimistic and he has written tragedies. Hardy thinks that there is some malignant power which controls this universe, and which is out to thwart and defeat man in all his plans. It is especially hostile to
those who try to assert themselves and have their own way. Thus his novels and poems are, throughout, the work of a man painfully dissatisfied with the age in which he lived. He yearned for England’s past, and he distrusted modern civilization because he suspected that its effect was frequently to decivilize and weaken those to whom Nature and old custom had given stout hearts, clear heads and an enduring spirit. In his books, ancient and modern are constantly at war, and none is happy who has been touched by ‘modern’ education and culture. Hardy also resists the infiltration of aggressive modernity in the quiet village surroundings.

Hardy passed the major portion of his life near Dorchester, and his personal experiences were bound up with the people and customs, the monuments and institutions of Dorset and the contiguous countries of south-western England, which he placed permanently on the literary map by the ancient name “Wessex”. Thus Hardy has left a body of fiction unique in its uniformity. No other novelist in England has celebrated a region so comprehensively as Hardy has done. Though he has dealt with a limited world, he has created hundreds of characters, many of whom are mere choral voices as in Greek drama.

On account of Hardy’s philosophy of a malignant power ruling the universe which thwarts and defeats man at every step, his novels are full of coincidences. In fact, chance plays too large a part in them. For this Hardy has been blamed by some critics who believe that he deliberately introduces coincidences which always upset the plans of his characters. In real life chance sometimes helps a man also, but in Hardy’s novel chance always comes as an upsetting force.

The great novels of Hardy are The Woodlanders, The Return of the Native, Far From the Madding Crowd, The Mayor of Casterbridge, Tess of the D’Urbervilles and Jude the Obscure. Though most of Hardy’s novels are tragedies, yet the role of tragedy becomes intensified in The Return of the Native, Tess and Jude. The last chapter of Tess outraged the religious conscience of 1891; to-day it offends the aesthetic conscience by its violation of our critical sense of order and imaginative sufficiency. Hardy had said enough in Tess before the beginning of the last chapter. As it stands, the novel is a masterpiece, but it is scarred by an unhappy final stroke, the novel is a masterpiece, but it is scarred by an unhappy final stroke. Jude the Obscure, though a very powerful novel is spoiled by Hardy’s ruthlessness. At no time are Sue and Jude permitted to escape the shadowing hand of malignant destiny. They are completely defeated and broken.
As a writer of tragedies Hardy can stand comparison with the great figures in world literature, but he falls short of their stature because he is inclined to pursue his afflicted characters beyond the limits of both art and nature. In the use of pathos Hardy is a past master. As for Hardy’s style, his prose is that of a poet in close contact with things. In his evocation of scenes and persons, his senses bring into play a verbal incantation that relates him to the Pre-Raphaelites. He describes characters and scenes in such a manner that they get imprinted on the memory.

The main contribution of Hardy to the history of the English novel was that he made it as serious a medium as poetry, which could deal with the fundamental problems of life. His novels can be favorably compared to great poetic tragedies, and the characters therein rise to great tragic heights. His greatest quality as a writer is his sincerity and his innate sympathy for the poor and the down-trodden. If at times he transgressed the limits of art, it was mainly on account of his deep compassion for mankind, especially those belonging to the lower stratum.

7.7. Other Novelists of the Victorian Period

Among the minor novelists of the early Victorian period, Benjamin Disraeli, the Brontes, Mrs. Gaskell, Charles Kingsley, Charles Reade, Wilkie Collins and Trollope are well known.

Benjamin Disraeli (1804-81) wrote his first novel *Vivian Grey* (1826-27), in which he gave the portrait of a dandy, a young, intelligent adventurer without scruples. In the succeeding novels *Coningsby* (1844), *Sybil* (1845) and *Tancred* (1847) Disraeli was among the first to point out that the amelioration of the wretched lot of the working class was a social duty of the aristocracy. Being a politician who became the Prime Minister of England, he has given us the finest study of the movements of English politics under Queen Victoria. All his novels are written with a purpose, and as the characters in them are created with a view to the thesis, they retain a certain air of unreality.

The Bronte Sisters who made their mark as novelists were Charlotte Bronte (1816-55) and Emily Bronte (1818-48). Charlotte Bronte depicted in her novels those strong romantic passions which were generally avoided by Dickens and Thackeray. She brought lyrical warmth and the play of strong feeling into the novel. In her masterpiece, *Jane Eyre* (1847), her dreams and resentments kindle every page. Her other novels are *The Professor, Villette* and *Shirley*. In
all of them we find her as a mistress of wit, irony, accurate observation, and a style full of impassioned eloquence.

Emily Bronte was more original than her sister. Though she died at the age of thirty, she wrote a strange novel, Wuthering Heights, which contains so many of the troubled, tumultuous and rebellious elements of romanticism. It is a tragedy of love at once fantastic and powerful, savage and moving, which is considered now as one of the masterpieces of world fiction.

Mrs. Gaskell (1810-65) as a novelist dealt with social problems. She had first-hand knowledge of the evils of industrialization, having lived in Manchester for many years. Her novels Mary Barton (1848) and North and South (1855) give us concrete details of the miserable plight of the working class. In Ruth (1853) Mrs. Gaskell shows the same sympathy for unfortunate girls. In Cranford (1853) she gave a delicate picture of the society of a small provincial town, which reminds us of Jane Austen.

Charles Kingsley (1819-75) who was the founder of the Christian Socialists, and actively interested in the co-operative movement, embodied his generous ideas of reform in the novels Yeast (1848) and Alton Locke (1850). As a historical novelist he returned to the earliest days of Christianity in Hypatia (1853). In Westward Ho! (1855) he commemorated the adventurous spirit of the Elizabethan navigators, and in Hereward the Wake (1865) of the descendants of the Vikings.

Charles Reade (1814-84) wrote novels with a social purpose. It is Never too Late to Mend (1853) is a picture of the horrors of prison life; Hard Cash (1863) depicts the abuses to which lunatic, asylums gave rise; Put Yourself in His Place is directed against trade unions. His A Terrible Temptation is a famous historical novel. His The Cloister and the Hearth (1867) shows the transition from the Middle Ages to the Renaissance.

Wilkie Collins (1824-89) excelled in arousing the sense of terror and in keeping in suspense the explanation of a mystery of the revelation of crime. His best-known novels are The Woman in White and The Moonstone in which he shows his great mastery in the mechanical art of plot construction.
Anthony Trollope (1815-88) wrote a number of novels, in which he presented real life without distorting or idealizing it. His important novels are *The Warden* (1855), *Barchester Towers* (1857) and *The Last Chronicle of Barset* (1867) in which he has given many truthful scenes of provincial life, without poetical feeling, but not without humour. Trollope has great skill as a story-teller and his characters are lifelike and shrewdly drawn. His novels present a true picture of middle class life, and there is neither heroism nor villainy there. His style is easy, regular, uniform and almost impersonal.

Robert Louis Stevenson was a great story-teller and romancer. He took advantage of the reader’s demand for shorter novels. His first romance entitled *Treasure Island* became very popular. It was followed by *New Arabian Nights, Kidnapped, The Black Arrow*, which contain romances and mystery stories. In *Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde* he departed from his usual manner to write a modern allegory of the good and evil in the human personality. In *The Master of Ballantre* Stevenson described the story of a soul condemned to evil. At his death he was working on unfinished novel, *Weir of Hermiston*, which is considered by some critics as the most finished product of his whole work. In it he dramatized the conflict between father and son—the Lord Justice-Clerk, the hanging judge, and his son Archie who has the courage to face him. The contribution of Stevenson to the English novel is that he introduced into it romantic adventure. His rediscovery of the art of narrative, of conscious and clever calculation in telling a story so that the maximum effect of clarity and suspense is achieved, meant the birth of the novel of action. He gave a wholly new literary dignity and impetus to light fiction whose main aim is entertainment.

**8.0. Prose Writers of the Victorian Age**

The early Victorian prose is in keeping with the energetic temperament of the time. An expansive energy seems to be characteristic of the whole period, displaying itself as freely in literature as in the development of science, geographical exploration and the rapidity of economic change.

This energetic mood prescribes the inventiveness and fertility of the prose-writers of the period and explains the vitality of so many of their works. Carlyle’s *The French Revolution*, Ruskin’s *Modern Painters* and Arnold’s *Essays in Criticism* are not modest and light-hearted
compositions, but they represent the aesthetic equivalent of self-assertion and an urgent ‘will to survive’ which was characteristic of the early Victorians. Their prose is not, as a rule, flawless in diction and rhythm, or easily related to a central standard of correctness or polished to a uniform high finish, but it is a prose which is vigorous, intricate and ample, and is more conscious of vocabulary and imagery than of balance and rhythm.

As the number of prose-writers during the period is quite large, there is a greater variety of style among them than to be found in any other period. In the absence any well-defined tradition of prose-writing, each writer cherishes his oddities and idiosyncrasies and is not prepared to sacrifice his peculiarities in deference to a received tradition. Victorian individualism, the ‘Doing As One Likes’, censured by Matthew Arnold, reverberates in prose style.

Taking the Victorian prose as a whole, we can say that it is Romantic prose. Though Romanticism gave a new direction to English poetry between 1780 and 1830, its full effects on prose were delayed until the eighteen-thirties when all the major Romantic poets were either dead or moribund. That is why, early Victorian prose is, properly speaking, Romantic prose, and Carlyle is the best example of a Romantic prose-artist. In fact it were the romantic elements—unevenness, seriousness of tone, concreteness and particularity—which constitute the underlying unity of the prose of the early Victorian period. All the great prose writers of period—Carlyle, Ruskin, Macaulay and Matthew Arnold have these qualities in common.

8.1. Thomas Carlyle (1795-1881)

Carlyle was the dominant figure of the Victorian period. He made his influence felt in every department of Victorian life. In the general prose literature of his age he was incomparably the greatest figure, and one of the greatest moral forces. In his youth he suffered from doubts which assailed him during the many dark years in which he wandered in the ‘howling wilderness of infidelity,’ striving vainly to recover his lost belief in God. Then suddenly there came a moment of mystical illumination, or ‘spiritual new birth’, which brought him back to the mood of courage and faith. The history of these years of struggle and conflict and the ultimate triumph of his spirit is written with great power in the second book of Sartor Restartus which is his most characteristic literary production, and one of the most remarkable and vital books in the English
language. His other works are: *French Revolution* (1837); his *Lectures on Heroes and Hero-Worship*; *Past and Present* (1843); the *Letters and Speeches of Oliver Cromwell* (1845); *Latter-day Pamphlets* (1850); *The Life of John Sterling* (1851); *The History of Frederick the Great* (1858-65).

Basically Carlyle was a Puritan, and in him the strenuous and uncompromising spirit of the seventeenth century Puritanism found its last great exponent. Always passionately in earnest and unyielding in temper, he could not tolerate any moral weakness or social evil. He wanted people to be sincere and he hated conventions and unrealities. In the spheres of religion, society and politics he sought reality and criticized all sham and falsehood. To him history was the revelation of God’s righteous dealings with men and he applied the lessons derived from the past to the present. He had no faith in democracy. He believed in the ‘hero’ under whose guidance and leadership the masses can march to glory. This is the theme of his *Lectures on Heroes and Hero-Worship*. He proclaimed a spiritual standard of life to a generation which had started worshipping the ‘mud-gods of modern civilization’. He denounced scientific materialism and utilitarianism in *Past and Present*. He preached to his contemporaries in a most forceful manner that spiritual freedom was the only life-giving truth. Carlyle could not turn back the currents of his age, but he exerted a tremendous influence.

Carlyle’s style is the reflection of his personality. In fact in hardly any English writer are personal and literary characters more closely and strongly blended. He twists the language to suit his needs. In order to achieve this he makes use of strange ‘tricks’—the use of capital initials, the dropping of conjunctions, pronouns, verbs, the quaint conversion of any noun into a verb, free use of foreign words or literal English translations of foreign words. Thus his language is like a mercenary army formed of all sorts of incongruous and exotic elements. His personifications and abstractions sometimes become irritating and even tiresome. At times he deliberately avoids simplicity, directness, proportion and form. He is in fact the most irregular and erratic of English writers. But in spite of all these faults, it is impossible to read him at his best without the sentiment of enthusiasm. In his mastery of vivid and telling phraseology he is unrivalled and his powers of description and characterization are remarkable. His style with its enormous wealth of vocabulary, its strangely constructed sentences, its breaks, abrupt turns, apostrophes and
exclamations, is unique in English prose literature, and there is no doubt that he is one of the greatest literary artists in the English language.

8.2. John Ruskin (1819-1900)

In the general prose literature of the early Victorian period Ruskin is ranked next to Carlyle. Of all the Victorian writers who were conscious of the defeats in contemporary life, he expressed himself most voluminously. Being one of the greatest masters of English he became interested in art and wrote *Modern Painters* (1843-1860) in five volumes in order to vindicate the position of Turner as a great artist. Being a man of deeply religious and pious nature he could not separate Beauty from Religion, and he endeavoured to prove that ‘all great art is praise’. Examination of the principles of art gradually led Ruskin to the study of social ethics. He found that architecture, even more than painting, indicated the state of a nation’s health. In his *The Seven Lamps of Architecture* (1849) and *The Stones of Venice* (1851-53) he tried to prove that the best type of architecture can be produced only in those ages which are morally superior.

The year 1860 when Ruskin published *Unto this Last* marks a great change in him. From this time onward he wrote little on art and devoted himself to the discussing of the ills of society. In this book he attacked the prevalent system of political economy, and protested against unrestricted competition, the law of ‘Devil-take-the-hindmost’, as Ruskin called it. In his later books—*Sesame and Lilies* (1865) and *The Crown of Wild Olive* (1866), Ruskin showed himself as a popular educator, clear in argument and skilful in illustration. His last work, an autobiography called *Praterita*, is full of interesting reminiscences.

The prose of Ruskin has a rhythmic, melodious quality which makes it almost equal to poetry. Being highly sensitive to beauty in every form, he helps the reader to see and appreciate the beauty of the world around us. In his economic essays he tried to mitigate the evils of the competitive system; to bring the employer and the employed together in mutual trust and helpfulness; to seek beauty, truth, goodness as the chief ends of life. There is no doubt that he was the prophet in an age of rank materialism, utilitarianism and competition, and pointed out the solution to the grave problems which were confronting his age.
8.3. Thomas Babington Lord Macaulay (1800-59)

Though Carlyle and Ruskin are now considered to be the great prose-writers of the Victorian period, contemporary opinion gave the first place to Macaulay, who in popularity far exceeded both of them. He was a voracious reader, and he remembered everything he read. He could repeat from memory all the twelve books of Paradise Lost. At the age of twenty-five he wrote his essay on poetry in general and on Milton as poet, man and politician in particular, which brought him immediate popularity as Byron’s Childe Harold had done. Besides biographical and critical essays which won for him great fame and popularity, Macaulay, like Carlyle; wrote historical essays as well as History of England. As early as 1828, he wrote, ‘a perfect historian must possess an imagination sufficiently powerful to make his narrative affecting and picturesque.’ That power of imagination he possessed and exercised so delightfully that his History was at once purchased more eagerly than a poem of romance.

Macaulay was the representative of the popular sentiments and prejudices of the common English man of the first half of the nineteenth century. But his popularity was based mainly on the energy and capacity of his mind, and the eloquence with which he enlivened whatever he wrote. By the resources and the quickness of his memory, by his wide learning which was always at his command, he rose to the high rank as the exponent of the matter of history, and as a critic of opinions.

The chief quality which makes Macaulay distinct from the other prose writers of the period is the variety and brilliance of details in his writings. There is a fondness for particulars in his descriptions which distinguished the poems and novels of the new age from the more generalised and abstract compositions of the old school. Though he may be more extravagant and profuse in his variety of details than is consistent with the ‘dignity’ of history, this variety is always supported by a structure of great plainness. The only fault of his style is that at times it becomes too rhetorical and so the continuity of the narrative is sacrificed. His short sentences, and his description of particular interference with the flow of the narrative, and so the cumulative effect of the story is not always secured. Besides this weakness of style, Macaulay is now given a rank lower than that of Carlyle, Ruskin and Arnold on account of his lack of originality and depth as a thinker. But on the whole he still remains as one of the most enjoyable of all Victorian prose-writers.
8.4. Matthew Arnold (1822-88)

Besides being a poet, Matthew Arnold was a prose-writer of a high order. He was also a great literary as well as social critic. Like Carlyle and Ruskin, he was vehement critic of his age. According to him, the Englishmen needed classical qualities in order to attain harmonious perfection in morals and in literature. It was not to the Hebrews or the Germans (as suggested by Carlyle), or to the men of the Middle Age (as suggested by Ruskin) that England could with advantage look for teaching, but to the Greeks or to that people which among the moderns had imbibed most of Hellenic culture, the French.

In literature Arnold strove to rehabilitate and to propagate the classical spirit in his country. England had reason to be proud of the literary splendor of the Elizabethan period, or of the glories of her Romantic movement, but according to Arnold, she had to long condemned or disdained the “indispensable eighteenth century.” From 1855 onwards Arnold wrote incessantly in order to raise the intellectual and cultural level of his countrymen. All his prose works are directed to this end: On Translating Homer (1861), The Study of Celtic Literature (1867), Essays in Criticism (1865 and 1888) and Culture and Anarchy (1869) in which he declared that “culture is the minister of the sweetness and light essential to the perfect character”. Being a poet himself, he looked upon poetry as “a criticism of life”, and laid great emphasis on the part it played in the formation of character and the guidance of conduct. He always attacked “the Philistines”, by whom he meant the middle class indifferent to the disinterested joys of pure intelligence. Arnold also attempted to eliminate the dogmatic element from Christianity in order to preserve its true spirit and bring it into the line with the discoveries of science and the progress of liberal thought.

Unlike the teachings of Carlyle and Ruskin, which appealed to the masses, Arnold’s teaching appealed mainly to the educated classes. As a writer of prose he is simply superb. His style is brilliant and polished to a nicety, possessing’ the virtues of quietness and proportion which we associate with no other English writer except Dryden. As his object was to bring home to his countrymen certain fundamental principles of cultured and intellectual life, he has the habit of repeating the same word and phrase with a sort of refrain effect. It was no wonder that critics first and the public afterwards, were attracted, irritated, amused or charmed by his writings. His loud praise of ‘sweetness’ and ‘culture’, his denunciation of the ‘Philistine’, the ‘Barbarian’, and
so forth, were ridiculed by some unkind critics. But rightly considered we find that there is something of justice in all that he wrote, and on every line there is the stamp of his sincerity.

When Arnold returned from religion and politics to his natural sphere of literature, then the substance of his criticism is admirably sound and its expression always delightful and distinguished. In spite of its extreme mannerism and the apparently obvious tricks by which that mannerism is reached, the style of Arnold is not easy to imitate. It is almost perfectly clear with a clearness rather French than English. It sparkles with wit which seldom diverts or distracts the attention. Such a style was eminently fitted for the purposes of criticism. As a writer of essays he had no superior among the writers of his time, and he can probably never be surpassed by any one in a certain mild ironic handling of a subject which he disapproves. He may not be considered as one of the strongest writers of English prose, but he must always hold a high rank in it for grace, for elegance, and for an elaborate and calculated charm.

Sources/Suggested Reading

1. English Literature: Its History and Significance by William J. Long
2. A Short History of English Literature by Ifor Evans
3. History of English Literature by Edward Albert
4. Victorian Faith in Crisis: Essays on Continuity and Change in Nineteenth Century Religious Belief by Helmstadter and Lightman
1.1. Introduction

The term Feminism is applied to a collection of movements and ideologies aimed at defining, establishing, and defending equal political, economic, cultural, and social rights for women. This includes seeking to establish equal opportunities for women in education and employment. A feminist advocates or supports the rights and equality of women.

Feminism is both an intellectual commitment and a political movement that seeks justice for women and the end of sexism in all forms. However, there are many different kinds of feminism. Feminists disagree about what sexism consists in, and what exactly ought to be done about it; they disagree about what it means to be a woman or a man and what social and political implications gender has or should have. Nonetheless, motivated by the quest for social justice, feminist inquiry provides a wide range of perspectives on social, cultural, and political phenomena. Important topics for feminist theory and politics include: the body, class and work, disability, the family, globalization, human rights, popular culture, race and racism, reproduction, science, the self, sex work, and sexuality. Extended discussion of these topics is included in the sub-entries.

Feminist theory, which emerged from feminist movements, aims to understand the nature of gender inequality by examining women's social roles and lived experience; it has developed theories in a variety of disciplines in order to respond to issues such as the social construction of sex and gender. Some of the earlier forms of feminism have been criticized for taking into account only white, middle-class, educated perspectives. This led to the creation of ethnically specific or multiculturalist forms of feminism.
Feminist activists campaign for women's rights – such as in contract law, property, and voting – while also promoting bodily integrity, autonomy, and reproductive rights for women. Feminist campaigns have changed societies, particularly in the West, by achieving women's suffrage, gender neutrality in English, equal pay for women, reproductive rights for women (including access to contraceptives and abortion), and the right to enter into contracts and own property. Feminists have worked to protect women and girls from domestic violence, sexual harassment, and sexual assault. They have also advocated for workplace rights, including maternity leave, and against forms of discrimination against women. Feminism is mainly focused on women's issues, but author bell hooks and others have argued that, since feminism seeks gender equality, it must necessarily include men's liberation because men are also harmed by sexism and gender roles.

Feminism brings many things to philosophy including not only a variety of particular moral and political claims, but ways of asking and answering questions, critiques of mainstream philosophical views and methods, and new topics of inquiry. Feminist contributions to and interventions in mainstream philosophical debates are covered in entries under "Feminism, interventions". Entries covered under the rubric "Feminism, topics" concern philosophical issues that arise as feminists articulate accounts of sexism, critique sexist social and cultural practices, and develop alternative visions of a just world. In short, they are philosophical topics that arise within feminism.

Although there are many different and sometimes conflicting approaches to feminist philosophy, it is instructive to begin by asking what, if anything, feminists as a group are committed to. Considering some of the controversies over what feminism is provides a springboard for seeing how feminist commitments generate a host of philosophical topics, especially as those commitments confront the world as we know it.
1.2. History

The history of feminism is the chronological narrative of the movements and ideologies aimed at defining, establishing, and defending equal political, economic, and social rights for women. While feminists around the world have differed in causes, goals, and intentions depending on time, culture, and country, most Western feminist historians assert that all movements that work to obtain women's rights should be considered feminist movements, even when they did not (or do not) apply the term to themselves. Other historians limit the term to the modern feminist movement and its progeny, and instead use the label "protofeminist" to describe earlier movements. Charles Fourier, a Utopian Socialist and French philosopher, is credited with having coined the word "feminism" in 1837. The words "feminism" and "feminist" first appeared in France and the Netherlands in 1872, Great Britain in the 1890s, and the United States in 1910, and the Oxford English Dictionary lists 1894 as the year of the first appearance of "feminist" and 1895 for "feminism". Depending on historical moment, culture and country, feminists around the world have had different causes and goals.

Modern Western feminist history is split into three time periods, or "waves", each with slightly different aims based on prior progress. First-wave feminism of the 19th and early 20th centuries focused on overturning legal inequalities, particularly women's suffrage. Second-wave feminism (1960s–1980s) broadened debate to include cultural inequalities, gender norms, and the role of women in society. Third-wave feminism (1990s–2000s) refers to diverse strains of feminist activity, seen as both a continuation of the second wave and a response to its perceived failures.

In the mid-1800s the term 'feminism' was used to refer to "the qualities of females", and it was not until after the First International Women's Conference in Paris in 1892 that the term, following the French term féministe, was used regularly in English for a belief in and advocacy of equal rights for women based on the idea of the equality of the sexes. Some feminists trace the origins of the term "feminism" in English as rooted in
the movement in Europe and the US beginning with the mobilization for suffrage during the late 19th and early 20th century and refer to this movement as "First Wave" feminism. Those who employ this history often depict feminist as waning between the two world wars, to be "revived" in the late 1960's and early 1970's as what they label "Second Wave" feminism. More recently, transformations of feminism in the past decade have been referred to as "Third Wave" feminism.

However, other feminist scholars object to identifying feminism with these particular moments of political activism, on the grounds that doing so eclipses the fact that there has been resistance to male domination that should be considered "feminist" throughout history and across cultures: i.e., feminism is not confined to a few (White) women in the West over the past century or so. Moreover, even considering only relatively recent efforts to resist male domination in Europe and the US, the emphasis on "First" and "Second" Wave feminism ignores the ongoing resistance to male domination between the 1920's and 1960's and the resistance outside mainstream politics, particularly by women of color and working class women.

One might seek to solve these problems by emphasizing the political ideas that the term was apparently coined to capture, viz., the commitment to women's equal rights. This acknowledges that commitment to and advocacy for women's rights has not been confined to the Women's Liberation Movement in the West. But this too raises controversy, for it frames feminism within a broadly Liberal approach to political and economic life. Although most feminists would probably agree that there is some sense of "rights" on which achieving equal rights for women is a necessary condition for feminism to succeed, most would also argue that this would not be sufficient. This is because women's oppression under male domination rarely if ever consists solely in depriving women of political and legal "rights", but also extends into the structure of our society and the content of our culture, and permeates our consciousness (e.g., Bartky 1990).
1.2.1. Nineteenth and early Twentieth Centuries

The First Wave

The 19th- and early 20th-century Anglosphere feminist activity that sought to win women's suffrage, female education rights, better working conditions, and abolition of gender double standards is known as first-wave feminism. The term "first-wave" was coined retrospectively when the term second-wave feminism was used to describe a newer feminist movement that fought social and cultural inequalities beyond basic political inequalities.

In the United States, feminist movement leaders campaigned for the national abolition of slavery and Temperance before championing women's rights. American first-wave feminism involved a wide range of women, some belonging to conservative Christian groups (such as Frances Willard and the Woman's Christian Temperance Union), others resembling the diversity and radicalism of much of second-wave feminism (such as Stanton, Anthony, Matilda Joslyn Gage, and the National Woman Suffrage Association, of which Stanton was president). First-wave feminism in the United States is considered to have ended with the passage of the Nineteenth Amendment to the United States Constitution (1920), which granted women the right to vote in the United States.

The antislavery campaign of the 1830s served as both a cause ideologically compatible with feminism and a blueprint for later feminist political organizing. Attempts to exclude women only strengthened their convictions. Sarah and Angelina Grimké moved rapidly from the emancipation of slaves to the emancipation of women. The most influential feminist writer of the time was the colourful journalist Margaret Fuller, whose *Woman in the Nineteenth Century* was published in 1845. Her dispatches from Europe for the *New York Tribune* helped create to synchronize the women's rights movement.
Elizabeth Cady Stanton and Lucretia Mott met in 1840 while en route to London where they were shunned as women by the male leadership of the first World's Anti-Slavery Convention. In 1848, Mott and Stanton held a woman's rights convention in Seneca Falls, New York, where a declaration of independence for women was drafted. Lucy Stone helped to organize the first National Women's Rights Convention in 1850, a much larger event at which Sojourner Truth, Abby Kelley Foster, and others spoke sparked Susan B. Anthony to take up the cause of women's rights. Barbara Leigh Smith met with Mott in 1858, strengthening the link between the transatlantic feminist movements.

Stanton and Matilda Joslyn Gage saw the Church as a major obstacle to women's rights, and welcomed the emerging literature on matriarchy. Both Gage and Stanton produced works on this topic, and collaborated on *The Woman's Bible*. Stanton wrote "The Matriarchate or Mother-Age" and Gage wrote *Woman, Church and State*, neatly inverting Johann Jakob Bachofen's thesis and adding a unique epistemological perspective, the critique of objectivity and the perception of the subjective.

Stanton once observed regarding assumptions of female inferiority, "The worst feature of these assumptions is that women themselves believe them". However this attempt to replace androcentric (male-centered) theological[clarification needed] tradition with a gynocentric (female-centered) view made little headway in a women's movement dominated by religious elements; thus she and Gage were largely ignored by subsequent generations.

By 1913, Feminism (originally capitalized) was a household term in the United States. Major issues in the 1910s and 1920s included suffrage, economics and employment, sexualities and families, war and peace, and a Constitutional amendment for equality. Both equality and difference were seen as routes to women's empowerment. Organizations at the time included the National Woman's Party, suffrage advocacy groups such as the National American Woman Suffrage Association and the National
League of Women Voters, career associations such as the American Association of University Women, the National Federation of Business and Professional Women's Clubs, and the National Women's Trade Union League, war and peace groups such as the Women's International League for Peace and Freedom and the International Council of Women, alcohol-focused groups like the Woman's Christian Temperance Union and the Women's Organization for National Prohibition Reform, and race- and gender-centered organizations like the National Association of Colored Women. Leaders and theoreticians included Jane Addams, Ida B. Wells-Barnett, Alice Paul, Carrie Chapman Catt, Margaret Sanger, and Charlotte Perkins Gilman.

**Suffrage**

The women's right to vote, with its legislative representation, represented a paradigm shift where women would no longer be treated as second-class citizens without a voice. The women's suffrage campaign is the most deeply embedded campaign of the past 250 years.

At first, suffrage was treated as a lower priority. The French Revolution accelerated this, with the assertions of Condorcet and de Gouges, and the women who led the 1789 march on Versailles. In 1793, the Society of Revolutionary Republican Women was founded, and originally included suffrage on its agenda before it was suppressed at the end of the year. As a gesture, this showed that issue was now part of the European political agenda.

German women were involved in the Vormärz, a prelude to the 1848 revolution. In Italy, Clara Maffei, Cristina Trivulzio Belgiojoso, and Ester Martini Currica were politically active[clarification needed] in the events leading up to 1848. In Britain, interest in suffrage emerged from the writings of Wheeler and Thompson in the 1820s, and from Reid, Taylor, and Anne Knight in the 1840s. The Australian State of South Australia was the first place in the world to officially grant full suffrage to women.
Early Twentieth Century

The early 20th century, the Edwardian era, saw a loosening of Victorian rigidity and complacency: women had more employment opportunities and were more active, leading to a relaxing of clothing restrictions.

Books, articles, speeches, pictures, and papers from the period show a diverse range of themes other than political reform and suffrage discussed publicly. In the Netherlands, for instance, the main feminist issues were educational rights, rights to medical care, improved working conditions, peace, and dismantled gender double standards. Feminists identified as such with little fanfare.

The charismatic and controversial Pankhurts formed the Women's Social and Political Union (WSPU) in 1903. As Emmeline Pankhurst put it, they viewed votes for women no longer as "a right, but as a desperate necessity". At the state level, Australia and the United States had already granted suffrage to some women. American feminists such as Susan B Anthony (1902) visited Britain. While WSPU was the best-known suffrage group, it was only one of many, such as the Women's Freedom League and the National Union of Women's Suffrage Societies (NUWSS) led by Millicent Garrett Fawcett. WSPU was largely a family affair although externally financed. Christabel Pankhurst became the dominant figure and gathered friends such as Annie Kenney, Flora Drummond, Teresa Billington, Ethel Smythe, Grace Roe, and Norah Dacre Fox (later known as Norah Elam) around her. Veterans such as Elizabeth Garrett also joined.

In 1906, the Daily Mail first labeled these women "suffragettes" as a form of ridicule, but the term was quickly embraced in Britain to describe the more militant form of suffragism visible in public marches, distinctive green, purple, and white emblems, and the Artists' Suffrage League's dramatic graphics. Even underwear in WPSU colors appeared in stores. They feminists learned to exploit photography and the media, and left a vivid visual record including images such as the 1914 photograph of Emmeline. As the movement gained momentum, deep divisions separated the former leaders from the
radicals. The splits were usually ideological or tactical. Even Christabel's sister, Sylvia, was expelled.

The protests slowly became more violent, and included heckling, banging on doors, smashing shop windows, and arson. Emily Davison, a WSPU member, unexpectedly ran onto the track during the 1913 Epsom Derby and died under the King's horse. These tactics produced mixed results of sympathy and alienation. As many protesters were imprisoned and went on hunger-strike, the British government was left with an embarrassing situation. From these political actions, the suffragists successfully created publicity around their institutional discrimination and sexism.

**Feminist Science Fiction**

At the beginning of the 20th century, feminist science fiction emerged as a sub-genre of science fiction that deals with women's roles in society. Female writers of the utopian literature movement at the time of first-wave feminism often addressed sexism. Charlotte Perkins Gilman's *Herland* (1915) did so. *Sultana's dream* (1905) by Bengali Muslim feminist Roquia Sakhawat Hussain depicts a gender-reversed *purdah* in a futuristic world.

During the 1920s, writers such as Clare Winger Harris and Gertrude Barrows Bennett published science fiction stories written from female perspectives and occasionally dealt with gender- and sexuality-based topics while popular 1920s and 30s pulp science fiction exaggerated masculinity alongside sexist portrayals of women. By the 1960s, science fiction combined sensationalism with political and technological critiques of society. With the advent of feminism, women's roles were questioned in this "subversive, mind expanding genre".

Feminist science fiction poses questions about social issues such as how society constructs gender roles, how reproduction defines gender, and how the political power of
men and women are unequal. Some of the most notable feminist science fiction works have illustrated these themes using utopias to explore societies where gender differences or gender power imbalances do not exist, and dystopias to explore worlds where gender inequalities are escalated, asserting a need for feminist work to continue.

**Mid-Twentieth Century**

Women entered the labor market during the First World War in unprecedented numbers, often in new sectors, and discovered the value of their work. The war also left large numbers of women bereaved and with a net loss of household income. The scores of men killed and wounded shifted the demographic composition. War also split the feminist groups, with many women opposed to the war and others involved in the white feather campaign.

Feminist scholars like Francoise Thebaud and Nancy Cott note a conservative reaction to World War I in some countries, citing a reinforcement of traditional imagery and literature that promotes motherhood. The appearance of these traits in wartime has been called the "nationalization of women".

In the years between the wars, feminists fought discrimination and establishment opposition. In Virginia Woolf's *A Room of One's Own*, Woolf describes the extent of the backlash and her frustration at the waste of so much talent. By now, the word "feminism" was in use, but with a negative connotation from mass media, which discouraged women from self-identifying as such. In 1938, Woolf wrote of the term in *Three Guineas*, "an old word ... that has much harm in its day and is now obsolete". When Rebecca West, another prominent writer, had been attacked as "a feminist", Woolf defended her. West has perhaps best been remembered for her comment, "I myself have never been able to find out precisely what feminism is: I only know that people call me a feminist whenever I express sentiments that differentiate me from a doormat, or a prostitute." Woolf's writing also examined gender constructs and portrayed lesbian sexuality positively.
In the 1920s, the nontraditional styles and attitudes of flappers were popular among American and British women.

**Electoral Reform**

The United Kingdom's Representation of the People Act 1918 gave near-universal suffrage to men, and suffrage to women over 30. The Representation of the People Act 1928 extended equal suffrage to both men and women. It also shifted the socioeconomic makeup of the electorate towards the working class, favoring the Labour Party, who were more sympathetic to women's issues. The following election and gave Labour the most seats in the house to date. The electoral reforms also allowed women to run for Parliament. Christabel Pankhurst narrowly failed to win a seat in 1918, but in 1919 and 1920, both Lady Astor and Margaret Wintringham won seats for the Conservatives and Liberals respectively by succeeding their husband's seats. Labour swept to power in 1924. Constance Markievicz (Sinn Féin) was the first woman elected in Ireland in 1918, but as an Irish nationalist, refused to take her seat. Astor's proposal to form a women's party in 1929 was unsuccessful, which some historians feel was a missed opportunity, as there were only 12 women in Parliament by 1940. Women gained considerable electoral experience over the next few years as a series of minority governments ensured almost annual elections. Close affiliation with Labour also proved to be a problem for the National Union of Societies for Equal Citizenship (NUSEC), which had little support in the Conservative party. However, their persistence with Prime Minister Stanley Baldwin was rewarded with the passage of the Representation of the People (Equal Franchise) Act 1928.

European women received the vote in Denmark and Iceland in 1915 (full in 1919), the Russian Republic in 1917, Austria, Germany and Canada in 1918, many countries
including the Netherlands in 1919, and Turkey and South Africa in 1930. French women did not receive the vote until 1945. Liechtenstein was one of the last countries, in 1984.

**Social Reform**

The political change did not immediately change social circumstances. With the economic recession, women were the most vulnerable sector of the workforce. Some women who held jobs prior to the war were obliged to forfeit them to returning soldiers, and others were excessed. With limited franchise, the UK National Union of Women's Suffrage Societies (NUWSS) pivoted into a new organization, the National Union of Societies for Equal Citizenship (NUSEC), which still advocated for equality in franchise, but extended its scope to examine equality in social and economic areas. Legislative reform was sought for discriminatory laws (e.g., family law and prostitution) and over the differences between equality and equity, the accommodations that would allow women to overcome barriers to fulfillment (known in later years as the "equality vs. difference conundrum"). Eleanor Rathbone, who became a British Member of Parliament in 1929, succeeded Millicent Garrett as president of NUSEC in 1919. She expressed the critical need for consideration of difference in gender relationships as "what women need to fulfill the potentialities of their own natures". The 1924 Labour government's social reforms created a formal split, as a splinter group of strict egalitarians formed the Open Door Council in May 1926. This eventually became an international movement, and continued until 1965. Other important social legislation of this period included the Sex Disqualification (Removal) Act 1919 (which opened professions to women), and the Matrimonial Causes Act 1923. In 1932, NUSEC separated advocacy from education, and continued the former activities as the National Council for Equal Citizenship and the latter as the Townswomen's Guild. The council continued until the end of the Second World War.
Reproductive Rights

Laws prevented feminists from discussing and addressing reproductive rights. Annie Besant was tried under the Obscene Publications Act 1857 in 1877 for publishing Charles Knowlton's *Fruits of Philosophy*, a work on family planning. Knowlton had previously been convicted in the United States. She and her colleague Charles Bradlaugh were convicted but acquitted on appeal. The subsequent publicity resulted in a decline in the birth rate. Besant later wrote *The Law of Population*.

In America, Margaret Sanger was prosecuted for her book *Family Limitation* under the Comstock Act in 1914, and fled to Britain until it was safe to return. Sanger's work was prosecuted in Britain. She met Marie Stopes in Britain, who was never prosecuted but regularly denounced for her promotion of birth control. In 1917, Sanger started the *Birth Control Review*. In 1926, Sanger gave a lecture on birth control to the women's auxiliary of the Ku Klux Klan in Silver Lake, New Jersey, which she referred to as a "weird experience". The establishment of the Abortion Law Reform Association in 1936 was even more controversial. The British penalty for abortion had been reduced from execution to life imprisonment by the Offences against the Person Act 1861, although some exceptions were allowed in the Infant Life (Preservation) Act 1929. Following Aleck Bourne's prosecution in 1938, the 1939 Birkett Committee made recommendations for reform that were set aside at the Second World War's outbreak, along with many other women's issues.

In the Netherlands, Aletta H. Jacobs, the first Dutch female doctor, and Wilhelmina Drucker led discussion and action for reproductive rights. Jacobs imported diaphragms from Germany and distributed them to poor women for free.
1940s

In most front line countries, women volunteered or were conscripted for various duties in support of the national war effort. In Britain, women were drafted and assigned to industrial jobs or to non-combat military service. The British services enrolled 460,000 women. The largest service, Auxiliary Territorial Service, had a maximum of 213,000 women enrolled, many of whom served in anti-aircraft gun combat roles. In many countries, including Germany and the Soviet Union, women volunteered or were conscripted. In Germany, women volunteered in the League of German Girls and assisted the Luftwaffe as anti-aircraft gunners, or as guerrilla fighters in Werwolf units behind Allied lines. In the Soviet Union, about 820,000 women served in the military as medics, radio operators, truck drivers, snipers, combat pilots, and junior commanding officers.

Many American women retained their domestic chores and often added a paid job, especially one related to a war industry. Much more so than in the previous war, large numbers of women were hired for unskilled or semi-skilled jobs in munitions, and barriers against married women taking jobs were eased. The popular Rosie the Riveter icon became a symbol for a generation of American working women. In addition, some 300,000 women served in U.S. military uniform with organizations such as Women's Army Corps and WAVES. With many young men gone, sports organizers tried to set up professional women's teams, such as the All-American Girls Professional Baseball League, which closed after the war. After the war, most munitions plants closed, and civilian plants replaced their temporary female workers with returning veterans, who had priority.

1.2.2. Second Wave

"Second-wave feminism" identifies a period of feminist activity from the early 1960s through the late 1980s that saw cultural and political inequalities as inextricably
linked. The ideas and efforts of this era continue to coexist with third-wave feminism. The movement encouraged women to understand aspects of their personal lives as deeply politicized and reflective of a sexist power structure. As first-wave feminists focused on absolute rights such as suffrage, second-wave feminists focused on other cultural equality issues, such as ending discrimination.

**Betty Friedan, The Feminine Mystique, and Women’s Liberation**

In 1963, Betty Friedan's exposé *The Feminine Mystique* became the voice for the discontent and disorientation women felt in being shunted into homemaking positions after their college graduations. In the book, Friedan explored the roots of the change in women's roles from essential workforce during World War II to homebound housewife and mother after the war, and assessed the forces that drove this change in perception of women's roles.

Over the following decade, "Women's Liberation" became a common phrase and concept.

The expression "Women's Liberation" is sometimes used to refer to feminism throughout history, but the term only became widespread recently. "Liberation" has been associated with feminist aspirations since 1895, and appears in the context of "women's liberation" in Simone de Beauvoir's 1949 *The Second Sex*, which appeared in English translation in 1953. The phrase "women's liberation" was first used in 1964, in print in 1966, though the French equivalent, libération des femmes, occurred as far back as 1911. "Women's liberation" was in use at the 1967 American Students for a Democratic Society (SDS) convention, which held a panel discussion on the topic. In 1968, the term "Women's Liberation Front" appeared in *Ramparts* magazine, and began to refer to the whole women's movement. In Chicago, women disillusioned with the New Left met separately in 1967, and published *Voice of the Women's Liberation Movement* in March 1968. When the Miss America pageant took place in Atlantic City in September 1968, the
media referred to the resulting demonstrations as "Women's Liberation". The Chicago Women's Liberation Union was formed in 1969. Similar groups with similar titles appeared in many parts of the United States. Bra-burning, although fictional, became associated with the movement, and the media coined other terms such as "libber". "Women's Liberation" persisted over the other rival terms for the new feminism, captured the popular imagination, and has endured alongside the older term "Women's Movement".

1960s feminism, its theory, and its activism was informed and fueled by the social, cultural, and political climate of that decade. This time was marked by increased female enrollment in higher education, the establishment of academic women's studies courses and departments, and feminist ideology in other related fields, such as politics, sociology, history, and literature. This academic shift in interests questioned the status quo, and its standards and authority.

The rise of the Women's Liberation movement revealed "multiple feminisms", or different underlying feminist lenses, due to the diverse origins from which groups had coalesced and intersected, and the complexity and contentiousness of the issues involved. Bell Hooks is noted as a prominent critic of the movement for its lack of voice given to the most oppressed women, its lack of emphasis on the inequalities of race and class, and its distance from the issues that divide women.

**Feminist Writing**

Empowered by *The Feminine Mystique*, new feminist activists of the 1970s addressed more political and sexual issues in their writing, including Gloria Steinem's *Ms.* magazine and Kate Millett's *Sexual Politics*. Millett's bleak survey of male writers, their attitudes and biases, to demonstrate that sex is politics, and politics is power imbalance in relationships. Shulamith Firestone's *The Dialectic of Sex* described a revolution based in Marxism, referenced as the "sex war". Considering the debates over
patriarchy, she claimed that male domination dated to "back beyond recorded history to the animal kingdom itself".

Germaine Greer's *The Female Eunuch*, Sheila Rowbotham's *Women's Liberation and the New Politics*, and Juliet Mitchell's *Woman's Estate* represent the English perspective. Mitchell argued that the movement should be seen as an international phenomenon with different manifestations based on local culture. British women drew on left-wing politics and organized small local discussion groups, partly through the London Women's Liberation Workshop and its publications, *Shrew* and the LWLW Newsletter. Although there were marches, the focus was on consciousness-raising, or political activism intended to bring a cause or condition to a wider audience. Kathie Sarachild of Redstockings described its function as such that women would "find what they thought was an individual dilemma is social predicament". Women found that their own personal experiences were information that they could trust in formulating political analyses.

Meanwhile in the U.S., women's frustrations crystallized around the failure to ratify the Equal Rights Amendment during the 1970s. Susan Brownmiller's 1975 *Against Our Will* introduced an explicit agenda against male violence, specifically male sexual violence, in a treatise on rape. Her assertion that "pornography is the theory and rape the practice" created deep fault lines around the concepts of objectification and commodification. Brownmiller's other major book, *In our Time* (2000), is a history of women's liberation.

### 1.2.3. Third Wave

Third-wave feminism began in the early 1990s in response to what young women perceived as failures of the second-wave. It also responds to the backlash against the second-wave's initiatives and movements. Third-wave feminism seeks to challenge or avoid second-wave "essentialist" definitions of femininity, which over-emphasized the
experiences of white, upper middle class women. A post-structuralist interpretation of
gender and sexuality, or an understanding of gender as outside binary maleness and
femaleness, is central to much of the third wave's ideology. Third-wave feminists often
describe "micropolitics", and challenge second-wave paradigms about whether actions
are unilaterally good for females.

These aspects of third-wave feminism arose in the mid-1980s. Feminist leaders
rooted in the second wave like Gloria Anzaldúa, bell hooks, Chela Sandoval, Cherríe
Moraga, Audre Lorde, Luisa Accati, Maxine Hong Kingston, and many other feminists of
color, called for a new subjectivity in feminist voice. They wanted prominent feminist
thought to consider race-related subjectivities. This focus on the intersection between
race and gender remained prominent through the 1991 Hill–Thomas hearings, but began
to shift with the Freedom Ride 1992, a drive to register voters in poor minority
communities whose rhetoric intended to rally young feminists. For many, the rallying of
the young is the common link within third-wave feminism.

**Sexual Politics**

Lesbianism during the second wave was visible within and without feminism. Lesbians felt sidelined by both gay liberation and women's liberation, where they were
referred to as the "Lavender Menace", provoking *The Woman-Identified Woman*, a 1970
manifesto that put lesbian women at the forefront of the liberation movement. Jill
its extreme form, this was expressed as the only appropriate choice for a woman.
Eventually the lesbian movement was welcomed into the mainstream women's
movement. This union's threat to male normativity was substantiated by the male
backlash that followed.
In reproductive rights, feminists sought the right to contraception and birth control, which were almost universally restricted until the 1960s. Feminists hoped to use the first birth control pill to free women to decide the terms under which they will bear children. They felt that reproductive self-control was essential for full economic independence from men. Access to abortion was also widely demanded for these reasons, but was more difficult to secure due to existing, deep societal divisions over the issue. As of 2013, abortion remains controversial in many parts of the world.

Third-wave feminists also fought to hasten social acceptance of female sexual freedom. As societal norms allowed men to have multiple sexual partners without rebuke, feminists sought sexual equality for that freedom and encouraged "sexual liberation" for women, including sex for pleasure with multiple partners, if desired.

**Global Feminism**

Following World War II, the United Nations (UN) extended feminism's global reach. They established a Commission on the Status of Women in 1946, which later joined the Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC). In 1948, the UN issued its Universal Declaration of Human Rights, which protects "the equal rights of men and women", and addressed both equality and equity. Starting with the 1975 World Conference of the International Women's Year in Mexico City as part of their Decade for Women (1975–85), the UN has held a series of world conferences on women's issues. These conferences have worldwide female representation and provide considerable opportunity to advance women's rights. They also illustrate deep cultural divisions and disagreement on universal principles, as evidenced by the successive Copenhagen (1980) and Nairobi (1985) conferences. Examples of such intrafeminism divisions have included disparities between economic development, attitudes towards forms of oppression, the definition of feminism, and stances on homosexuality, female circumcision, and population control. The Nairobi convention revealed a less monolithic feminism that
"constitutes the political expression of the concerns and interests of women from different regions, classes, nationalities, and ethnic backgrounds. There is and must be a diversity of feminisms, responsive to the different needs and concerns of women, and defined by them for themselves. This diversity builds on a common opposition to gender oppression and hierarchy which, however, is only the first step in articulating and acting upon a political agenda." The fourth conference was held in Beijing in 1995, where the Beijing Platform for Action was signed. This included a commitment to achieve "gender equality and the empowerment of women" through "gender mainstreaming", or letting women and men "experience equal conditions for realizing their full human rights, and have the opportunity to contribute and benefit from national, political, economic, social and cultural development".

1.3. Synopsis of the Three Waves

It is common to speak of three phases of modern feminism; however, there is little consensus as to how to characterize these three waves or what to do with women's movements before the late nineteenth century.

For instance, some thinkers have sought to locate the roots of feminism in ancient Greece with Sappho (d. c. 570 BCE) or the medieval world with Hildegard of Bingen (d. 1179) or Christine de Pisan (d. 1434). Certainly Olympes de Gouge (d. 1791), Mary Wollstonecraft (d. 1797), and Jane Austen (d. 1817) are foremothers of the modern women's movement. All of these people advocated for the dignity, intelligence, and basic human potential of the female sex. However, it was not until the late 19th century that the efforts for women's equal rights coalesced into a clearly identifiable and self-conscious movement, or rather a series of movements.

The first wave of feminism took place in the late 19th and early 20th centuries, emerging out of an environment of urban industrialism and liberal, socialist politics. The
goal of this wave was to open up opportunities for women, with a focus on suffrage. The wave formally began at the Seneca Falls Convention in 1848 when 300 men and women rallied to the cause of equality for women. Elizabeth Cady Stanton (d.1902) drafted the Seneca Falls Declaration outlining the new movement's ideology and political strategies.

In its early stages, feminism was interrelated with the temperance and abolitionist movements, and gave voice to now-famous activists like the African-American Sojourner Truth (d. 1883), who demanded: "Ain't I a woman?" Victorian America saw women acting in very "un-ladylike" ways (public speaking, demonstrating, stints in jail), which challenged the "cult of domesticity." Discussions about the vote and women's participation in politics led to an examination of the differences between men and women as they were then viewed. Some claimed that women were morally superior to men, and so their presence in the civic sphere would improve public behavior and the political process.

The second wave began in the 1960s and continued into the 90's. This wave unfolded in the context of the anti-war and civil rights movements and the growing self-consciousness of a variety of minority groups around the world. The New Left was on the rise, and the voice of the second wave was increasingly radical. In this phase, sexuality and reproductive rights were dominant issues, and much of the movement's energy was focused on passing the Equal Rights Amendment to the Constitution guaranteeing social equality regardless of sex.

This phase began with protests against the Miss America pageant in Atlantic City in 1968 and 1969. Feminists parodied what they held to be a degrading "cattle parade" that reduced women to objects of beauty dominated by a patriarchy that sought to keep them in the home or in dull, low-paying jobs. The radical New York group called the Redstockings staged a counter pageant in which they crowned a sheep as Miss America and threw "oppressive" feminine artifacts such as bras, girdles, high-heels, makeup and false eyelashes into the trashcan.
Because the second wave of feminism found voice amid so many other social movements, it was easily marginalized and viewed as less pressing than, for example, Black Power or the effort to end the war in Vietnam. Feminists reacted by forming women-only organizations (such as NOW) and "consciousness raising" groups. In publications like "The BITCH Manifesto" and "Sisterhood is Powerful," feminists advocated for their place in the sun. The second wave was increasingly theoretical, based on a fusion of neo-Marxism and psycho-analytical theory, and began to associate the subjugation of women with broader critiques of patriarchy, capitalism, normative heterosexuality, and the woman's role as wife and mother. Sex and gender were differentiated—the former being biological, and the later a social construct that varies culture-to-culture and over time.

Whereas the first wave of feminism was generally propelled by middle class white women, the second phase drew in women of color and developing nations, seeking sisterhood and solidarity and claiming "Women's struggle is class struggle." Feminists spoke of women as a social class and coined phrases such as "the personal is political" and "identity politics" in an effort to demonstrate that race, class, and gender oppression are all related. They initiated a concentrated effort to rid society top-to-bottom of sexism, from children's cartoons to the highest levels of government.

One of the strains of this complex and diverse "wave" was the development of women-only spaces and the notion that women working together create a special dynamic that is not possible in mixed-groups and that would ultimately work for the betterment of the entire planet. Women, due whether to their long "subjugation" or to their biology, were thought by some to be more humane, collaborative, inclusive, peaceful, nurturing, democratic, and holistic in their approach to problem solving than men. The term ecofeminism was coined to capture the sense that because of their biological connection to earth and lunar cycles, women were natural advocates of environmentalism.

The third phase of feminism began in the mid-90's and is informed by postcolonial and post-modern thinking. In this phase many constructs have been destabilized,
including the notions of "universal womanhood," body, gender, sexuality and heteronormativity. An aspect of third phase feminism that mystifies the mothers of the earlier feminist movement is the readoption by young feminists of the very lip-stick, high-heals, and cleavage proudly exposed by low cut necklines that the first two phases of the movement identified with male oppression. Pinkfloor expressed this new position when she said; "It's possible to have a push-up bra and a brain at the same time."

The "grrls" of the third wave have stepped onto the stage as strong and empowered, eschewing victimization and defining feminine beauty for themselves as subjects, not as objects of a sexist patriarchy. They have developed a rhetoric of mimicry, which reappropriates derogatory terms like "slut" and "bitch" in order subvert sexist culture and deprive it of verbal weapons. The web is an important aspect of the new "girlie feminism." E-zines have provided "cybergrrls" and "netgrrls" another kind of women-only space. At the same time — rife with the irony of third-wave feminism because cyberspace is disembodied — it permits all users the opportunity to cross gender boundaries and so the very notion of gender has become more problematic.

This is in keeping with the third-wave's celebration of ambiguity and refusal to think in terms of "us-them" or in some cases their refusal to identify themselves as "feminists" at all. Grrl-feminism tends to be global and multi-cultural and it shuns simple answers or artificial categories of identity, gender and sexuality. Its transversal politics means that differences such as those of ethnicity, class, sexual orientation, etc. and are celebrated but recognized as dynamic, situational, and provisional. Reality is conceived not so much in terms of fixed structures and power relations, but in terms of performance within contingencies. Third wave feminism breaks boundaries.

Where feminism will go from here is unclear, but the point it that feminism, by whatever name, is alive and well both in academia and outside of it. Some older feminists feel discouraged by the younger generation's seeming ignorance of or disregard for the struggles and achievements of the early movement. They see little progress (the pay gap has not significantly narrowed in 60 years), and are fearful that the new high-healed, red-
lipped college grrls are letting us backslide. This, however, is not likely the case. There have always been feminisms in the movement, not just one ideology, and there have always been tensions, points and counter-points. The political, social and intellectual feminist movements have always been chaotic, multivalenced, and disconcerting; and let's hope they continue to be so; it's a sign that they are thriving.

1.4. Feminist Theory

Feminist theory is the extension of feminism into theoretical or philosophical fields. It encompasses work in a variety of disciplines, including anthropology, sociology, economics, women's studies, literary criticism, art history, psychoanalysis and philosophy. Feminist theory aims to understand gender inequality and focuses on gender politics, power relations, and sexuality. While providing a critique of these social and political relations, much of feminist theory also focuses on the promotion of women's rights and interests. Themes explored in feminist theory include discrimination, stereotyping, objectification (especially sexual objectification), oppression, and patriarchy.

In the field of literary criticism, Elaine Showalter describes the development of feminist theory as having three phases. The first she calls "feminist critique", in which the feminist reader examines the ideologies behind literary phenomena. The second Showalter calls "gynocriticism", in which the "woman is producer of textual meaning". The last phase she calls "gender theory", in which the "ideological inscription and the literary effects of the sex/gender system are explored".

This was paralleled in the 1970s by French feminists, who developed the concept of écrite féminine (which translates as 'female or feminine writing'). Helene Cixous argues that writing and philosophy are phallocentric and along with other French feminists such as Luce Irigaray emphasize "writing from the body" as a subversive
exercise. The work of Julia Kristeva, a feminist psychoanalyst and philosopher, and Bracha Ettinger, artist and psychoanalyst, has influenced feminist theory in general and feminist literary criticism in particular. However, as the scholar Elizabeth Wright points out, "none of these French feminists align themselves with the feminist movement as it appeared in the Anglophone world".

**1.4.1. History of Feminist Theory**

Feminist theories first emerged as early as 1792 in publications such as “The Changing Woman”, “Ain’t I a Woman”, “Speech after Arrest for Illegal Voting”, and so on. “The Changing Woman” is a Navajo Myth that gave credit to a woman who, in the end, populated the world. In 1851, Sojourner Truth addressed women’s rights issues through her publication, “Ain’t I a Woman.” Sojourner Truth addressed the issue of women having limited rights due to men's flawed perception of women. Truth argued that if a woman of color can perform tasks that were supposedly limited to men, then any woman of any color could perform those same tasks. After her arrest for illegally voting, Susan B. Anthony gave a speech within court in which she addressed the issues of language within the constitution documented in her publication, “Speech after Arrest for Illegal voting” in 1872. Anthony questioned the authoritative principles of the constitution and its male gendered language. She raised the question of why women are accountable to be punished under law but they cannot use the law for their own protection (women could not vote, own property, nor themselves in marriage). She also critiqued the constitution for its male gendered language and questioned why women should have to abide by laws that do not specify women.

Nancy Cott makes a distinction between modern feminism and its antecedents, particularly the struggle for suffrage. In the United States she places the turning point in the decades before and after women obtained the vote in 1920 (1910–1930). She argues
that the prior woman movement was primarily about woman as a universal entity, whereas over this 20 year period it transformed itself into one primarily concerned with social differentiation, attentive to individuality and diversity. New issues dealt more with woman's condition as a social construct, gender identity, and relationships within and between genders. Politically this represented a shift from an ideological alignment comfortable with the right, to one more radically associated with the left.

Susan Kingsley Kent says that Freudian patriarchy was responsible for the diminished profile of feminism in the inter-war years; others such as Juliet Mitchell consider this to be overly simplistic since Freudian theory is not wholly incompatible with feminism. Some feminist scholarship shifted away from the need to establish the origins of family, and towards analyzing the process of patriarchy. In the immediate postwar period, Simone de Beauvoir stood in opposition to an image of "the woman in the home". De Beauvoir provided an existentialist dimension to feminism with the publication of *Le Deuxième Sexe* (*The Second Sex*) in 1949. As the title implies, the starting point is the implicit inferiority of women, and the first question de Beauvoir asks is "what is a woman"?. Woman she realizes is always perceived of as the "other", "she is defined and differentiated with reference to man and not he with reference to her". In this book and her essay, "Woman: Myth & Reality", de Beauvoir anticipates Betty Friedan in seeking to demythologise the male concept of woman. "A myth invented by men to confine women to their oppressed state. For women it is not a question of asserting themselves as women, but of becoming full-scale human beings." "One is not born, but rather becomes, a woman", or as Toril Moi puts it "a woman defines herself through the way she lives her embodied situation in the world, or in other words, through the way in which she makes something of what the world makes of her". Therefore, woman must regain subject, to escape her defined role as "other", as a Cartesian point of departure. In her examination of myth, she appears as one who does not accept any special privileges for women. Ironically, feminist philosophers have had to extract de Beauvoir herself from out of the shadow of Jean-Paul Sartre to fully appreciate her. While more philosopher and
novelist than activist, she did sign one of the *Mouvement de Libération des Femmes manifestos*.

The resurgence of feminist activism in the late 1960s was accompanied by an emerging literature of what might be considered female associated issues, such as concerns for the earth and spirituality, and environmentalism. This in turn created an atmosphere conducive to reigniting the study of and debate on matricentricity, as a rejection of determinism, such as Adrienne Rich and Marilyn French while for socialist feminists like Evelyn Reed, patriarchy held the properties of capitalism. Feminist psychologists, such as Jean Baker Miller, sought to bring a feminist analysis to previous psychological theories, proving that "there was nothing wrong with women, but rather with the way modern culture viewed them."

Elaine Showalter describes the development of Feminist theory as having a number of phases. The first she calls "feminist critique" - where the feminist reader examines the ideologies behind literary phenomena. The second Showalter calls "Gynocritics" - where the "woman is producer of textual meaning" including "the psychodynamics of female creativity; linguistics and the problem of a female language; the trajectory of the individual or collective female literary career and literary history". The last phase she calls "gender theory" - where the "ideological inscription and the literary effects of the sex/gender system" are explored." This model has been criticized by Toril Moi who sees it as an essentialist and deterministic model for female subjectivity. She also criticized it for not taking account of the situation for women outside the west. From the 1970s onwards, psychoanalytical ideas that have been arising in the field of French feminism have gained a decisive influence on feminist theory. Feminist psychoanalysis deconstructed the phallic hypotheses regarding the Unconscious. Julia Kristeva, Bracha Ettinger and Luce Irigaray developed specific notions concerning unconscious sexual difference, the feminine and motherhood, with wide implications for film and literature analysis.
1.4.2. Disciplines

There are a number of distinct feminist disciplines, in which experts in other areas apply feminist techniques and principles to their own fields. Additionally, these are also debates which shape feminist theory and they can be applied interchangeably in the arguments of feminist theorists.

1.4.2.1. Bodies

In western thought, the body has been historically associated solely with women, whereas men have been associated with the mind. Susan Bordo, a modern feminist philosopher, in her writings elaborates the dualistic nature of the mind/body connection by examining the early philosophies of Aristotle, Hegel and Descartes, revealing how such distinguishing binaries such as spirit/matter and male activity/female passivity have worked to solidify gender characteristics and categorization. Bordo goes on to point out that while men have historically been associated with the intellect and the mind or spirit, women have long been associated with the body, the subordinated, negatively imbued term in the mind/body dichotomy. The notion of the body (but not the mind) being associated with women has served as a justification to deem women as property, objects, and exchangeable commodities (among men). For example, women’s bodies have been objectified throughout history through the changing ideologies of fashion, diet, exercise programs, cosmetic surgery, childbearing, etc. This contrasts to men's role as a moral agent, responsible for working or being allowed to fight in bloody wars. The race and class of a woman can determine whether her body will be treated as decoration and protected, which is associated with middle or upper-class women’s bodies. On the other hand, the other body is recognized for its use in labor and exploitation which is generally associated with women’s bodies in the working-class or with women of color. Second-
wave feminist activism has argued for reproductive rights and choice, women’s health (movement), and lesbian rights (movement) which are also associated with this Bodies debate.

1.4.2.2. The Standard and Contemporary Sex and Gender System

The standard sex and gender model consists of ideologies based on the sex and gender of every individual and serve as "norms" for societal life. The model claims that the sex of a person is the physical body that the individual is born with, strictly existing within a male/female dichotomy giving importance to the genitals and the chromosomes which make the organism male or female. The standard model defines gender as a social understanding/ideology that defines what behaviors, actions, and appearances are proper for males and females living in society.

The contemporary sex and gender model corrects and broadens the horizons of the sex and gender ideologies. It revises the ideology of sex in that an individual's sex is actually a social construct which is not limited to either male or female. This can be seen by the Intersex Society of North America which explains that, “nature doesn't decide where the category of ‘male’ ends and the category of ‘intersex’ begins, or where the category of ‘intersex’ ends and the category of ‘female’ begins. Humans decide. Humans (today, typically doctors) decide how small a penis has to be, or how unusual a combination of parts has to be, before it counts as intersex”. Therefore, sex is not a biological/natural construct but a social one instead since, society and doctors decide on what it means to be male, female, or intersex in terms of sex chromosomes and genitals, in addition to their personal judgment on who or how one passes as a specific sex. The ideology of gender remains a social construct but is not as strict and fixed. Instead, gender is easily malleable, and is forever changing. One example of where the standard
definition of gender alters with time happens to be depicted in Sally Shuttleworth’s *Female Circulation* in which the, “abasement of the woman, reducing her from an active participant in the labor market to the passive bodily existence to be controlled by male expertise is indicative of the ways in which the ideological deployment of gender roles operated to facilitate and sustain the changing structure of familial and market relations in Victorian England”. In other words this quote shows what it meant growing up into the roles of a female (gender/roles) changed from being a homemaker to being a working woman and then back to being passive and inferior to males. In conclusion, the contemporary sex gender model is accurate because both sex and gender are rightly seen as social constructs inclusive of the wide spectrum of sexes and genders and in which nature and nurture are interconnected.

1.4.2.3. **Epistemologies**

The generation and production of knowledge has been an important part of feminist theory. This debate proposes such questions as “Are there ‘women’s ways of knowing’ and ‘women’s knowledge’?” And “How does the knowledge women produce about themselves differ from that produced by patriarchy?” (Bartowski and Kolmar 2005, 45) Feminist theorists have also proposed the “feminist standpoint knowledge” which attempts to replace “the view from nowhere” with the model of knowing that expels the “view from women’s lives”. (Bartowski and Kolmar 2005, 45). A feminist approach to epistemology seeks to establish knowledge production from a woman's perspective. It theorizes that from personal experience comes knowledge which helps each individual look at things from a different insight.

Central to feminism is that women are systematically subordinated, and bad faith exists when women surrender their agency to this subordination, e.g., acceptance of
religious beliefs that a man is the dominant party in a marriage by the will of God; Simone de Beauvoir labels such women "mutilated" and "immanent".

1.4.2.4. Love

A life’s project to be in love may result in bad faith; love is an example of bad faith given by both Simone de Beauvoir and Jean-Paul Sartre (who were in love with each other). A woman in love may in bad faith allow herself to be subjugated by her lover, who has created a dependency of the woman on him, allowed by the woman in bad faith.

1.4.2.5. Intersectionality

Definition: Intersectionality is the examination of various ways in which people are oppressed, based on the relational web of dominating factors of race, sex, class, nation and sexual orientation. Intersectionality “describes the simultaneous, multiple, overlapping, and contradictory systems of power that shape our lives and political options”. While this theory can be applied to all people, and more particularly all women, it is specifically mentioned and studied within the realms of black feminism. Patricia Hill Collins, a leader in sociology and black feminism, argues that black women in particular, have a unique perspective on the oppression of the world as unlike white women, they face both racial and gender oppression simultaneously, among other factors. This debate raises the issue of understanding the oppressive lives of women that are not only shaped by gender alone but by other elements such as racism, classism, ageism, heterosexism, disableism etc.
Genealogy: While this concept has been traced back to as early as the 19th century, it was first officially coined by critical race theorist Kimberle Crenshaw in 1989. It became more prominent and widely studied during the 1960s and 1970s, as the Second Feminist Wave and historical racial movements were making national headway and colliding in an effort to end structural inequality. It came along with the critique of radical feminism which then introduced the “Re-Visionist Feminist Theory” that challenged the notion that gender is not the only factor that affects and determines a woman’s fate. Most notably, intersectionality was primarily used in the Combahee River Collective statement in the 1970s which aimed to articulate the struggles and tribulations that women of color face as they fight against both sexism and racism simultaneously. As these movements were merging, it shed light on the issue that the feminist movement in and of itself was not a homogenous and unified society.

Intersectionality & Feminist Theory: Intersectionality questions the early feminist ideology that sexism is the primary enemy to be conquered. Below are examples of the challenges within the feminist movement that intersectionality has brought to light. Contemporary feminist theory addresses such issues of intersectionality in such publications as “Age, Race, Sex, and Class” by Kimberlé Williams Crenshaw. Intersectionality, Racism, & Classism During the first and second waves of feminism, there was a conflict for women of color and working-class women who had to decide whether to fight against racism or classism versus sexism—or prioritize and participate in the hierarchy. Mary Ann Weathers’ utilizes intersectionality in her publication, “An Argument for Black Women’s Liberation as a Revolutionary Force.” She states that “black women, at least the Black women I have come in contact with in the movement, have been expending all their energies in “liberating” Black men (if you yourself are not free, how can you “liberate” someone else?)” Women of color were put in a position of choosing between for their race or gender during the Civil Rights Movement. White feminists also wanted working-class women to prioritize the women’s movement over struggling alongside their men (working-class, poor men) against class oppression. These
conflicts furthered with the lack of discussion about the issues surrounding women of color during the first and second feminist waves. The early feminist movements were shaped primarily by white women and did not address such issues.

Intersectionality & Sexism:

Another example of intersectionality can be seen through bell hooks’ publication, Feminist Theory from Margin to Center. Hooks similarly advocates for a movement that does not isolate black women or women of color. She says, “I advocate feminism” rather than “I am a feminist” to avoid the assumption that women’s issues are more important than issues such as race or class. Not only does she emphasize class and race but also she focuses on the role men must play in the feminist movement. According to Hooks, the second-wave feminists “reinforced sexist ideology by positing in an inverted form the notion of a basic conflict between the sexes, the implication being that the empowerment of women would necessarily be at the expense of men.” She points out that if women are the only ones responsible for feminism, then feminist ideology only serves to reinforce the gap between the sexes in terms of the division of labor. Moreover, women cannot be solely responsible for abolishing sexism because, she says, “men are the primary agents maintaining and supporting sexism and sexist oppression, they can only be eradicated if men are compelled to assume responsibility for transforming their consciousness and the consciousness of society as a whole.” Because of this, men who support the fight against sexism are those with whom women need to band together.

Intersectionality & Contemporary Feminist Theory:

Consequently, this has sparked the branching of critical theoretical analysis of feminism and the differentiating sects of the movement. While feminism was once thought of as a movement based on ultimate solidarity, the movement was now being critically examined for its lack of inclusion of all women. Intersectionality also aids in the analysis of the different levels and forms of oppression, as it highlights the Matrix of Domination – a sociological paradigm that describes the issues of intersectionality and
suggests that everyone is both the oppressor and the oppressed. Thusly, intersectionality has provided an opportunity for feminist scholars to think more specifically in regards to feminist theories and the types of feminists that they affect. Intersectionality works cohesively with the fundamental arguments of black feminism as well as indigenous feminism as it highlighted the types of oppression that minority women face not just from men or the structures of society, but also from white women. It has questioned the meaning of solidarity within the feminist movement, and allowed feminists to think critically about the causes being fought for.

1.4.2.6. **Language**

In this debate, women writers have addressed the issues of masculinized writing through male gendered language that may not serve to accommodate the literary understanding of women’s lives. Such masculinized language that feminist theorists address is the use of, for example, “God the Father” which is looked upon as a way of designating the sacred as solely men (or, in other words, biblical language glorifies men through all of the masculine pronouns like “he” and “him” and addressing God as a “He”). Feminist theorists attempt to reclaim and redefine women through re-structuring language. For example, feminist theorists have used the term “womyn” instead of “women.” Some feminist theorists find solace in changing titles of unisex jobs (for example, police officer versus policeman or mail carrier versus mailman). Some feminist theorists have reclaimed and redefined such words as “dyke” and “bitch” and others have invested redefining knowledge into feminist dictionaries.
1.4.2.7. Psychology/Psychoanalysis

Feminist psychology, is a form of psychology centered on societal structures and gender. Feminist psychology critiques the fact that historically psychological research has been done from a male perspective with the view that males are the norm. Feminist psychology is oriented on the values and principles of feminism. It incorporates gender and the ways women are affected by issues resulting from it. Ethel Dench Puffer Howes was one of the first women to enter the field of psychology. She was the Executive Secretary of the National College Equal Suffrage League in 1914.

One major psychological theory, Relational-Cultural Theory, is based on the work of Jean Baker Miller, who's book *Toward a New Psychology of Women* proposes that "growth-fostering relationships are a central human necessity and that disconnections are the source of psychological problems." Inspired by Betty Friedan's Feminine Mystique, and other feminist classics from the 1960s, *Relational-Cultural Theory* proposes that "isolation is one of the most damaging human experiences and is best treated by reconnecting with other people," and that a therapist should "foster an atmosphere of empathy and acceptance for the patient, even at the cost of the therapist’s neutrality." The theory is based on clinical observations and sought to prove that "there was nothing wrong with women, but rather with the way modern culture viewed them."

1.4.2.8. Literary Theory

Feminist literary criticism is literary criticism informed by feminist theories or politics. Its history has been varied, from classic works of female authors such as George
Eliot, Virginia Woolf, and Margaret Fuller to recent theoretical work in women's studies and gender studies by "third-wave" authors.

In the most general, feminist literary criticism before the 1970s was concerned with the politics of women's authorship and the representation of women's condition within literature. Since the arrival of more complex conceptions of gender and subjectivity, feminist literary criticism has taken a variety of new routes. It has considered gender in the terms of Freudian and Lacanian psychoanalysis, as part of the deconstruction of existing power relations.

1.4.2.9. **Film Theory**

Film theory is often dominated by feminism being played a major antagonist side of the film or made fun of. Feminists have taken many different approaches to the analysis of cinema. These include discussions of the function of women characters in particular film narratives or in particular genres, such as film noir, where a female character can often be seen to embody a subversive sexuality that is dangerous to males and is ultimately punished with death. In considering the way that films are put together, many feminist film critics, such as Laura Mulvey, have pointed to the "male gaze" that predominates in classical Hollywood film making. Through the use of various film techniques, such as shot reverse shot, the viewers are led to align themselves with the point of view of a male protagonist. Notably, women function as objects of this gaze far more often than as proxies for the spectator. Feminist film theory of the last twenty years is heavily influenced by the general transformation in the field of aesthetics, including the new options of articulating the gaze, offered by psychoanalytical French feminism, like the matrixial gaze.
1.4.2.10. **Art History**

Linda Nochlin and Griselda Pollock are prominent art historians writing on contemporary and modern artists and articulating Art history from a feminist perspective since the 1970s. Pollock works with French psychoanalysis, and in particular with Kristeva's and Ettinger's theories, to offer new insights into art history and contemporary art with special regard to questions of trauma and trans-generation memory in the works of women artists. Other prominent feminist art historians include: Norma Broude and Mary Garrard; Amelia Jones; Mieke Bal; Carol Duncan; Lynda Nead; Lisa Tickner; Tamar Garb; Hilary Robinson; Katy Deepwell.

1.4.2.11. **History**

Feminist history refers to the re-reading and re-interpretation of history from a feminist perspective. It is not the same as the history of feminism, which outlines the origins and evolution of the feminist movement. It also differs from women's history, which focuses on the role of women in historical events. The goal of feminist history is to explore and illuminate the female viewpoint of history through rediscovery of female writers, artists, philosophers, etc., in order to recover and demonstrate the significance of women's voices and choices in the past.

1.4.2.12. **Geography**

Feminist geography is often considered part of a broader postmodern approach to the subject which is not primarily concerned with the development of conceptual theory
in itself but rather focuses on the real experiences of individuals and groups in their own localities, upon the geographies that they live in within their own communities. In addition to its analysis of the real world, it also critiques existing geographical and social studies, arguing that academic traditions are delineated by patriarchy, and that contemporary studies which do not confront the nature of previous work reinforce the male bias of academic study.

1.4.2.13. **Philosophy**

The Feminist philosophy refers to a philosophy approached from a feminist perspective. Feminist philosophy involves attempts to use methods of philosophy to further the cause of the feminist movements, it also tries to criticize and/or reevaluate the ideas of traditional philosophy from within a feminist view. This critique stems from the dichotomy Western philosophy has conjectured with the mind and body phenomena. There is no specific school for feminist philosophy like there has been in regard to other theories. This means that Feminist philosophers can be found in the analytic and continental traditions, and the different viewpoints taken on philosophical issues with those traditions. Feminist philosophers also have many different viewpoints taken on philosophical issues within those traditions. Feminist philosophers who are feminists can belong to many different varieties of feminism. The writings of Judith Butler, Rosi Braidotti, Donna Haraway and Avital Ronell are the most significant psychoanalytically informed influences on contemporary feminist philosophy.
1.4.2.14. Sexology

Feminist sexology is an offshoot of traditional studies of sexology that focuses on the intersectionality of sex and gender in relation to the sexual lives of women. Feminist sexology shares many principles with the wider field of sexology; in particular, it does not try to prescribe a certain path or “normality” for women's sexuality, but only observe and note the different and varied ways in which women express their sexuality. Looking at sexuality from a feminist point of view creates connections between the different aspects of a person's sexual life.

1.4.2.15. Monosexual Paradigm

Monosexual Paradigm is a term coined by Blasingame, a self identified African American, bisexual female. Blasingame used this term to address the lesbian and gay communities who turned a blind eye to the dichotomy that oppressed bisexuals from both heterosexual and homosexual communities. This oppression negatively affects the gay and lesbian communities more so than the heterosexual community due to its contradictory exclusiveness of bisexuals. Blasingame argued that in reality dichotomies are inaccurate to the representation of individuals because nothing is truly black or white, straight or gay. Her main argument is that biphobia is the central message of two roots; internalized heterosexism and racism. Internalized heterosexism is described in the monosexual paradigm in which the binary states that you are either straight or gay and nothing in between. Gays and lesbians accept this internalized heterosexism by morphing into the monosexual paradigm and favoring single attraction and opposing attraction for both sexes. Blasingame described this favoritism as an act of horizontal hostility, where oppressed groups fight amongst themselves. Racism is described in the monosexual paradigm as a dichotomy where individuals are either black or white, again nothing in
between. The issue of racism comes into fruition in regards to the bisexuals coming out process, where risks of coming out vary on a basis of anticipated community reaction and also in regards to the norms among bisexual leadership, where class status and race factor predominately over sexual orientation.

1.4.2.16. **Politics**

Feminist political theory is a recently emerging field in political science focusing on gender and feminist themes within the state, institutions and policies. It questions the "modern political theory, dominated by universalistic liberalist thought, which claims indifference to gender or other identity differences and has therefore taken its time to open up to such concerns".

1.4.2.17. **Economics**

Feminist economics broadly refers to a developing branch of economics that applies feminist insights and critiques to economics. Research under this heading is often interdisciplinary, critical, or heterodox. It encompasses debates about the relationship between feminism and economics on many levels: from applying mainstream economic methods to under-researched "women's" areas, to questioning how mainstream economics values the reproductive sector, to deeply philosophical critiques of economic epistemology and methodology.

One prominent issue that feminist economists investigate is how the Gross Domestic Product (GDP) does not adequately measure unpaid labor predominantly performed by women, such as housework, childcare, and eldercare. Feminist economists have also challenged and exposed the rhetorical approach of mainstream economics.
They have made critiques of many basic assumptions of mainstream economics, including the Homo economicus model. In the Houseworker's Handbook Betsy Warrior presents a cogent argument that the reproduction and domestic labor of women form the foundation of economic survival; although, unremunerated and not included in the GDP. Warrior also notes that the unacknowledged income of men from illegal activities like arms, drugs and human trafficking, political graft, religious emollients and various other undisclosed activities provide a rich revenue stream to men, which further invalidates GDP figures. Somehow proponents of this theory operate under the assumption that women don't generate revenue from illegal sources and men provide no domestic production. They have been instrumental in creating alternative models, such as the Capability Approach and incorporating gender into the analysis of economic data to affect policy. Marilyn Power suggests that feminist economic methodology can be broken down into five categories.

1.4.2.18. **Legal Theory**

Feminist legal theory is based on the feminist view that law's treatment of women in relation to men has not been equal or fair. The goals of feminist legal theory, as defined by leading theorist Claire Dalton, consist of understanding and exploring the female experience, figuring out if law and institutions oppose females, and figuring out what changes can be committed to. This is to be accomplished through studying the connections between the law and gender as well as applying feminist analysis to concrete areas of law.
1.4.2.19. Communication Theory

Feminist communication theory has evolved over time and branches out in many directions. Early theories focused on the way that gender influenced communication and many argued that language was “MAN made”. This view of communication promoted a “deficiency model” asserting that characteristics of speech associated with women were negative and that men “set the standard for competent interpersonal communication.” These early theories also suggested that ethnicity, cultural and economic backgrounds also needed to be addressed. They looked at how gender intersects with other identity constructs, such as class, race, and sexuality. Feminist theorists, especially those considered to be liberal feminists, began looking at issues of equality in education and employment. Other theorists addressed political oratory and public discourse. The recovery project brought to light many women orators who had been “erased or ignored as significant contributors.” Feminist communication theorists also addressed how women were represented in the media and how the media “communicated ideology about women, gender, and feminism.”

Feminist communication theory also encompasses access to the public sphere, whose voices are heard in that sphere, and the ways in which the field of communication studies has limited what is regarded as essential to public discourse. The recognition of a full history of women orators overlooked and disregarded by the field has effectively become an undertaking of recovery, as it establishes and honors the existence of women in history and lauds the communication by these historically significant contributors. This recovery effort, begun by Andrea Lundsford, Professor of English and Director of the Program in Writing and Rhetoric at Stanford University and followed by other feminist communication theorists also names women such as Aspasia, Diotoma, and Christine de Pisan, who were likely influential in rhetorical and communication traditions in classical and medieval times, but who have been negated as serious contributors to the traditions.
Feminist communication theorists are also concerned with attempting to explain the methods used by those with power to prohibit women like Maria Miller Stewart, Sarah Grimke, and Angelina Grimke, and more recently, Ella Baker and Anita Hill, from achieving a voice in political discourse and consequently being driven from the public sphere. Theorists in this vein are also interested in the unique and significant techniques of communication employed by these women and others like them to surmount some of the oppression they experienced.

1.4.2.20. Feminist Theory of Design

Technical writers have concluded that visual language can convey facts and ideas clearer than almost any other means of communication. According to the feminist theory, "gender may be a factor in how human beings represent reality."

Men and women will construct different types of structures about the self, and, consequently, their thought processes may diverge in content and form. This division depends on the self-concept, which is an "important regulator of thoughts, feelings and actions" that "governs one’s perception of reality."

With that being said, the self-concept has a significant effect on how men and women represent reality in different ways.

Recently, "technical communicators’ terms such as ‘visual rhetoric,’ ‘visual language,’ and ‘document design’ indicate a new awareness of the importance of visual design.”

Deborah S. Bosley explores this new concept of the “feminist theory of design” by conducting a study on a collection of undergraduate males and females who were asked to illustrate a visual, on paper, given to them in a text. Based on this study, she creates a “feminist theory of design” and connects it to technical communicators.
In the results of the study, males used more angular illustrations, such as squares, rectangles and arrows, which are interpreted as a “direction” moving away from or a moving toward, thus suggesting more aggressive positions than rounded shapes, showing masculinity.

Females, on the other hand, used more curved visuals, such as circles, rounded containers and bending pipes. Bosley takes into account that feminist theory offers insight into the relationship between females and circles or rounded objects. According to Bosley, studies of women and leadership indicate a preference for nonhierarchical work patterns (preferring a communication “web” rather than a communication “ladder”). Bosley explains that circles and other rounded shapes, which women chose to draw, are nonhierarchical and often used to represent inclusive, communal relationships, confirming her results that women’s visual designs do have an effect on their means of communications.

Based on these conclusions, this “feminist theory of design” can go on to say that gender does play a role in how humans represent reality.

1.5. Feminist Literature

The feminist movement produced both feminist fiction and non-fiction, and created new interest in women's writing. It also prompted a general reevaluation of women's historical and academic contributions in response to the belief that women's lives and contributions have been underrepresented as areas of scholarly interest. Much of the early period of feminist literary scholarship was given over to the rediscovery and reclamation of texts written by women. Studies like Dale Spender's Mothers of the Novel (1986) and Jane Spencer's The Rise of the Woman Novelist (1986) were ground-breaking in their insistence that women have always been writing. Commensurate with this growth in scholarly interest, various presses began the task of reissuing long-out-of-print texts.
Virago Press began to publish its large list of 19th and early-20th-century novels in 1975 and became one of the first commercial presses to join in the project of reclamation. In the 1980s Pandora Press, responsible for publishing Spender's study, issued a companion line of 18th-century novels written by women. More recently, Broadview Press continues to issue 18th- and 19th-century novels, many hitherto out of print, and the University of Kentucky has a series of republications of early women's novels. *A Vindication of the Rights of Woman* (1792) by Mary Wollstonecraft, is one of the earliest works of feminist philosophy. *A Room of One's Own* (1929) by Virginia Woolf, is noted in its argument for both a literal and figural space for women writers within a literary tradition dominated by patriarchy.

The widespread interest in women's writing is related to a general reassessment and expansion of the literary canon. Interest in post-colonial literatures, gay and lesbian literature, writing by people of colour, working people's writing, and the cultural productions of other historically marginalized groups has resulted in a whole scale expansion of what is considered "literature," and genres hitherto not regarded as "literary," such as children's writing, journals, letters, travel writing, and many others are now the subjects of scholarly interest. Most genres and sub-genres have undergone a similar analysis, so that one now sees work on the "female gothic" or women's science fiction.

According to Elyce Rae Helford, "Science fiction and fantasy serve as important vehicles for feminist thought, particularly as bridges between theory and practice." Feminist science fiction is sometimes taught at the university level to explore the role of social constructs in understanding gender. Notable texts of this kind are Ursula K. Le Guin's *The Left Hand of Darkness* (1969), Joanna Russ' *The Female Man* (1970), Octavia Butler's *Kindred* (1979) and Margaret Atwood's *Handmaid's Tale* (1985).

Thus, Feminist literature is fiction or nonfiction which supports the feminist goals of defining, establishing and defending equal civil, political, economic and social rights
for women. It often identifies women's roles as unequal to those of men – particularly as regards status, privilege and power – and generally portrays the consequences to women, men, families, communities and societies as undesirable.

1.5.1. Characteristics

Feminist literature is identified by the characteristics of the feminist movement. Authors of feminist literature are known to understand and explain the difference between sex and gender. They believe that though a person's sex is predetermined and natural, it is the gender that has been created by society, along with a particular perception about gender roles. Gender roles, they believe, can be altered over time. The predominance of one gender over the other, is a common concept across almost all societies, and the fact that it is not in favor of women is an underlying, yet blatant, characteristic of feminist or women's literature. Here, it is argued that any society that does not provide channels of learning and knowledge to both genders equally is not a complete and impartial society.

Critics argue that there wasn't much difference between male and female authors, and that there was no need to identify a separate class of literature termed as feminist or look for traces of feminism in literature. However, if you read any such work, you will realize how such writers criticized society's andocentric (male-centered) approach, and tried to understand the beliefs and needs of the opposite sex with a subjective, and not an objective, approach. Take for example Jane Austen's *Pride and Prejudice*. The protagonist, Elizabeth Bennett was a woman of her mind. Despite the societal pressure (put on her by her mother) to choose a partner, and to lead a life that was decided for all women, she decided to choose her own path towards what she wanted. And none of this was blatantly approached. She did not put an outward fight, in order to choose her life course. The entire piece of work is subtle, and the only clear characteristic of the
protagonist you will notice is her assertiveness. And that is one clear characteristic of the feminist approach toward literature.

Women in literature of the feminist nature are always featured as the protagonist, who, more often than not, do not readily accept the traditional role of women as decided by society. They are ready to make their own decisions, to express this choice of personal decision-making, and are ready to deal with the consequences of these choices, actions, and decisions. Though a daughter, a mother, a sister, or a wife, any piece of feminist literature first deals with a woman as a woman. It is not these relationships, roles, or stereotypes that give these female characters in literature their identity. Their identity is defined by their choices and their beliefs which are then associated with these roles. It is important to note that not all works of feminist literature have happy endings, both for the character, and for the author of the work. Women have been ostracized by society for openly demanding equality, and have had to face several negative consequences of their decision to go against the waves.

Women have been treated as important subjects even in many literary works by men. For instance, Henrik Ibsen, a Norwegian author and playwright, often focused on women, women's issues, their troubles faced by society, and the decisions they made based on their personal values and beliefs. If you take a look at the play called A Doll's House, by this very same author, you will clearly notice the strength and character of the protagonist.

Not all, but some pieces of feminist literature (particularly non-fiction) showcase and stress on women's suffrage and a demand for equality in society, for political, social, and economic rights. In modern feminist literature, the attack on a male-dominated society became more forthright and straightforward, where women demanded a closer look into the patriarchal and capitalistic approach towards feminism.
1.5.2. Reading List

With some clarity on the nature of feminist literature, you can understand any piece of work of this nature in a better and clearer manner. Here is a list of famous works of this genre, after reading which, you will be able to identify with the aforementioned characteristics of this type of writing. Before we take a look at some good books and novels that showcase feminist literature, let’s take a look at writers who strove to make this movement felt through their works. These wrote fictional works that had an underlying feminist principle.

- Virginia Woolf
- Margaret Atwood
- Jane Austen
- Audre Lorde
- Phyllis Reynolds Naylor
- Jeannette Winterson
- Octavia Butler
- Ursula Le Guin
- Angela Carter
- Grace Paley
- Aimee Bender
- Edwidge Danticat
- Suzan Lori-Parks
- Wendy Wasserstein

Some famous works of feminist literature, that include both non-fiction and fiction writing have been enlisted here.

- *Feminism Is for Everybody: Passionate Politics* - Bell Hooks
- *A Room of One's Own* - Virginia Woolf
1.6. Conclusion

Feminist literature, as the name suggests, is based on the principles of feminism, and refers to any literary work that centers on the struggle of a woman for equality, and to be accepted as a human being, before being cast into a gender stereotype. Not all these
works follow a direct approach towards this goal of equality. It is only through such media that women believed a change was possible in the way they were perceived in society. Not all feminist literature has been written by women, but also by men who understood women beyond the roles they were expected to fit into, and delved into their psyche to understand their needs and desires. Some works may be fictional, while others may be non-fictional.

Though a lot has changed in today's time, there is still an underlying wave of feminism, the presence of which one can sense all over the world. While in the urban setting, women have almost been given their dues, in the rural setting, women are still expected to live by the stereotypes cast by society. Even in the urban setting, though women have achieved a lot more than society has given them credit for, they are still expected to fulfill certain roles and stereotypes that have been the norm for centuries. Feminist literature of different periods will depict different desires and different wants under the purview of feminism. The roles of daughters, wives, and mothers in literature will keep changing, and so will their requirements and beliefs. The concept of gender equality that focuses primarily on women's rights has come a long way, and feminist literature has been a great medium to bring about any visible changes in the attitude towards women. Yet, it is a long battle that is being fought, and it will be a while before gender equality and the role of women in society will be clear in the ideal sense.

Sources

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Feminism
1.1. Introduction

The Modern Age in English Literature started from the beginning of the twentieth century, and it followed the Victorian Age. The most important characteristic of Modern Literature is that it is opposed to the general attitude to life and its problems adopted by the Victorian writers and the public, which may be termed ‘Victorian’. The young people during the first decade of the present century regarded the Victorian age as hypocritical, and the Victorian ideals as mean, superficial and stupid.

This rebellious mood affected modern literature, which was directed by mental attitudes moral ideals and spiritual values diametrically opposed to those of the Victorians. Nothing was considered as certain; everything was questioned. In the field of literary technique also some fundamental changes took place. Standards of artistic workmanship and of aesthetic appreciations also underwent radical changes.

What the Victorians had considered as honorable and beautiful, their children and grandchildren considered as mean and ugly. The Victorians accepted the Voice of Authority, and acknowledged the rule of the Expert in religion, in politics, in literature and family life. They had the innate desire to affirm and confirm rather than to reject or question the opinions of the experts in their respective fields. They showed readiness to accept their words at face value without critical examinations. This was their attitude to religion and science. They believed in the truths revealed in the Bible, and accepted the new scientific theories as propounded by Darwin and others. On the other hand, the twentieth century minds did not take anything for granted; they questioned everything.

Another characteristic of Victorianism was an implicit faith in the permanence of nineteenth century institutions, both secular and spiritual. The Victorians believed that their
family life, their Constitution, the British Empire and the Christian religion were based on sound footings, and that they would last forever. This Victorian idea of the Permanence of Institutions was replaced among the early twentieth century writers by the sense that nothing is fixed and final in this world. H. G. Wells spoke of the flow of things and of “all this world of ours being no more than the prelude to the real civilization”. The simple faith of the Victorians was replaced by the modern man’s desire to probe and question, Bernard Shaw, foremost among the rebels, attacked not only the ‘old’ superstitions of religion, but also the ‘new’ superstitions of science. The watchwords of his creed were: Question! Examine! Test! He challenged the Voice of Authority and the rule of the Expert. He was responsible for producing the interrogative habit of the mind in all spheres of life. He made the people question the basic conceptions of religion and morality. Andrew Undershift declares in Bernard Shaw’s *Major Barbara*: “That is what is wrong with the world at present. It scraps its obsolete steam engines and dynamos; but it won’t scrap its old prejudices and its old moralities and its old religions and its old political institutions”. Such a radical proclamation invigorated some whereas others were completely shaken, as Barbara herself: “I stood on the rock I thought eternal; and without a word it reeled and crumbled under me.”

The modern mind was outraged by the Victorian self-complacency. The social and religious reformers at first raised this complaint, and they were followed by men of letters, because they echo the voice around them. Of course, the accusation of self-complacency cannot be rightly leveled against many of the Victorian writers, especially the authors of *Vanity Fair*, *David Copperfield*, *Maud*, *Past and Present*, *Bishop Blouhram*, *Culture and Anarchy*, *Richard Feveral* and *Tess*. But there was felt the need of a change in the sphere of literature also because the idiom, the manner of presentment, the play of imagination, and the rhythm and structure of the verse, of the Victorian writers were becoming stale, and seemed gradually to be losing the old magic. Their words failed to evoke the spirit.

Thus a reaction was even otherwise overdue in the field of literature, because art has to be renewed in order to revitalize it. The Victorian literature had lost its freshness and it lacked in the element of surprise which is its very soul. It had relapsed into life of the common day, and could not give the reader a shock of novelty. At the end of the Victorian era it was felt that the
ideas, experiences, moods and attitudes had changed, and so the freshness which was lacking in literature had to be supplied on another level.

Besides the modern reaction against the attitude of self-complacency of the Victorians, there was also failure or disintegration of values in the twentieth century. The young men, who were being taught by their elders to prize ‘the things of the spirit’ above worldly prosperity, found in actual experience that nothing could be attained without money. Material prosperity had become the basis of social standing. Whereas in 1777 Dr. Johnson affirmed that ‘opulence excludes but one evil Poverty’, in 1863, Samuel Butler who was much ahead of his time, voiced the experience of the twentieth century, when he wrote: “Money is like antennae; without it the human insect loses touch with its environment. He who would acquire scholarship or gentility must first acquire cash. In order to make the best of himself, the average youth must first make money. He would have to sacrifice to possessiveness the qualities which should render possession worthwhile.”

Besides the immense importance which began to be attached to money in the twentieth century, there was also a more acute and pressing consciousness of the social life. Whereas some of the Victorians could satisfy themselves with the contemplation of cosmic order, identification with some Divine Intelligence or Superhuman plan which absorbs and purifies our petty egoisms, and with the merging of our will in a higher will, their successors in the twentieth century could not do so. They realized every day that man was more of a social being than a spiritual being, and that industrial problems were already menacing the peace of Europe. Instead of believing in the cult of self-perfection as the Victorians did, they were ready to accept the duty of working for others. A number of twentieth century writers began to study and ponder seriously over the writings of Karl Marx, Engels, Ruskin, Morris, and some of them like Henry James, discussed practical suggestions for the reconstruction of society.

The Victorians believed in the sanctity of home life, but in the twentieth century the sentiments for the family circle declined. Young men and women who realized the prospect of financial independence refused to submit to parental authority, and considered domestic life as too narrow. Moreover, young people who began early to earn their living got greater opportunity of mixing with each other, and to them sex no longer remained a mystery. So love became much less of a romance and much more of an experience.
These are some of the examples of the disintegration of values in the twentieth century. The result was that the modern writers could no longer write in the old manner. If they played on such sentiments as the contempt for money, divine love, natural beauty, the sentiments of home and life, classical scholarship, and communication with the spirit of the past, they were running the risk of striking a false note. Even if they treated the same themes, they had to do it in a different manner, and evoke different thoughts and emotions from what were normally associated with them. The modern writer had, therefore, to cultivate a fresh point of view, and also a fresh technique.

The impact of scientific thought was mainly responsible for this attitude of interrogations and disintegration of old values. The scientific truths which were previously the proud possessions of the privileged few were now equally intelligible to all. In an age of mass education, they began to appeal to the masses. The physical and biological conclusions of great scientists like Darwin, Lyell and Huxley, created the impression on the new generation that the universe looks like a colossal blunder, that human life on our inhospitable globe is an accident due to unknown causes, and that this accident had led to untold misery. They began to look upon Nature not as a system planned by Divine Architect, but as a powerful, but blind, pitiless and wasteful force. These impressions filled the people of the twentieth century with overwhelming pity, despair or stoicism. A number of writers bred and brought up in such an atmosphere began to voice these ideas in their writings.

The twentieth century has become the age of machine. Machinery has, no doubt, dominated every aspect of modern life, and it has produced mixed response from the readers and writers. Some of them have been alarmed at the materialism which machinery has brought in its wake, and they seek consolation and self-expression in the bygone unmechanised and pre-mechanical ages. Others, however, being impressed by the spectacle of mechanical power producing a sense of mathematical adjustment and simplicity of design, and conferring untold blessings on mankind, find a certain rhythm and beauty in it. But there is no doubt, that whereas machinery has reduced drudgery, accelerated production and raised the standard of living, it has given rise to several distressing complications. The various scientific appliances confer freedom and enslavement, efficiency and embarrassment. The modern man has now to live by the clock applying his energies not according to mood and impulse, but according to the time scheme. All
these ideas are found expressed in modern literature, because the twentieth century author has to reflect this atmosphere, and he finds little help from the nineteenth century.

Another important factor which influenced modern literature was the large number of people of the poor classes who were educated by the State. In order to meet their demand for reading the publishers of the early twentieth century began whole series of cheaply reprinted classics. This was supplemented by the issue of anthologies of Victorian literature, which illustrated a stable society fit for a governing class which had established itself on the economic laws of wealth, the truth of Christianity and the legality of the English Constitution. But these failed to appeal to the new cheaply educated reading public who had no share in the inheritance of those ideals, who wanted redistribution of wealth, and had their own peculiar codes of moral and sexual freedom. Even those who were impressed by the wit and wisdom of the past could not shut their eyes to the change that had come about on account of the use of machinery, scientific development, and the general atmosphere of instability and flux in which they lived. So they demanded a literature which suited the new atmosphere. The modern writers found in these readers a source of power and income, if they could only appeal to them, and give them what they wanted. The temptation to do so was great and it was fraught with great dangers, because the new reading public was uncertain of their ideologies, detached from their background, but desperately anxious to be impressed. They wanted to be led and shown the way. The result was that some of the twentieth century authors exploited their enthusiasm and tried to lead their innocent readers in the quickest, easiest way, by playing on their susceptibilities. In some cases the clever writer might end as a prophet of a school in which he did not believe. Such was the power wielded by the reading public.

One great disadvantage under which the modern writers labour is that there is no common ground on which they and their readers meet. This was not so during the Victorian period, where the authors and the reading public understood each other, and had the common outlook on and attitude to life and its problems. In the atmosphere of disillusionment, discontent and doubt, different authors show different approaches to life. Some lament the passing of old values, and express a sense of nostalgia. Some show an utter despair of the future; while others recommend reverting to an artificial primitivism. Some concentrate on sentiment, style or diction in order to recover what has been lost. Thus among the twentieth century writers are sometimes
found aggressive attempts to retain or revitalize old values in a new setting or, if it is not possible, to create new values to take their place.

The twentieth century literature which is the product of this tension is, therefore, unique. It is extremely fascinating and, at the same time, very difficult to evaluate, because, to a certain extent, it is a record of uncoordinated efforts. It is not easy to divide it into school and types. It is full of adventures and experiments peculiar to the modern age which is an age of transition and discovery. But there is an undercurrent in it which runs parallel to the turbulent current of ideas which flows with great impetuosity. Though it started as a reaction against ‘Victorianism’ in the beginning of the twentieth century, it is closely bound up with the new ideas which are agitating the mind of the modern man.

1.2. **Historical background**

The long and progressive reign of Queen Victoria came to a climax in the Diamond Jubilee Year (1897), a time of peace and plenty when the British Empire seemed to be at the summit of its power and security. Of the discord that soon followed the below mentioned factors had a large influence on contemporary English literature.

1.2.1. **Imperialism**

The first disturbing factor was imperialism, the reawakening of a dominant spirit which had seemingly been put to sleep by the proclamation of an Imperial Federation. Its coming was heralded by the Boer War in South Africa, through which Britain blundered to what was hoped to be an era of peace and good will. Other nations promptly joined in. Germany demanded her larger “place in the sun” and began warlike preparation for a future “push to the East”. France enlarged her huge empire in Africa and Indo-China. Italy began a career of disaster by her first attack on Abyssinia. Japanese war lords, inflated by victory over Russia, began a career of conquest which aimed to make Japan master of Asia and East Indies. Five nations began to overpower China by seizing treaty ports and claiming special concessions in trade. Even the United States after its triumph in the Spanish War, started on an imperialistic adventure by taking control of the Philippines, thus making an implacable enemy of Japan, which had wanted to take over Philippines too. (William J. Long)
An inevitable result of such imperialistic tendencies was the First World War and the greater horror of a Second World War, the two calamities being different acts of the same tragedy of imperialism, separated only by a breathing spell.

1.2.2. Social Unrest

Another factor that influenced literature for the worse was a widespread demand for social reform of every kind; not slow and orderly reform, which is progress, but immediate and intemperate reform, which breeds a spirit of rebellion and despair. There ensued a period of sweeping social reform and unprecedented progress. The reawakening of a social conscience found its expression in the development of local government and rapid extension of its influence upon the health, education, and happiness of the citizen. More than ever before political issues were fought on the basis of class loyalties, and this period saw the emergence and rapid growth of the Labour Party. Political passions ran high, and the years before the War saw serious labour troubles, many of them connected with the growth of Trades Unionism, Home Rule for Ireland, Free Trade or Protection, Votes for Women, the decline of agriculture and the growing urbanization of the country were major problems of the day. After the Boer War the aloofness which Britain had so long and prosperously maintained from European conflicts was abandoned in face of growing German strength, and national rivalries finally came to a head in the appalling struggles of 1914-18.

1.2.3. The Two World Wars

Even before the catastrophe of World War I (1914-1918), many Western thinkers, writers, and artists had began to question nineteenth-century "certainties that had supported traditional modes of social organization, religion and morality," as well as "traditional ways of conceiving the human self . . . " (Abrams 119). Loss of faith in "received" Western [so-called "First World"] ideas of progress, science, religion, politics, bourgeois morality; was influenced by new scientific discoveries and theories, and radical thinkers like Friedrich Nietzsche (1844-1900), Karl Marx, Sigmund Freud, James G. Frazer, and others. Traditional Western structures of human life--e.g. Christianity--were questioned and challenged as self-serving "convenient fictions" created to preserve power for privileged groups, and impose artificial order & meaning on what increasingly seemed to be a random, unjust, senseless, violent world of predatory
"haves" (i.e. the rich, privileged, powerful) exploiting the "have nots" (i.e. the poor, disenfranchised, powerless).

Ironically and naively called "The Great War to End All Wars", World War I seemed a new Apocalypse. Worldwide devastation and senseless sacrifices (esp. those exacted by trench warfare) wiped out nearly an entire generation of young men, leaving a stunned and alienated group of survivors whom Gertrude Stein (U.S. writer/expatriate) famously labeled a "lost generation". It shook to the core faith in Western civilization, its cultural-social values, its imperialistic rhetoric and political-economic policies, and their violent military consequences. Post-World War I mood was dominated by profound disillusionment and despair, cynicism and/or mindless hedonism. The period also witnessed a radical break from past traditional structures of Western culture & art, which seemed the only possible response for many Modernist artists and writers. Modernists sought new sources of inspiration and/or turn inward to create new art forms equal to representing their experiences and perceptions of disorder, chaos, injustice, hypocrisy, bankruptcy, and alienation; and to forging some new meaning or quest for meaning in a seemingly meaningless post World War I world.

After World War I economic conflicts and competition among Western colonial powers brought about a world-wide depression in the 1930s. This period also saw a rise of dictators, ultra-nationalism, and militarism in Europe and Asia. Fascism (Hitler in Germany, Mussolini in Italy, Franco in Spain) rose to its full force, vowing to reverse decline of West, and preserve "pure" European culture. In 1939 after U.K. and other Western European attempts at Appeasement of Hitler fail, World War II began: "Axis" (Germany, Italy, Spain, Japan & occupied territories) vs. "Allies" (led by U.K. and unoccupied W. European democracies, later to be joined by USSR and USA). In 1945 World War II ended after U.S. dropped atomic bombs on Hiroshima & Nagasaki, Japan (demonstrating human technology's capability to end our world and stimulating an arms race that continues to this day). Allies "won" World War II and world powers were politically defined, and a "Cold War" among these powers is waged, for the next 40 years.

WWII was a global nightmare of devastation, suffering, and death. Global scale of this "world" war, waged on many fronts, affected nearly every continent and its peoples. Western science, technology, industrialism were applied with devastating success to waging "total"
warfare; dealing serious, if not fatal, blows to residual Enlightenment faith in human reason, knowledge science, technology, education, etc., as trustworthy guides to human progress and betterment. Unprecedented and horrific numbers of World War II civilian casualties and deaths resulted from, Aerial blanket bombings (because targeting technology was notoriously imprecise) of strategic targets, as well as of cities and heavily populated areas, Deliberate, unconscionable genocide campaigns systematically enacted with lethal technologically-assisted success (e.g. against millions of victims interred in German and Japanese concentration camps).

World War II's manifestation of the human capacity for evil & the apparent triumph of human nature's "dark side" raised profound moral, religious, and spiritual questions. The survivors struggled to come to terms with their own feelings of guilt and responsibility, deserved or not, for what happened in the War, and could not bring themselves to speak/write of their condition which eventually led to a response in the art world in the form of existentialism and theater of the absurd.

1.3. Literary Features of the Age

1.3.1. The Spread of Education

The full effect of the Education Act of 1870, strengthened by the Act of 1902, began to make itself felt in the pre-War years. The ladder of educational opportunity, from elementary school to university, was now available to the poorest boy who had the ability to take advantage of it, and literacy became the normal rather than the unusual thing. On literature the effect was profound. Not only was there a larger market than ever before for the ‘classics’ and for all types of fiction, but there arose an entirely new demand for works in ‘educational’ fields—science, history, and travel. As a profession and as a business, literature offered better financial prospects.

1.3.2. Enormous Output of Books

Authors and publishers were not slow to supply the public with what it wanted, and books poured from the presses with astonishing rapidity. Among them were numerous ‘pot-boilers’ by inferior writers intent only on financial gains. Even some great artists failed to resist the temptation of over-rapid and over-frequent production, and of too many of them it maybe said that they wrote too much. The sacrifice of art to business was not new—it had affected
adversely some of the work of Dickens—but in the twentieth century the commercialization of literature was carried to unprecedented limits, and the problem has continued to grow.

1.3.3. The Literature of Social Purpose

The spread of literacy was accompanied by the awakening of the national conscience to the evils resulting from the Industrial Revolution. More than ever before would-be reformers pinned their faith on the printed word and on the serious theatre as media for social propaganda, and the problem or discussion play and the novel of social purpose may be described as two of the typical literary products of the period.

1.3.4. The Dominance of the Novel

In view of the developments outlined above, it is not surprising that for the first time in its history the novel now became the dominant literary form in English. To a semi-educated modern taste prose fiction was (and still is) more palatable than poetry, which is a more sophisticated taste, while by its nature, it is more accessible to the masses than drama. In addition, the novel is admirably suited as a vehicle for the sociological studies which attracted most of the great artists of the period.

1.3.5. The Rebirth of Drama

After a hundred years of insignificance drama again appeared as an important literary form, and the thirty years under review saw men of genius, who were also practical, experienced men of the theatre, created a live and significant drama out of the problems of their age. Like the novelists, most of the important dramatists were chiefly concerned with the contemporary social scene, and though, toward the end of the period, there were signs of a revival of poetic drama, prose was the normal medium.

1.3.6. Experiments in Literary Form

Long before 1918 it had become obvious that in poetry, in the novel, and in drama the old traditional forms were outworn. Experimenters in all three fields were evolving new forms to sustain the new demands being made upon them. Progress is most rapid in the drama, but the novel too, in the hands of great masters, underwent revolutionary changes, the importance of which is sometimes underestimated because they were overshadowed by more startling experiments of the inter-War period. In poetry experiments were less sensational, and the bulk of
the poetry published was in the traditional manner. For the first time for many years poetry was least significant of the important literary forms.

1.4. Modernist Movements in Arts

1.4.1. Impressionism

Impressionism is the name given to a colorful style of painting in France at the end of the 19th century. The Impressionists searched for a more exact analysis of the effects of color and light in nature. They sought to capture the atmosphere of a particular time of day or the effects of different weather conditions. They often worked outdoors and applied their paint in small brightly colored strokes which meant sacrificing much of the outline and detail of their subject. Impressionism abandoned the conventional idea that the shadow of an object was made up from its color with some brown or black added. Instead, the Impressionists enriched their colors with the idea that a shadow is broken up with dashes of its complementary color.

The term ‘Impressionism’ comes from the school of mid-nineteenth century French painting, which was in reaction to the academic style of the day. The Impressionists, as they called themselves, made the act of perception the key for the understanding of the structure of reality. They developed a technique by which objects were not seen as solids but as fragments of colour which the spectator’s eye unified. The basic premise involved was that “truth” lay in the mental processes, not in the precise representation of external reality.

The literary use of the term ‘Impressionism’ is, however, far less precise. Many of the French Symbolist poets have at one time or another been called Impressionists. In England, Walter Pater, concerned with aesthetic matters, used the term ‘impressionism’ in The Renaissance (1873) to indicate that the critic must first examine his own reactions in judging a work of art. Arthur Symons felt that the Impressionist in verse should record his sensitivity to experience, not the experience itself; he should express the inexpressible. In Wilde’s Impression du Matin, perhaps influenced by Whistler’s painting, the Impressionist technique is apparent in the subjectivity of description.

In the modern novel, ‘Impressionism frequently refers to the technique of centering on the mental life of the chief character rather than on the chief character rather than on the reality around him. Writers such as Proust, Joyce and Virginia Woolf dwell on their character’s
memories, associations, and inner emotional reactions. In *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man*, for example, Joyce presents Stephen Dedalus’ unarticulated feelings but little of physical surroundings.

### 1.4.2. Symbolism

Symbolism was a late nineteenth-century art movement of French, Russian and Belgian origin in poetry and other arts. In literature, the style had its beginnings with the publication *Les Fleurs du mal (The Flowers of Evil, 1857)* by Charles Baudelaire. The works of Edgar Allan Poe, which Baudelaire admired greatly and translated into French, were a significant influence and the source of many stock tropes and images. The aesthetic was developed by Stéphane Mallarmé and Paul Verlaine during the 1860s and '70s. In the 1880s, the aesthetic was articulated by a series of manifestos and attracted a generation of writers. The name "symbolist" itself was first applied by the critic Jean Moréas, who invented the term to distinguish the symbolists from the related decadents of literature and of art. Distinct from, but related to, the style of literature, symbolism of art is related to the gothic component of Romanticism.

Symbolism, a loosely organized literary and artistic movement that originated with a group of French poets in the late 19th century, spread to painting and the theatre, and influenced the European and American literatures of the 20th century to varying degrees. Symbolist artists sought to express individual emotional experience through the subtle and suggestive use of highly symbolized language.

The principal Symbolist poets include the Frenchmen Stéphane Mallarmé, Paul Verlaine, Arthur Rimbaud, Jules Laforgue, Henri de Régnier, René Ghil, and Gustave Kahn; the Belgians Émile Verhaeren and Georges Rodenbach; the Greek-born Jean Moréas; and Francis Viéville-Griffin and Stuart Merrill, who were American by birth. Rémy de Gourmont was the principal Symbolist critic, while Symbolist criteria were applied most successfully to the novel by Joris-Karl Huysmans and to the theatre by the Belgian Maurice Maeterlinck. The French poets Paul Valéry and Paul Claudel are sometimes considered to be direct 20th-century heirs of the Symbolists.

Symbolism originated in the revolt of certain French poets against the rigid conventions governing both technique and theme in traditional French poetry, as evidenced in the precise
description of Parnassian poetry. The Symbolists wished to liberate poetry from its expository functions and its formalized oratory in order to describe instead the fleeting, immediate sensations of man’s inner life and experience. They attempted to evoke the ineffable intuitions and sense impressions of man’s inner life and to communicate the underlying mystery of existence through a free and highly personal use of metaphors and images that, though lacking in precise meaning, would nevertheless convey the state of the poet’s mind and hint at the “dark and confused unity” of an inexpressible reality.

Such Symbolist forerunners as Verlaine and Rimbaud were greatly influenced by the poetry and thought of Charles Baudelaire, particularly by the poems in his *Les Fleurs du mal* (1857). They adopted Baudelaire’s concept of the correspondances between the senses and combined this with the Wagnerian ideal of a synthesis of the arts to produce an original conception of the musical qualities of poetry. Thus, to the Symbolists, the theme within a poem could be developed and “orchestrated” by the sensitive manipulation of the harmonies, tones, and colours inherent in carefully chosen words. The Symbolists’ attempt to emphasize the essential and innate qualities of the poetic medium was based on their conviction of the supremacy of art over all other means of expression or knowledge. This in turn was partly based on their idealistic conviction that underlying the materiality and individuality of the physical world was another reality whose essence could best be glimpsed through the subjective emotional responses contributing to and generated by the work of art.

Such masterpieces as Verlaine’s *Romances sans paroles* (1874; *Songs Without Words*) and Mallarmé’s *L’Après-midi d’un faune* (1876) sparked a growing interest in the nascent innovations of progressive French poets. The Symbolist manifesto itself was published by Jean Moréas in *Le Figaro* on September 18, 1886; in it he attacked the descriptive tendencies of Realist theatre, Naturalistic novels, and Parnassian poetry. He also proposed replacing the term décadent, which was used to describe Baudelaire and others, with the terms symboliste and symbolisme. Many little Symbolist reviews and magazines sprang up in the late 1880s, their authors freely participating in the controversies generated by the attacks of hostile critics on the movement. Mallarmé became the leader of the Symbolists, and his *Divagations* (1897) remains the most valuable statement of the movement’s aesthetics. In their efforts to escape rigid metrical patterns and to achieve freer poetic rhythms, many Symbolist poets resorted to the composition
of prose poems and the use of *vers libre* (free verse), which has now become a fundamental form of contemporary poetry.

The Symbolist movement also spread to Russia, where Valery Bryusov published an anthology of Russian and French Symbolist poems in 1894–95. The revival of poetry in Russia stemming from this movement had as its leader Vladimir Sergeyevich Solovyov. His poetry expressed a belief that the world was a system of symbols expressing metaphysical realities. The greatest poet of the movement was Aleksandr Blok, who in *Dvenadtsat* (1918; *The Twelve*) united the Russian Revolution and God in an apocalyptic vision in which 12 Red Army men became apostles of the New World, headed by Christ. Other Russian Symbolist poets were Vyacheslav Ivanovich Ivanov, Fyodor Sologub, Andrey Bely, and Nikolay Gumilyov.

The Symbolist movement in poetry reached its peak around 1890 and began to enter a precipitous decline in popularity about 1900. The atmospheric, unfocused imagery of Symbolist poetry eventually came to be seen as over-refined and affected, and the term *décadent*, which the Symbolists had once proudly flaunted, became with others a term of derision denoting mere fin-de-siècle preciosity. Symbolist works had a strong and lasting influence on much British and American literature in the 20th century, however. Their experimental techniques greatly enriched the technical repertoire of modern poetry, and Symbolist theories bore fruit both in the poetry of W.B. Yeats and T.S. Eliot and in the modern novel as represented by James Joyce and Virginia Woolf, in which word harmonies and patterns of images often take preeminence over the narrative.

One of the few successful Symbolist novels was *À rebours* (1884; *Against Nature*) by J.-K. Huysmans. The book relates the varied and surprisingly resourceful experiments in aesthetic decadence undertaken by a bored aristocrat. The 20th-century American critic Edmund Wilson’s survey of the Symbolist movement, *Axel’s Castle* (1931), is considered a classic of modern literary analysis and the authoritative study of the movement.

### 1.4.3. Imagism

The Imagist movement included English and American poets in the early twentieth century who wrote free verse and were devoted to “clarity of expression through the use of precise visual images.” A strand of modernism, Imagism was officially launched in 1912 when
Ezra Pound read and marked up a poem by Hilda Doolittle, signed it “H. D. Imagiste,” and sent it to Harriet Monroe at *Poetry* magazine.

The movement sprang from ideas developed by T. E. Hulme, who—as early as 1908—was proposing to the Poets’ Club in London a poetry based on absolutely accurate presentation of its subject with no excess verbiage. The first tenet of the Imagist manifesto was “To use the language of common speech, but to employ always the exact word, not the nearly-exact, nor the merely decorative word.”

Imagism was a reaction against the flabby abstract language and “careless thinking” of Georgian Romanticism. Imagist poetry aimed to replace muddy abstractions with exactness of observed detail, apt metaphors, and economy of language. For example, Pound’s "In a Station of the Metro" started from a glimpse of beautiful faces in a dark subway and elevated that perception into a crisp vision by finding an intensified equivalent image. The metaphor provokes a sharp, intuitive discovery in order to get at the essence of life.

Pound’s definition of the image was “that which presents an intellectual and emotional complex in an instant of time.” Pound defined the tenets of Imagist poetry as:

1. Direct treatment of the “thing,” whether subjective or objective.

2. To use absolutely no word that does not contribute to the presentation.

3. As regarding rhythm: to compose in sequence of the musical phrase, not in sequence of the metronome.

An Imagist anthology was published in 1914 that collected work by William Carlos Williams, Richard Aldington, and James Joyce, as well as H. D. and Pound. Other Imagists included F. S. Flint, D. H. Lawrence, and John Gould Fletcher. By the time the anthology appeared, Amy Lowell had effectively appropriated Imagism and was seen as the movement’s leader. Three years later, even Amy Lowell thought the movement had run its course. Pound by then was claiming that he invented Imagism to launch H. D’s career. Though Imagism as a movement was over by 1917, the ideas about poetry embedded in the Imagist doctrine profoundly influenced free verse poets throughout the twentieth century.
1.4.4. Stream of Consciousness

Stream of consciousness is a narrative device used in literature "to depict the multitudinous thoughts and feelings which pass through the mind. Another phrase for it is 'interior monologue'." The term "Stream of Consciousness" was coined by philosopher and psychologist William James in *The Principles of Psychology* (1890):

> consciousness, then, does not appear to itself as chopped up in bits ... it is nothing joined; it flows. A 'river' or a 'stream' are the metaphors by which it is most naturally described. In talking of it hereafter, let's call it the stream of thought, consciousness, or subjective life.

In literary criticism, stream of consciousness is a narrative mode that seeks to portray an individual's point of view by giving the written equivalent of the character's thought processes, either in a loose interior monologue, or in connection to his or her actions. Stream-of-consciousness writing is usually regarded as a special form of interior monologue and is characterized by associative leaps in thought and lack of punctuation. Stream of consciousness and interior monologue are distinguished from dramatic monologue and soliloquy, where the speaker is addressing an audience or a third person, which are chiefly used in poetry or drama. In stream of consciousness the speaker's thought processes are more often depicted as overheard in the mind (or addressed to oneself); it is primarily a fictional device.

The stream-of-consciousness novel commonly uses the narrative techniques of interior monologue. Probably the most famous example is James Joyce’s *Ulysses* (1922), a complex evocation of the inner states of the characters Leopold and Molly Bloom and Stephen Dedalus. Other notable examples include *Leutnant Gustl* (1901) by Arthur Schnitzler, an early use of stream of consciousness to re-create the atmosphere of pre-World War I Vienna; William Faulkner’s *The Sound and the Fury* (1929), which records the fragmentary and impressionistic responses in the minds of three members of the Compson family to events that are immediately being experienced or events that are being remembered; and Virginia Woolf’s *The Waves* (1931), a complex novel in which six characters recount their lives from childhood to old age.

In the following example of stream of consciousness from James Joyce's *Ulysses*, Molly seeks sleep:
a quarter after what an unearthly hour I suppose they're just getting up in China now combing out their pigtails for the day well soon have the nuns ringing the angelus they've nobody coming in to spoil their sleep except an odd priest or two for his night office or the alarmlock next door at cockshout clattering the brain out of itself let me see if I can doze off 1 2 3 4 5 what kind of flowers are those they invented like the stars the wallpaper in Lombard street was much nicer the apron he gave me was like that something only I only wore it twice better lower this lamp and try again so that I can get up early.

While many sources use the terms stream of consciousness and interior monologue as synonyms, the *Oxford Dictionary of Literary Terms* suggests, that "they can also be distinguished psychologically and literarily. In a psychological sense, stream of consciousness is the subject-matter, while interior monologue is the technique for presenting it". And for literature ... "while an interior monologue always presents a character's thoughts ‘directly’, without the apparent intervention of a summarizing and selecting narrator, it does not necessarily mingle them with impressions and perceptions, nor does it necessarily violate the norms of grammar, or logic- but the stream-of-consciousness technique also does one or both of these things." Similarly the *Encyclopædia Britannica Online*, while agreeing that these terms are "often used interchangeably," suggests, that "while an interior monologue may mirror all the half thoughts, impressions, and associations that impinge upon the character’s consciousness, it may also be restricted to an organized presentation of that character’s rational thoughts".

### 1.4.5. Realism

Realism is an aesthetic mode which broke with the classical demands of art to show life as it should be in order to show life "as it is." The work of realist art tends to eschew the elevated subject matter of tragedy in favour of the quotidian; the average, the commonplace, the middle classes and their daily struggles with the mean verities of everyday existence--these are the typical subject matters of realism.

The attempt, however, to render life as it is, to use language as a kind of undistorting mirror of, or perfectly transparent window to, the "real" is fraught with contradictions. Realism in this simplified sense must assume a one-to-one relationship between the signifier (the word, "tree" for example) and the thing it represents (the actual arboreal object typically found in
forests). Realism must, in effect, disguise its own status as artifice, must try and force language into transparency through an appeal to our ideologically constructed sense of the real. The reader must be addressed in such a way that he or she is always, in some way, saying, "Yes. That's it, that's how it really is."

Realism can never fully offer up the world in all its complexity, its irreducible plenitude. Its verisimilitude is an effect achieved through the deployment of certain literary and ideological conventions which have been invested with a kind of truth value. The use of an omniscient narrator who gives us access to a character's thoughts, feelings and motivations, for example, is a highly formalized convention that produces a sense of psychological depth; the characters seem to have "lives" independent of the text itself. They, of course, do not; the sense that they do is achieved entirely by the fact that both the author and the reader share these codes of the real. The consensual nature of such codes is so deep that we forget that we are in the presence of fiction. As Terry Eagleton notes,

*The sign as "reflection," "expression" or "representation" denies the productive character of language: it suppresses the fact that what we only have a "world" at all because we have language to signify it.*

The realist novel first developed in the nineteenth century and is the form we associate with the work of writers such as Austen, Balzac, George Eliot and Tolstoy. According to Barthes, the narrative or plot of a realist novel is structured around an opening enigma which throws the conventional cultural and signifying practices into disarray. In a detective novel, for example, the opening enigma is usually a murder, or a theft. The event throws the world into a paranoid state of suspicion; the reader and the protagonist can no longer trust anyone because signs--people, objects, words--no longer have the obvious meaning they had before the event. But the story must move inevitably towards closure, which in the realist novel involves some dissolution or resolution of the enigma: the murderer is caught, the case is solved, the hero marries the girl. The realist novel drives toward the final re-establishment of harmony and thus re-assures the reader that the value system of signs and cultural practices which he or she shares with the author is not in danger. The political affiliation of the realist novel is thus evident; in trying to show us the world as it is, it often reaffirms, in the last instance, the way things are.
1.5. Modernism

1.5.1. Definition

Modernism, in its broadest definition, is modern thought, character, or practice. More specifically, the term describes both a set of cultural tendencies and an array of associated cultural movements, originally arising from wide-scale and far-reaching changes to Western society in the late 19th century and early 20th century. Modernism was a revolt against the conservative values of realism. The term encompasses the activities and output of those who felt the "traditional" forms of art, architecture, literature, religious faith, social organization and daily life were becoming outdated in the new economic, social, and political conditions of an emerging fully industrialized world.

Modernism rejected the lingering certainty of Enlightenment thinking, and also that of the existence of a compassionate, all-powerful Creator. This is not to say that all modernists or modernist movements rejected either religion or all aspects of Enlightenment thought, rather that modernism can be viewed as a questioning of the axioms of the previous age.

A salient characteristic of modernism is self-consciousness. This often led to experiments with form, and work that draws attention to the processes and materials used (and to the further tendency of abstraction). The poet Ezra Pound's paradigmatic injunction was to "Make it new!" Whether or not the "making new" of the modernists constituted a new historical epoch is up for debate. Philosopher and composer Theodor Adorno warns us.

Adorno would have us understand modernity as the rejection of the false rationality, harmony, and coherence of Enlightenment thinking, art, and music. But the past proves sticky. Pound's general imperative to make new, and Adorno's exhortation to challenge false coherence and harmony, faces T. S. Eliot's emphasis on the relation of the artist to tradition. Eliot wrote:

Literary scholar Peter Childs sums up the complexity:

These oppositions are inherent to modernism: it is in its broadest cultural sense the assessment of the past as different to the modern age, the recognition that the world was
becoming more complex, and that the old "final authorities" (God, government, science, and reason) were subject to intense critical scrutiny.

1.5.2. Features of Modernism

The first characteristic associated with modernism is nihilism, the rejection of all religious and moral principles as the only means of obtaining social progress. In other words, the modernists repudiated the moral codes of the society in which they were living in. The reason that they did so was not necessarily because they did not believe in God, although there was a great majority of them who were atheists, or that they experienced great doubt about the meaninglessness of life. Rather, their rejection of conventional morality was based on its arbitrariness, its conformity and its exertion of control over human feelings. In other words, the rules of conduct were a restrictive and limiting force over the human spirit. The modernists believed that for an individual to feel whole and a contributor to the re-vitalization of the social process, he or she needed to be free of all the encumbering baggage of hundreds of years of hypocrisy.

The rejection of moral and religious principles was compounded by the repudiation of all systems of beliefs, whether in the arts, politics, sciences or philosophy. Doubt was not necessarily the most significant reason why this questioning took place. One of the causes of this iconoclasm was the fact that early 20th-century culture was literally re-inventing itself on a daily basis. With so many scientific discoveries and technological innovations taking place, the world was changing so quickly that culture had to re-define itself constantly in order to keep pace with modernity and not appear anachronistic. By the time a new scientific or philosophical system or artistic style had found acceptance, each was soon after questioned and discarded for an even newer one. Another reason for this fickleness was the fact that people felt a tremendous creative energy always looming in the background as if to announce the birth of some new invention or theory.

As a consequence of the new technological dynamics, the modernists felt a sense of constant anticipation and did not want to commit to any one system that would thereby harness creativity, ultimately restricting and annihilating it. And so, in the arts, for instance, at the beginning of the 20th-century, artists questioned academic art for its lack of freedom and flirted
with so many isms: secessionism, fauvism, expressionism, cubism, futurism, constructivism, dada, and surrealism. Pablo Picasso, for instance, went as far as experimenting with several of these styles, never wanting to feel too comfortable with any one style.

The wrestling with all the new assumptions about reality and culture generated a new permissiveness in the realm of the arts. The arts were now beginning to break all of the rules since they were trying to keep pace with all of the theoretical and technological advances that were changing the whole structure of life. In doing so, artists broke rank with everything that had been taught as being sacred and invented and experimented with new artistic languages that could more appropriately express the meaning of all of the new changes that were occurring. The result was a new art that appeared strange and radical to whoever experienced it because the artistic standard had always been mimesis, the literal imitation or representation of the appearance of nature, people, and society. In other words, art was supposed to be judged on the standard of how well it realistically reflected what something looked or sounded like.

1.6. The Modern Novel

Modernist literature was a predominantly English genre of fiction writing, popular from roughly the 1910s into the 1960s. Modernist literature came into its own due to increasing industrialization and globalization. New technology and the horrifying events of both World Wars (but specifically World War I) made many people question the future of humanity: What was becoming of the world?

Writers reacted to this question by turning toward Modernist sentiments. Gone was the Romantic period that focused on nature and being. Modernist fiction spoke of the inner self and consciousness. Instead of progress, the Modernist writer saw a decline of civilization. Instead of new technology, the Modernist writer saw cold machinery and increased capitalism, which alienated the individual and led to loneliness.

1.6.1. General Features

- **Perspectivism**: the locating of meaning from the viewpoint of the individual; the use of narrators located within the action of the fiction, experiencing from a personal, particular (as opposed to an omniscient, 'objective') perspective; the use of many voices, contrasts and contestations of perspective; the consequent disappearance of the
omniscient narrator, especially as 'spokesperson' for the author; the author retires from the scene of representation, files her or his fingernails (says Joyce).

- **Impressionism**: an emphasis on the process of perception and knowing: the use of devices (formal, linguistic, representational), to present more closely the texture or process or structure of knowing and perceiving. A re-structuring of literature and the experience of reality it re-presents.

- A re-structuring of literature and the experience of reality it re-presents. (Art always attempts to 'imitate' or re-present reality; what changes is our understanding of what constitutes reality, and how that reality can best be re-presented, presented to the mind and senses most faithfully and fully.) Modernist literature is marked by a break with the sequential, developmental, cause-and-effect presentation of the 'reality' of realist fiction, toward a presentation of experience as layered, allusive, discontinuous; the use, to these ends, of fragmentation and juxtaposition, motif, symbol, allusion.

- Experimentation in **form** in order to present differently, afresh, the structure, the connections, and the experience of life (see next point); also, not necessarily in connection with the former, to create a sense of art as artifact, art as 'other' than diurnal reality (art is seen as 'high', as opposed to popular).

- The tightening of form: an emphasis on cohesion, interrelatedness and depth in the structure of the aesthetic object and of experience; this is accomplished in part through the use of various devices such as motif, juxtaposition, significant parallels, different voices, shifts and overlays in time and place and perspective.

- The (re)presentation of inner (psychological) reality, including the 'flow' of experience, through devices such as stream of consciousness.

- The use of such structural approaches to experience as psychoanalysis, myth, the symbolic apprehension and comprehension of reality.

- The use of interior or symbolic landscape: the world is moved 'inside', structured symbolically or metaphorically -- as opposed to the Romantic interaction with transcendent forces acting through the exterior world, and Realist representations of the exterior world as a physical, historical, contiguous site of experience. David Lodge suggests in *Modes of Modern Writing* that the realist mode of fiction is based on metonomy, or contiguity, and the modernist mode is based on metaphor, or substitution.
• Time is moved into the interior as well: time becomes psychological time (time as innerly experienced) or symbolic time (time or measures of time as symbols, or time as it accommodates a symbolic rather than a historical reality), not the 'historical' or railway time of realism. Time is used as well more complexly as a structuring device through a movement backwards and forwards through time, the juxtaposing of events of different times, and so forth.

• A turn to 'open' or ambiguous endings, again seen to be more representative of 'reality' -- as opposed to 'closed' endings, in which matters are resolved.

• The search for symbolic ground or an ontological or epistemic ground for reality, especially through the device of 'epiphany' (Joyce), 'inscape' (Hopkins), 'moment of being' (Woolf), 'Jetzeit' (Benjamin) (no, evidently not the source of 'jet-set') -- the moment of revelation of a reality beneath and grounding appearances. This relates as well to the move to tighten up form, to move experience inwards, and to explore the structural aspects of experience.

• The appearance of various typical themes, including: question of the reality of experience itself; the search for a ground of meaning in a world without God; the critique of the traditional values of the culture; the loss of meaning and hope in the modern world and an exploration of how this loss may be faced.

1.7. Major Novelists

1.7.1. Henry James (1843-1916)

Henry James was a noted American-born English essayist, critic, and author of the realism movement wrote The Ambassadors (1903), The Turn of the Screw (1898), and The Portrait of a Lady (1881).

James's works, many of which were first serialized in the magazine The Atlantic Monthly include narrative romances with highly developed characters set amongst illuminating social commentary on politics, class, and status, as well as explorations of the themes of personal freedom, feminism, and morality. In his short stories and novels he employs techniques of interior monologue and point of view to expand the readers' enjoyment of character perception and insight. Often comparing the Old World with the New, and influenced by Honore de Balzac,
Henrik Ibsen, Charles Dickens, and Nathaniel Hawthorne of whose work he wrote "too original and exquisite to pass away" James would become widely respected in North America and Europe, earning honorary degrees from Harvard and Oxford Universities, in 1911 and 1912 respectively. He was acquainted with many notable literary figures of the day including Robert Browning, Ivan S. Turgenev, Emile Zola, Lord Alfred Tennyson, and Gustave Flaubert. American-born and never married, James would live the majority of his life in Europe, becoming a British citizen in 1915 after the outbreak of World War I. Many of his works have inspired other author's works and adaptations to the stage and screen.

After several attempts at attending schools to study science and law, by 1864 James decided he would become a writer. He was always a voracious reader and he now immersed himself in French, Russian, English, and American classic literature. He ventured out on his own travels to Europe, wrote book reviews, and submitted stories to magazines such as the North American Review, Nation, North American Tribune, Macmillan's, and The Atlantic Monthly which also serialized his first novel Watch and Ward (1871). James left America and lived for a time in Paris, France before moving to London, England in 1876. He continued his prodigious output of short stories and novels including Roderick Hudson (1875), The American (1877), The Europeans (1878), Confidence (1879), Washington Square (1880), The Pension Beaurepas (1881), and his extended critical essay Hawthorne (1879). He also wrote the novella Daisy Miller (1879) which he later based a play on; one of many that proved unsuccessful. A Little Tour In France (1884) was followed by The Bostonians (1886), The Aspern Papers (1888), The Reverberator (1888), The Tragic Muse (1890), The Pupil (1891), Sir Dominick Ferrand (1892), The Death of the Lion (1894), The Coxon Fund (1894), and The Altar of the Dead (1895).

In 1897 James retired from the hectic city of London to the quieter town of Rye in East Sussex, where James bought "Lamb House" and continued to write What Maisie Knew (1897), In The Cage (1898), The Awkward Age (1899), The Wings of the Dove (1902), The Beast in the Jungle (1903), The Golden Bowl (1904), Italian Hours (1909), and The Outcry (1911). Autobiographies include A Small Boy and Others (1913), Notes Of A Son And Brother (1914), and The Middle Years (1917).
1.7.2. Joseph Conrad (1857-1924)

Polish-born English novelist and short-story writer, Joseph Conrad raised the novel form to new heights, dealing with the issues of human isolation in the face of an overwhelming natural universe, with a psychological realism that revealed the depths of his characters’ consciousness and perceptions.

Conrad, the greatest modern romantic, sought his subjects wherever he could expect to find adventure in an unusual or exotic setting. His own experience of the sea and, in particular, of Malayan waters, was of immense value to him as a writer, and most of his best work is in one or both of these settings. While he is an excellent storyteller who gives deep thought to his technique of presentation, his prime interest is in character, in the tracing of the life of a man in such a way as to illuminate the inmost recesses of his soul.

Conrad began his own literary career in 1895 with the publication of his first novel, *Almayer's Folly*, an adventure tale set in the Borneo jungles. Before the turn of the century he wrote two of his most famous and enduring novels. *Lord Jim* (1900) is the story of an outcast young sailor who comes to terms with his past acts of cowardice and eventually becomes the leader of a small South Seas country. *Heart of Darkness* (1902) is a novella describing a British man's journey deep into the Congo of Africa, where he encounters the cruel and mysterious Kurtz, a European trader who has established himself as a ruler of the native people there.

*Lord Jim* and *Heart of Darkness* contain the signature elements of Conrad's writing: faraway settings; dramatic conflicts between human characters and the brutal forces of nature; and themes of individualism, the violent side of human nature and racial prejudice. Conrad was interested in showing "psycho-political" situations that drew parallels between the inner lives of single characters and the broader sweep of human history.

Conrad continued to achieve success as an author, publishing such further novels as *Nostromo* (1904) and *The Secret Agent* (1907), short-story collections and a memoir titled *A Personal Record* (1912). Many of his major works first appeared as serialized pieces in magazines, followed by the publication of the complete novel. As his career progressed, Conrad also collected income through reprints of his novels and the sale of film rights for several books. Over the last two decades of his life, Conrad produced more autobiographical writings and
novels, including *The Arrow of Gold* and *The Rescue*. His final novel, *The Rover*, was published in 1923.

Conrad's work influenced numerous later 20th century writers, from T.S. Eliot and Graham Greene to Virginia Woolf, Albert Camus and William Faulkner. His books have been translated into dozens of languages and are still taught in schools and universities.

1. **D. H. Lawrence (1885-1930)**

Born in England, D. H. Lawrence is regarded as one of the most influential writers of the 20th century. Lawrence published many novels and poetry volumes during his lifetime, including *Sons and Lovers* and *Women in Love*, but is best known for his infamous novel *Lady Chatterley's Lover*. The graphic and highly sexual novel was published in Italy in 1928, but was banned in the United States until 1959, and banned in England until 1960. Garnering fame for his novels and short stories early into his career, Lawrence later received acclaim for his personal letters, in which he detailed a range of emotions, from exhilaration to depression to prophetic brooding.

In the nineteen years between his first published novel and his death Lawrence produced over forty volumes of fiction (novels and short stories), poetry, plays, treatises, and essays, however, it is as a novelist that he is chiefly remembered. *The White Peacock* (1911) is a story of unhappy human relationships, and this very first work of his reveals his concern with one of his chief themes, the conflict between man and woman, and much of his remarkable gift for fine description and lyric emotion. A slighter work, *The Trespasser* (1912), was followed by the largely autobiographical *Sons and Lovers* (1913), which is considered to be the best of his work. Then came *The Rainbow* (1915), suppressed as obscene, which treats again the conflict between man and woman. Not until 1921 was he able to find a publisher for its sequel, *Women in Love*. Equally significant is *Aaron’s Rod* (1922), a more mature work of greater stylistic quality. From his experiences during the War and his later visit to Australia sprang *Kangaroo* (1923), which he called a ‘thought adventure’. This was followed by *The Boy in the Bush* (1924) and *The Plumed Serpent* (1926) depicting Australian and Mexican life respectively. Two years later appeared in Florence *Lady Chatterley’s Lover* (1928), a novel in which sexual experience is handled with a wealth of physical detail and uninhibited language which until 1960 caused its suppression in the United Kingdom.
Lawrence combined a violent hatred of the values of modern mechanized civilization with a love of the primitive and natural, and a passionate belief in the importance of the development of each unique individuality. His portrayals of the vital experiences of human life, of which the most important was the sexual relationship, indicate that Lawrence was deeply conscious of their religious nature. Therefore, it is seen that although sex is frequently his theme, it is handled as a sacred thing, spiritual not animal, and this, as he himself claims, remains true even of *Lady Chatterley's Lover*. Lawrence is, then, the prophet of the primitive instincts and passions; his own appeal is to the heart rather than the head.

### 1.7.4. James Joyce (1882-1941)

James Joyce was a noted Irish novelist, famous for his experimental use of language in such works as *Ulysses* (1922) and *Finnegan's Wake* (1939). Joyce's technical innovations in the art of the novel include an extensive use of interior monologue; complex network of symbolic parallels drawn from the mythology, history, and literature, which he combined to create a unique language of invented words, puns, and allusions.


At the outset of the First World War, Joyce moved with his family to Zürich. In Zürich Joyce started to develop the early chapters of *Ulysses*, which was first published in France because of censorship troubles in the Great Britain and the United States, where the book became legally available only in 1933. In March 1923 Joyce started in Paris his second major work, *Finnegan’s Wake*, suffering at the same time chronic eye troubles caused by glaucoma. The first segment of the novel appeared in Ford Madox Ford's transatlantic review in April 1924, as part of what Joyce called *Work in Progress*. The final version was published in 1939.

Some critics considered the work a masterpiece, though many readers found it incomprehensible. After the fall of France in World War II, Joyce returned to Zürich, where he died on January 13, 1941, still disappointed with the reception of *Finnegan’s Wake*.

Joyce was a ceaseless experimenter, ever anxious to explore the potentialities of a method once it was evolved, and in his use of the ‘stream of consciousness’ technique, and in his
handling of the interior monologue, he went further and deeper than any other novelist. His sensitiveness, his depth of penetration into the human consciousness, gives to his character-study a subtlety unparalleled in his day, and if, in his attempts to catch delicate and elusive shades of feeling and fix them in words, he has frequently become incomprehensible, the fact remains that a character like Leopold Bloom is a unique and fascinating creation.

1.7.5. Virginia Woolf (1882-1941)

Considered one of the best of the Modernist writers, Virginia Woolf's personal life is almost as intriguing as her fiction. Troubled by mental instability for most of her life, Virginia composed her great works in bursts of manic energy and with the support of her brilliant friends and family. However, upon completion of a book, Virginia fell into a dangerously dark depression in anticipation of the world's reaction to her work. Despite her personal difficulties, Virginia Woolf's fiction represented a shift in both structure and style. The world was changing; literature needed to change too, if it was to properly and honestly convey the new realities.

Virginia Woolf was born into an intellectually gifted family. Her father, Sir Leslie Stephen, is the author of the massive *Dictionary of National Biography*, a sixty-two volume compilation of the lives of important British citizens. After her parents' deaths, Virginia and her siblings moved out of their family home in Kensington and into a rather shabby London neighborhood called Bloomsbury, where they enjoyed the intellectual stimulation of socialists, artists and students. Thoby, who had made a number of extremely interesting friends while at Cambridge, instituted Thursday night get-togethers with his old college buddies and other great London minds: Lytton Strachey, Roger Fry, Clive Bell, Leonard Woolf, Duncan Grant, Desmond MacCarthy and John Maynard Keynes. Virginia and Vanessa sat in on these conversations, which ranged from Art to philosophy to politics, and soon became a part of the Bloomsbury Group themselves.

As she came into her own, and comfortable in her new environment, Virginia began to write. She first produced short articles and reviews for various London weeklies. She then embarked on her first novel, *The Voyage Out* (1915), which would consume nearly five years of her life and go through seven drafts. When that book came out to good reviews, she continued producing novels, each one a more daring experiment in language and structure, it seemed, than the last one. After a botched marriage proposal from Lytton Strachey, and after turning down
two other proposals in the meantime, Virginia accepted Leonard Woolf's proposal of marriage, after recovering from a mental breakdown in a country nursing home.

Although she had affairs of the heart with other women like Vita Sackville-West and Violet Dickinson, Virginia remained very much in love with Leonard for her entire life. He was her greatest supporter, half-nursemaid, half-cheerleader. He was also a good novelist in his own right, and a publishing entrepreneur, having founded Hogarth Press with Virginia. Together, they scouted great unknown talents like T.S. Eliot, Katherine Mansfield and E.M. Forster. Hogarth also began publishing Virginia's novels.

When Virginia published *To the Lighthouse* and *The Waves* in 1927 and 1931 respectively, she had turned a corner and could now be considered more than simply avant-garde; she was now, by most critic's accounts, a literary genius. However, until the end, she remained insecure and fearful of the public's reaction to her work. Her other famous works include *Night and Day* (1919), *Jacob’s Room* (1922), *Mrs Dalloway* (1925), *Orlando* (1928).

Virginia didn't only publish fiction; she was also an insightful and, at times, incisive literary and social critic. She was at her best when she took society to task for limiting the opportunities of gifted female writers. *A Room of One's Own* was a compilation of lectures Virginia gave at Cambridge on the topic of women and fiction, and in this slender volume she argues that talented female writers face the two impediments to fully realizing their potentials: social inferiority and lack of economic independence. Virginia proposed five hundred pounds a year and a private room for female writers with talent. She also published criticism, including two volumes of *The Common Reader*.

Despite her success, Virginia battled her own internal demons, and although she could quiet them through rest, sometimes she found it impossible to escape the voices in her head. She likely suffered from manic-depression, though doctors knew little about that disorder at the time. Leonard tried to monitor his wife's activities, going so far as to limit the number of visitors she had and to prescribe different kinds of food for her to eat. His efforts likely enabled Virginia to achieve as much as she did. However, he couldn't ultimately save her from herself. On March twenty-eight, 1941, Virginia wrote her husband two notes, both of which told him that if anyone could have saved her, it would have been him. However, she didn't feel she'd be able to come
back from this latest episode of what was then called "madness" so she thought it best to end it all. She then picked up her walking stick and headed to the River Ouse. Once on the banks, she filled her pockets with stones, waded into the water, and drowned herself. She was fifty-nine years old.

1.8. Poetry

Modern poetry, of which T. S. Eliot is the chief representative, has followed entirely a different tradition from the Romantic and Victorian tradition of poetry. Every age has certain ideas about poetry, especially regarding the essentially poetical subjects, the poetical materials and the poetical modes.

These preconceptions about poetry during the nineteenth century were mainly those which were established by great Romantic poets—Wordsworth, Coleridge, Byron, Shelley and Keats. According to them the sublime and the pathetic were the two chief nerves of all genuine poetry. That is why Spenser, Shakespeare and Milton were given a higher place as poets than Dryden and Pope, who were merely men of wit and good sense, and had nothing of the transcendentally sublime or pathetic in them. During the Victorian Age, Matthew Arnold, summing up these very assumptions about poetry stated: “Though they may write in verse, though they may in a certain sense be masters of the art of versification, Dryden and Pope are not classics of our poetry; they are classics of our prose.”

William Morris, though a practical socialist, reserved poetry for his day-dreams. Moreover, some of the distinguished authors like Meredith and Hardy turned to the novel, and during the early part of the twentieth century it was left to the minor poets like Houseman and Rupert Brooke to write in the poetic medium. Thus there was the greatest need for some great poets to make poetry adequate to modern life, and escape from the atmosphere which the established habits had created. For generations owing to the reaction of aesthetes against the new scientific, industrial and largely materialistic world, the people in England had become accustomed to the idea that certain things are ‘not poetical,’ that a poet can mention a rose and not the steam engine, that poetry is an escape from life and not an attack on life, and that a poet is sensitive to only certain beautiful aspects of life, and not the whole life. So the twentieth century needed poets who were fully alive to what was happening around them, and who had the courage and technique to express it.
The great poetical problem in the beginning of the twentieth century was, therefore, to invent technique that would be adequate to the ways of feeling, or modes of experience of the modern adult sensitive mind. The importance of T. S. Eliot lies in the fact that gifted with a mind of rare distinction; he has solved his own problem as a poet. Moreover, being a poet as well as a critic his poetical theories are re-inforced by his own poetry, and thus he has exerted a tremendous influence on modern poetry. It is mainly due to him that all serious modern poets and critics have realized that English poetry must develop along some other line than that running from the Romantics to Tennyson, Swinburne and Rupert Brooke.

Of the other important poets of the twentieth century Robert Bridges belonged to the transitional period. He was an expert literary technician, and it was his “inexhaustible satisfaction of form” which led him to poetry. His metrical innovations were directed to the breaking down of the domination of the syllabic system of versification, overruling it by a stress prosody wherein natural speech rhythms should find their proper values. He was convinced that it was only through the revival of the principle of quantitative stress that any advances in English versification could be expected. A. E. Houseman a classical scholar like Robert Bridges, rejected the ecstasies of romantic poetry, and in his expression of the mood of philosophic despair, used a style characterized by Purity, Simplicity, restraint and absence of all ornamentation. W. B. Yeats, the founder of the Celtic movement in poetry and drama, a phase of romanticism which had not been much exploited hitherto, gave expression to the intellectual mood of his age.

The twentieth century poets who were in revolt against Victorianism and especially against the didactic tendency of poets like Tennyson, Browning, Arnold and even Swinburne and Meredith, felt that the poet’s business was to be uniquely himself, and to project his personality through the medium of his art. Poetry to them was not a medium for philosophy and other extraneous matters; nor was it singing for its own sake. It was a method first of discovering one’s self, and then a means of projecting this discovery. Thus the problem before each of them was how to arrive at a completely individual expression of oneself in poetry. Naturally it could not be solved by using the common or universally accepted language of poetry. On account of the change in the conceptions of the function of poetry, it was essential that a new technique of communicating meaning be discovered. It was this necessity which brought about the movements known as imagism and symbolism in modern poetry.
1.8.2. The Symbolists

Symbolism was first started in France in the nineteenth century. The business of the symbolist poet is to express his individual sensations and perceptions in language which seems best adapted to convey his essential quality without caring for the conventional meters and sentence structures. He aims at inducing certain states of mind in the reader rather than communicating logical meaning. The imagists, on the other hand, aim at clarity of expression through hard, accurate, and definite images. They believe that it is not the elaborate similes of Milton or extended metaphors of Shakespeare which can express the soul of poetry. This purpose of poetry can be best served by images which by their rapid impingement on the consciousness, set up in the mind fleeting complexes of thought and feeling. In poetry which is capable of capturing such instantaneous state of mind, there is no scope for Wordsworth’s “emotion recollected in tranquillity”. In it suggestion plays the paramount part and there is no room for patient, objective descriptions.

The symbolist poetry in England came into prominence with the appearance of T. S. Eliot’s *The Waste Land*. But it had actually started right during the Victorian Age, which is evident from the poetry of Gerard Manley Hopkins (1844-89), a Jesuit priest whose poems were published thirty years after his death. It was the poetry of Hopkins and T. S. Eliot which exerted the greatest influence on English poetry between the two wars.

The technique of the symbolist is impressionistic and not representational. In order to prevent any obstruction in the way of emotive suggestion by any direct statement of experience, he gives a covering of obscurity to his meaning. There is also in symbolist poetry a strong element of charm or incantation woven by the music of words. Repetition is often resorted to by the symbolist poets as we find in Tennyson’s *The Marriage of Geraint*:

Forgetful of his promise to the king

Forgetful of the falcon and the hunt,

Forgetful of the tilt and tournament,

Forgetful of his glory and his name
Forgetful of the princedom and its cares.

But the repetitive rhythms which the symbolists use have in them a hypnotic quality. They also recall the texture of dreams of the subconscious states of mind, and because of absence of punctuation they can express the continuous “stream of consciousness”.

The symbolists also give more importance to the subjective vision of an object or situation rather than the object or the situation itself. Moreover, unlike the Romantics who create beauty out of things which are conventionally beautiful, like natural objects, works of art etc., the symbolists find beauty in every detail of normal day-to-day life. Naturally to accomplish that and create beauty out of such prosaic material requires a higher quality of art and a more sensitive approach to life. Moreover, besides including all sorts of objects and situations in the poetical fold, the symbolist has broken fresh grounds in language also. He considers that every word in the language has a potentiality for being used in poetry as well in prose. For him the language of poetry is not different from that of prose. As he uses all sorts of words which were never used in poetry by the Romantics, the symbolist has to invent a new prosody to accommodate such words as were banned previously from the domain of poetry. Thus the symbolist does not consider any particular topic, diction or rhythm specially privileged to be used in poetry.

1.8.3. Modern Poets

1.8.3.1. Robert Bridges (1840-1930)

Robert Bridges, though a twentieth century poet, may be considered as the last of the Great Victorians as he carried on the Victorian tradition. He is not a poet of the modern crisis except for his metrical innovations. Belonging to the aristocracy his work is also concerned with the leisured and highly cultivated aristocratic class of society.

In his poetry we find beautiful descriptions of English landscapes, clear streams, gardens, songs of birds. The world that he depicts is haunted by memories of the classics, of music and poetry and decorous love making. He carries on the tradition of Milton, Wordsworth and Tennyson, against which the young men of his times were in open revolt. We do not find in his poetry any bold attempt to face the critical problems facing his generation. Even his greatest
poem, *The Testament of Beauty*, does not contain any consistent treatment of deep philosophy. That is why Yeats remarked that there is emptiness everywhere in the poetry of Bridges.

The importance of Bridges in modern poetry, however, is in his metrical innovations. He was lover of old English music and many of his early lyrics are obviously influenced by the Elizabethan lyricists, especially Thomas Campion. He was a remarkable prosodist, the first English poet who had a grasp of phonetic theory. He was tireless experimenter in verse form. He himself admitted: “What led me to poetry was the inexhaustible satisfaction of form, the magic of speech, lying as it seemed to be in the masterly control of the material.” Working under the influence of his friend, Hopkins, to whom he dedicated the second book of shorter poems, Bridges wrote his poems following the rules of new prosody. The best of Bridges’ metrical experiment is the sprung rhythm, a kind of versification which is not, as usual, based on speech rhythm, but on “the hidden emotional pattern that makes poetry.” And it was a definite contribution to the development of English verse.

The lyrics of Bridges like *A Passer-By, London Snow, The Downs*, are marked by an Elizabethan simplicity. In the sonnets of *The Growth of Love*, we find the calm, the meditative strain of Victorian love poetry. A believer in Platonic love, he exalts the ethical and intellectual principle of beauty. In his greatest poem, *The Testament of Beauty*, he has given beautiful expression to his love for ‘the mighty abstract idea of beauty in all things’ which he received from Keats. Here he has also sought to ‘reconcile Passion with peace and show desire at rest.’ In his poetry Bridges thus transcended rather than solved the modern problems by his faith in idealism and the evolutionary spirit. He has no sympathy for the down-trodden and less fortunate members of humanity, and so whenever he deals with a simple human theme, as in the poem *The Villager*, he reflects the mind of the upper class which has lost touch with common humanity. Bridges is, therefore, rightly called the last Great Victorian, and his greatest poem, *The Testament of Beauty*, the final flower of the Victorian Spirit.

### 1.8.3.2. Gerard Manley Hopkins (1844-1889)

Hopkins who died in 1889, but whose poems were not issued during his lifetime, and who only became widely known after his friend Robert Bridges edited the collection in 1918, exerted a great influence on modern English poetry. The poems of Hopkins were so eccentric in
style that Bridges dared not publish them till thirty years after his death. Hopkins had tried to revive the ‘sprung rhythm’, the accentual and alliterative measure of Langland and Skelton, which had dropped out of use since the sixteenth century. In this rhythm there are two currents, the undercurrent and the overcurrent, which are intertwined. This effect is produced by inducing the metre to run back on itself, sometimes making a second line reverse the movement of one before; sometimes in the same line confronting a metric foot by its opposite, for instance, an iambic followed by a trochee. As these variations produce the momentary effect of a break or split, Hopkins called this device sprung rhythm. This rhythm follows the system of beats and stresses unlike the quantitative metres where every syllable is counted. As in conversation we stress significant words and syllables with so much emphasis that accompanying syllables and words are left to take care of themselves, the ‘sprung’ rhythm is nearer to natural speech. That is why it has appealed to the modern poets who in their poetry attempt to convey the everyday experience of modern life and its multifarious problem in a most natural manner. The ‘sprung’ rhythm of Hopkins, therefore, is his greatest contribution to modern poetry. Of course he was not the first to invent it; there are examples of it in the poetry of all great poets, especially Milton. But Hopkins revived it and laid special emphasis on it, and exerted a great influence because the twentieth century needed it.

Hopkins, like Keats, was endowed with a highly sensuous temperament, but being a deeply religious man having an abiding faith in God, he refined his faculty and offered it to God. He avoided all outward and sensuous experiences, but enjoyed them in a deeply religious mood as intimations of the Divine Presence. He could perceive God in every object, and tried to find its distinctive virtue of design of pattern the inner kernel of its being, or its very soul which was expressed by its outer form. This peculiarity or the immanent quality in each thing which is the manifestation of Beauty was called by Hopkins as inscape’, a term which he borrowed from Don Scotus. For example, the inscape of the flower called ‘blue bell’, according to Hopkins, is mixed strength and grace. Thus to him not only trees, grass, flower, but each human spirit had its personal inscape, a mystic, creative force which shapes the mind. This ‘inscape Hopkins expressed in a style also which was peculiar to himself, because he could not be satisfied with the conventional rhythms and metres which were incapable of conveying what came straight from his heart.
The poems of Hopkins are about God, Nature and Man, and all of them are pervaded with the immanence of God. His greatest poem is *The Wreck of Deutschland*, which is full of storm and agony revealing the mystery of God’s way to men. All his poetry is symbolic, and he means more than he says. Some of his lyrics are sublime, but the majority of his poems are obscure. It is mainly on account of his theory—sprung rhythm, and inscape, that he has exerted such a tremendous influence on modern poets.

1.8.3.3. A. E. Houseman (1859-1936)

Alfred Edward Houseman was a great classical scholar. He wrote much of his poetry about Shropshire, which like Hardy’s Wessex, is a part of England, full of historic memories and still comparatively free from the taint of materialism. Out of his memories of this place, Houseman created a dream world, a type of arcadia. His most celebrated poem, *Shropshire Lad*, which is a pseudo-pastoral fancy, deals with the life of the Shropshire lad who lives a vigorous, care-free life.

Houseman was disgusted with the dismal picture which the modern world presented to him, but he did not possess a sufficiently acute intellect to solve its problems. However, in some of his poems he gives an effective and powerful expression to the division in the modern consciousness caused by the contrast between the development of the moral sense and the dehumanized world picture provided by scientific discoveries. In one of his poems based on his memories of Shropshire, he has achieved tragic dignity:

Men loved unkindness then, but lightless in the quarry

I slept and saw not; tears fell down, I did not mourn;

Sweat ran and blood sprang and I was never sorry;

Then it was well with me, in days ere I was born

Houseman also wrote a few poems expressing the horrible destruction caused by modern wars, and their utter futility and inhumanity. But he was on the whole a minor poet who could not attain the stature of T. S. Eliot or W. B. Yeats.
1.8.4. Georgian Poets

Besides Bridges and Houseman, who did not belong to any group, there was in the first quarter of the twentieth century a group of poets called the “George Group.” These poets flourished in the reign of George V (1911-1936). They possessed various characteristics and were not conscious of belonging to a particular group. In reality they were imitators of the parts, who shut their eyes against the contemporary problems. But they were presumptuous enough to think of themselves as the heralds of a new age. Robert Graves who first claimed to belong to this group, and subsequently broke away with it, wrote about the Georgian poets, “The Georgians’ general recommendations were the discarding of archaistic diction such as ‘thee’ and ‘thou’ and ‘flower’d’ and ‘when’er’, and of poetical construction such as ‘winter clear’ and ‘host on armed host’ and of pomposities generally… In reaction to Victorianism their verse should avoid all formally religious, philosophic or improving themes; and all sad, wrecked cafe-table themes in reaction to the nineteenes. Georgian poets were to be English but not aggressively imperialistic, pantheistic rather than atheistic; and as simple as a child’s reading book. Their subjects were to be Nature, love, leisure, old age, childhood, animals, sleep… unemotional subject.”

This is rather a severe account of the Georgian poets but it is not wholly unjustified. Though the quantity of work produced by the Georgian poets is great, the quality is not of a high order. The poets generally attributed to this group are roughly those whose work was published in the five volumes of Georgian Poetry, dated respectively 1911-12, 1913-15, 1916-17, 1918-19 and 1920-22. The important poets who contributed to these volumes were Lascelles Abercrombie, Gordon Bottomley, Rupert Brooke, G. K. Chesterton, W. H. Davis; Walter De La Mare, John Masefield, J. E. Flecker, W. W. Gibson; D. H. Lawrence, John Drinkwater, Sturge Moore, Laurence Binyon, Siegfried Sassoon and Wilfred Owen.

Among these the poets whose work has some lasting value are Walter De la Mare, W. H. Davis, Laurence Binyon and John Masefield. The greatest of them is Walter De La Mare (1873-1957) who writes in a simple, pure, lyrical style about beautiful sights and sounds of the country, about children and old people but there is always in his poetry a strange enchantment produced by the apprehension of another world existing side by with the everyday world. His poetry has the atmosphere of dreamland, as he himself says in his introduction to Behold, This Dreamer:
“Every imaginative poem resembles in its onset and its effect the experience of dreaming.” He has the faculty of bridging the gulf between waking and dreaming, between reality and fantasy. Besides this he has great skill in the management of metre, and successfully welding the grotesque with the profoundly pathetic.

William Henry Davies (1871-1940) is one of the natural singers in the English language. Being immensely interested in Nature, the experiences which he describes about natural objects and scenes are authentic. His lyrics remind us of the melodies of Herrick and Blake. Though living in the twentieth century, he remained wholly unsophisticated, and composing his poems without much conscious effort, he could not give them polish and finish. But in spite of this he has left quite a number of lyrics which on account of their lively music have an enduring appeal to sensitive ears.

Laurence Binyon (1869-1943), a scholar and poet who translated Dante into English had a sense of just word and its sound. Generally he wrote about classical themes. The most notable of such poems is his *Attila*, a dramatic poem which is a well-constructed play. Its vehement blank verse and speed of action remind the readers of Shakespeare. The First World War stirred him to profound feelings and he wrote some very moving poems, for example, the one beginning with the unforgettable line—

They shall not grow old, as we that are left grow old.

The Second World War had a great saddening effect on him, and in his last years he wrote poems in which he contrasted old pleasures and dreams with the horrible war oppressed present. They were posthumously published in 1944 under the title *The Burning of the Leaves and other Poems*. Though these poems were written under the shadow of war and they deal with the transient nature of things and their tendency to decay, yet they express the hope, like Browning’s poetry, that nothing that is past is ultimately gone.

John Masefield (born 1878) who has been Poet Laureate since 1930 has been composing poems for the last forty years, but he has not attained real greatness as a poet. As a young man he was a sailor, and so most of his early poetry deals with life at sea and the various adventures that one meets there. The poems which give expression to this experience are contained in the volumes *Salt Water Ballads* (1902) and *Ballads* (1906). In 1909 he produced his best poetic
tragedy—*The Tragedy of Nan*. After that he gave up writing on imaginative themes, and produced poems dealing with the graver aspects of modern life in a realistic manner, e.g. *The Everlasting Mercy* (1911), *The Widow in the Bye-Street Dauber* (1913), and *The Daffodil Fields* (1913). All these poems narrate a stirring story with an excellent moral. Now he is looked upon as one of the ‘prophets’ of modern England.

1.8.5. Trench Poets

The First World War (1914-18) gave rise to war poetry, and the poets who wrote about the war and its horrors especially in the trenches are called the War Poets, or the “Trench Poets.” The war poetry was in continuation of Georgian poetry, and displayed its major characteristics, namely, an escape from actuality. For example, E. W. Tennant describes the soldiers in *Home Thoughts in Laventie*, as

Dancing with a measured step from wrecked and shattered town.

Away upon the Downs.

Instead of facing squarely the horrors of war, these poets looked upon the terrible present as a mere dream and the world of imagination the only reality. Following the Georgian tradition with its fanciful revolution from the drabness of urban life and its impressionistic description of the commonplace in a low emotional tone, a number of poets who wrote about the war, described incidents of war and the ardours and pathos of simple men caught in the catastrophe. Their method was descriptive and impressionistic, and on account of lack of any intense, sincere and realistic approach, they failed to arouse the desired emotions in the readers.

Out of a number of these war poets, only two—Siegfried Sassoon and Wilfred Owen—attained some poetic standard. Though Sassoon in his early period belonged to the Georgian group, his predominant mood was not lyrical but satiric, not ‘escapist’ but rebellious, because he felt that the soldier was being sacrificed for a false idealism. He looked upon him as

a decent chap

Who did his work and hadn’t much to say

*(A Working Party)*
In his *Suicide in Trenches* he described the horrors of trench warfare. In *Song Books of the War* he dwelt on the short memory of the public who forget those who suffered and died for them during the war. Sassoon, who is still living, wrote some poems between the two great wars, in which he attacked the shallow complacency of his contemporaries, and gave voice to the disillusionment.

Wilfred Owen wrote war poems under the influence of Sassoon. He admired Sassoon because the latter expressed in a harsh manner the truth about war. Speaking about his own poetry he remarked, “Above all, I am not concerned with poetry. My subject is War and the poetry of War. The poetry is in the pity … all a poet can do today is to warn. That is why the true poets must be truthful.” Though in his poems we find the mood of disillusioned irony, yet, unlike Sassoon, he does not completely lose his hope for man. His poems are free from bitterness and he rejoices in the exultation of battle as well as in the fellowship of comrades. Whereas in Sassoon’s poetry we find a mood of indignation and satire, in Owen’s poetry the mood is of reconciliation and elegy. The following remarkable lines in his poem *Strange Meeting* reveal Owen’s typical approach to war.

I am the enemy you killed, my fried…

Let us sleep now.

As an experimenter in metre Owen’s contribution to modern English poetry is great. Against the Georgian laxity, he introduced accumulative use of balance and parallelism. And above all, he brought a new dignity to war poetry.

1.8.6. William Butler Yeats (1865-1939)

William Butler Yeats was one of the most important of modern poets, who exerted a great influence on his contemporaries as well as successors. He was an Irish, and could never reconcile himself to the English habits and way of thinking. By temperament he was a dreamer, a visionary, who fell under the spell of the folk-lore and the superstitions of the Irish peasantry. Like them he believed in fairies, gnomes, and demons, in the truth of dreams, and in personal immortality. Naturally with such a type of temperament, Yeats felt himself a stranger in the world dominated by science, technology and rationalism.
Being convinced that modern civilization effaces our fundamental consciousness of ourselves, Yeats trusted in the faculty of imagination, and admired those ages when imagination reigned supreme. Thus he went deeper and farther in the range of folk-lore and mythology. He discovered the primitive and perennial throb of life in passions and beliefs of ancient times, and he wanted to revive it, because he felt that modern civilization has tamed it by its insistence on dry logic and cold reason.

Yeats was anti-rationalist. He believed in magic, occult influences and hypnotism. He thus led the ‘revolt of the soul against the intellect’, in the hope to acquire ‘a more conscious exercise of the human faculties’. He also believed in the magic of words, the phrases and terms which appeal to common humanity. Therefore, he tried to rediscover those symbols which had a popular appeal in ancient days, and which can even now touch man’s hidden selves and awaken in him his deepest and oldest consciousness of love and death, or his impulse towards adventure and self-fulfillment. Being disillusioned by lack of harmony and strength in modern culture, he tried to revive the ancient spells and incantations to bring about unity and a spirit of integration in modern civilization which was torn by conflicts and dissensions.

All these factors inclined Yeats towards symbolism. Believing in the existence of a universal ‘great mind’, and a ‘great memory’ which could be ‘evoked by symbols’, he came to regard that both imagery and rhythm can work as incantations to rouse universal emotions. He liked Shelley’s poetry because of the symbolism inherent in the recurrent images of leaves, boats, stars, caves, the moon. He found that Blake invented his own symbols, but his own task was easier because he could draw freely on Irish mythology for the symbols he required. Coming under the influence of French Symbolists like Verlaine, Maeterlinck, he tried to substitute the wavering, meditative and organic rhythms, which are the embodiment of imagination, for those energetic rhythms as of a running man which are not suited to serious poetry.

As a symbolist poet Yeats’ aim was to evoke a complex of emotions not by a direct statement but by a multitude of indirect strokes. The result is that sometimes the symbols used by him are not clear as they have been derived from certain obscure sources. For example, the symbols used in the following lines from The Poet Pleads with the Elemental Powers demand a commentary:
Do you not hear me calling white deer with no horns?

I have been changed to a hound with one red ear!

I would that the Boar without bristles had come from the west

And had rooted the sun and moon and stars out of the sky

And lay in the darkness, grunting, and turning to his rest.

In most of his poems, however, the symbols used by Yeats are obvious. One very common symbol in his poetry is ‘the moon’, which stands for life’s mystery.

Yeats, therefore, tried to reform poetry not by breaking with the Past, but with the Present. According to him, the true poet is he who tells the most ancient story in a manner which applies to the people today. His early poems, like *The Wanderings of Oisin* (1889), express Yeats’ deepest idealism in the simple outlines of primitive tales. The same attempt, though more effective and mature, was made in *The Wind Among the Reeds* (1899) and *The Shadowy Waters* (1900). But up to this time Yeats had not found himself; he was groping in the dreamland for wisdom and illumination.

The First World War (1914-18) and the Irish disturbances during those eventful years gave to Yeats a more realistic direction. These conflicts, of course, did not completely efface his dreams, but they turned his eyes from mythology to his own soul which was divided between earthly passions and unearthly visions. Yeats realized that the highest type of poetry is produced by the fusion of both—“the synthesis of the Self and Anti-self” as he called It. The Anti-self is our soaring spirit which tries to rise above the bondage of our mental habits and associations. Yeats’ lyrics which give the most effective expression to these views are *The Wild Swan at Coole* (1917), *The Tower* (1928) and *The Winding Stair* (1929). Here he gave a very satisfying presentation of the wholeness of man—his Self and Anti-self.

In his later poetry Yeats reached a maturity of vision and style which may be described as hard, athletic and having a metallic glint. Instead of serving as symbols and having certain indefinite associations, his last poems expressed *Cold passion* in images which are chastened and
well-defined. That is why, it is no exaggeration to say that Yeats was influenced by the Imagists, and influenced them in return. *A Thought from Propertius* is in every respect an Imagist poem.

In his last years Yeats retired to the solitude of his own mind, and he wrote poems dealing with his early interests—love of dreams (Presences), admiration of simple joy of youth and old civilizations, but the disintegration of modern civilization under the impact of war pained Yeats, and he believed that a revolutionary change is in the offing. In *Second Coming* he describes what lies at the root of the malady;

> Things fall apart; the centre cannot hold...

> The best lack all conviction, while the worst

> Are full of passionate intensity

For about half a century Yeats exerted a tremendous influence on modern poetry on account of his utter sincerity and extraordinary personality and genius. He recognized no external law, but like a true and great artist, he was a law unto himself.

**1.8.7. T. S. Eliot (1888-1965)**

Thomas Stearns Eliot is the greatest among the modern English poets, and he has influenced modern poetry more than any other poet of the twentieth century. He combines in himself strange and opposing characteristics. He is a great poet as well a great critic; he is a traditionalist rooted in classicism as well as an innovator of a new style of poetry; he is a stern realist acutely conscious of modern civilization with its manifold problems as well as a visionary who looks at life beyond the limits of time and space.

T. S. Eliot was born in 1888 in the U.S.A. He was educated at Harvard University. After that he received education at Paris and Oxford, and settled in England which he has made his literary home. He came into prominence as a poet in the decade following the First World War i.e., between 1920 and 1930, during which period he wrote the poems for which he is best known. There was at that time in England a tendency in favour of classicism which directly influenced Eliot. Being himself a great classical scholar, and finding around him petty poets of the Georgian group, he set himself to establish principles of a sound classicism. To him
classicism stands for order. It is a tradition not established by the authority of Aristotle or any other ancient critic, but by the whole body of great writers who have contributed to it in the course of centuries. He conceives of literature as a continuous process in which the present contains the past. The modern poet, according to Eliot, should carry on that process, follow the permanent spirit of that tradition, and thus create fresh literature by expressing the present on a new and modified manner. Thus Eliot is different from the neo-classicists of the eighteenth century who insisted on implicitly following the narrowly defined rules of writing. To him classicism means a sort of training for order, poise and right reason. In order to achieve that the modern writer should not defy the permanent spirit of tradition, and must have “a framework of accepted and traditional ideas.”

But the surprising thing about Eliot is that in spite of his being a professed classicist and an uncompromising upholder of tradition, he was the man who led the attack on the writing of “traditional’ poetry, and come out as the foremost innovator of modern times. He thought that the literary language which had served its purpose in the past was not suited for modern use. So he rejected it outright. According to him, the modern writer while carrying on the literary tradition of ‘poise, order and right reason’ need not follow the old and obsolete idiom of his predecessors, but should invent entirely a new medium which is capable of digesting and expressing new objects and new feelings, new ideas, and new aspects of modern life. The language used by the modern poet must be different from the language of the past because modern life dominated by science and technology is radically different from the life of the past ages characterized by slow and steady development.

In his attempt to find a new medium for poetry Eliot became interested in the experiments of Ezra Pound, the leader of the Imagists. Like Pound, Eliot also sought to extend the range of poetic language by introducing words used in common speech but commonly regarded as inappropriate in literature. But Eliot is different from Pound in this respect that having a profound knowledge of classical literature he can, whenever he likes, borrow phrases from well-known poets and thus create an astonishing effect. Thus in his poem one find colloquial words expressing precisely and exactly the meaning which he wants to convey, along with archaic and foreign words used by ancient poets, philosophers and prophets, which sound like voice far away beyond a mountain.
Eliot is acutely aware of the present and the baffling problems which face mankind in the modern times. The poems of his early period as *The Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock* (1917) express the disillusion, irony and disgust at the contemplation of the modern world which is trivial, sordid and empty. In his greatest poem, *The Waste Land*, the poet surveys the desolate scene of the world with a searching gaze. He relentlessly uncovers its baffling contrasts and looks in vain for a meaning where there is only, “A heap of broken images, where the sun heats./And the dead tree gives no shelter, the cricket no relief,/And the dry stone no sound of water.” The same attitude is expressed in *The Hollow Men* (1925): “We are the hollow men./We are stuffed men./Leaning together./The Headpiece filled with straw.”

But it is not merely the present with which Eliot is preoccupied. He is a mystic who has a profound sense of the past and he looks into the future. His aim is to look beyond the instant, pressing moment, and think of himself as belonging to what was best in the past and may be prolonged into the future. For him the spirit exists in one eternal Now, in which Past, Present and Future are blended. In order to experience it one should surrender one’s ego and relax in a mood of humble receptivity. Only then one can absorb the fleeting moment in such a way that the scheme of existence purged of all one’s personal prejudices, narrowness and resentment is felt all around one’s self. It is in this mood that his later poems published together in *Four Quartets*, consisting of *Burnt Norton* (1936), *East Coker* (1940), *The Dry Salvages* (1941), and *Little Gidding* (1942) are written.

Thus T. S. Eliot, who is a force in modern English literature, is a many-sided personality. He is a classicist, innovator, critic, poet, social philosopher and mystic—all combined into one. He makes the reader aware not merely of the problems of modern life but also of mankind as a whole. The soul of man finds itself in horror and loneliness in the Waste Land unless it is redeemed by courage and faith. Though a great and acute thinker, he has a spiritual approach to life, which is rare in the twentieth century dominated by science and materialism. And he has expressed his ideas and feelings in a language which is devoid of all superfluous ornamentation and is capable of conveying the bewildering and terrifying aspects of modern life. Of all the living English poets he has done most to make his age conscious of itself and aware of the dangers inherent in modern civilization.
1.9. Drama

From the dramatic point of view the first half of the nineteenth century was almost completely barren. The popular pieces of the day were melodrama, farces, and sentimental comedies, which had no literary qualities, were poor in dialogue and negligible in characterization, and relied for their success upon sensation, rapid action, and spectacle. However, within the melodrama itself there can be traced a significant development from romantic and historical themes to more domestic themes, and this movement towards realism received considerable impetus from the work of T. W. Robertson, a writer of comedies, who introduced the idea of a serious theme underlying the humor, and characters and dialogue of a more natural kind.

It was not until the nineties, when the influence of Ibsen was making itself strongly felt, and Shaw produced his first plays, that the necessary impetus was there to carry the serious drama over into the field of social, domestic, or personal problems. A period so keenly aware of social problems was an admirable breeding ground for the drama of ideas, and the themes of drama became the problems of religion, of youth and age, of labor and capital, and above all, of sex. New psychological investigations reinforced the interest in character as distinct from plot, and the realistic drama of this period aimed at the impartial presentation of real life, contemporary rather than historical. To begin with, its concern was primarily with the upper classes; and its problems, except in Shaw, were handled discreetly, but gradually it turned to other social levels, and became more daring in its themes. The dramatists of this new order were, however, a small minority, and while they struggled, for recognition, melodrama and musical comedy continued to flourish. But such was the force of the work of this minority that it established the drama of ideas as the drama of the early twentieth century.

1.9.1. George Bernard Shaw (1856-1950)

Born in Ireland, Shaw identified himself as a socialist from an early age and joined the Fabian Society, which was a non-revolutionary Marxist group advocating for a kind of social reform that would result in socialism without bloodshed. He was an extremely prolific writer who completed over fifty plays before his death of natural causes at the age of 94. He was awarded the Nobel Prize in 1925.
Shaw began writing rather late in life, beginning with articles for a Fabian Society publication called *Fabian Letters* (1889). He wrote five novels, but he earned a living as a music and theater critic, advocating strongly for the music of Richard Wagner. Shaw originally tried his hand at writing plays to flesh out his criticisms of the existing British stage. Compared to the light Victorian comedies which were the fashion, Shaw's plays were revolutionary in their seriousness and socialist themes.

His earliest plays were published in a set titled *Plays Pleasant and Unpleasant* (1898). *The Pleasant* volume includes *Arms and the Man* (1894), *Candida* (1893), and *You Never Can Tell* (1895). *The Unpleasant* volume includes *Widowers' Houses* (1892), *The Philanderer* (1893), and *Mrs. Warren's Profession* (1893). The latter play describes the mother/daughter relationship between a prostitute and her exacting daughter, and it was banned in London for its "immorality."

Shaw was a vegetarian and a teetotaler, and he was well known for his large ego. In 1898, Shaw married an Irish heiress who famously insisted on maintaining celibacy even after marriage. In 1901 he published *Three Plays for Puritans*, a set which included *The Devil's Disciple*, a play about the American Revolution.

Of his later plays, Shaw is best remembered for his *Saint Joan* (1923) and *John Bull's Other Island* (1904). Written four years after Joan of Arc was recognized as a saint, *Saint Joan* portrays the Frenchwoman as a stubborn piece of work who was ahead of her time. *John Bull's Other Island* is a comedy about Ireland that was originally commissioned by W. B. Yeats for the opening of the National Theatre in Ireland but which he later rejected for being too controversial.

Shaw believed that ideas of his plays were their most important feature. His fundamental aim in his drama was the bettering of the lot of humanity. Scoffing at the romantic view of life, he examined man and his social institutions with intellectual courage and shrewd irreverent insight. Slum landlords, prostitution, marriage conventions, social prejudices, the romanticized soldier, the glamorous historical figure, the medical profession—the critics, religion—these are but some of the people and things which come under the microscope of his rationalism. His earliest work was emphatically socialist, and socialism, later in a more moderate form, remained his hope for humanity. *Man and Superman* and then *Back to Methuselah* proclaimed the creed of
Creative Evolution which would eventually bring about perfection, in the first play through selective breeding, in the second through an incredible longevity. Religion was the main theme of his later plays. It was Shaw’s delight always to turn the social scene inside out, to show the other side of the accepted picture, a process which he undertook with a roguish humor, a delight in shocking the conventions, and a provocative mixture of serious argument and more or less fantastic fooling.

1.9.2. John Millington Synge (1871-1909)

Synge was the greatest dramatist in the rebirth of the Irish Theatre. His plays are few in number but they are of a stature to place him among the greatest playwrights in the language. Persuaded by Yeats to abandon his Bohemian life and live for a while in the Aran Islands and then return to Dublin and devote himself to creative work. *The Aran Islands* (1907) is the journal of Synge's retreat among these primitive people.

The plays of Irish peasant life on which his fame rests were written in the last six years of his life. The first two one-act plays, *In the Shadow of the Glen*, (1903), a comedy, and *Riders to the Sea* (1904), considered one of the finest tragedies ever written, were produced by the Irish National Theatre Society. This group, with Synge, Yeats and Lady Gregory as co-directors, organized in 1904 the famous Abbey Theatre. Two comedies, *The Well of the Saints* (1905) and *The Playboy of the Western World* (1907), were presented by the Abbey players. The latter play created a furor of resentment among Irish patriots stung by Synge's bitter humor.

Synge's later works included *The Tinker's Wedding*, published in 1908 but not produced for fear of further riots, and *Deirdre of the Sorrows*, a tragedy unfinished at the time of his death but presented by the Abbey players in 1910.

The decisive event in Synge’s life was his going, at the suggestion of Yeats, to the Isle of Aran. His experiences there, and later in Ireland, gave him the theme and style of his drama. He saw and felt deeply the life of the peasants wringing a hard living from sea and soil; its tragedy, its comedy, its poetry and dignity are all captured in his work. Synge reacted strongly against the almost photographic reporting of the plays of the realistic movement, which, he felt, missed the essential poetry and joy of life. Like Yeats, he sought inspiration in the legends and myths of earlier days. His keen insight into human nature and his skill in the delineation of character are
best seen in Nora (*The Shadow of the Glen*), and Christy Mahon in *The Playboy of the Western World*.

The presence of nature is felt in every one of his plays. Sometimes as a fearsome relentless enemy (*Riders to the Sea*), sometimes as a kind comforter (*The Well of the Saints*), but always as a chief actor in the drama or as a source of imagery, nature is present. Synge views nature with something of the mysticism, and much of the same careful sensitive observation, found in Wordsworth, but he shows no tendency to build up a philosophy of nature. He is not didactic or moralistic; his approach being something akin to pagan.

### 1.10. Conclusion

During the twentieth century, especially after World War I, Western drama became more internationally unified and less the product of separate national literary traditions. Throughout the century realism, naturalism, and symbolism (and various combinations of these) continued to inform important plays. Among the many twentieth century playwrights who have written what can be broadly termed naturalist dramas are Gerhart Hauptmann (German), John Galsworthy (English), John Millington Synge and Sean O'Casey (Irish), and Eugene O'Neill, Clifford Odets, and Lillian Hellman (American).

An important movement in early twentieth century drama was expressionism. Expressionist playwrights tried to convey the dehumanizing aspects of twentieth century technological society through such devices as minimal scenery, telegraphic dialogue, talking machines, and characters portrayed as types rather than individuals. Notable playwrights who wrote expressionist dramas include Ernst Toller and Georg Kaiser (German), Karel Čapek (Czech), and Elmer Rice and Eugene O'Neill (American). The twentieth century also saw the attempted revival of drama in verse, but although such writers as William Butler Yeats, W. H. Auden, T. S. Eliot, Christopher Fry, and Maxwell Anderson produced effective results, verse drama was no longer an important form in English. In Spanish, however, the poetic dramas of Federico García Lorca are placed among the great works of Spanish literature.

World War II and its attendant horrors produced a widespread sense of the utter meaninglessness of human existence. This sense is brilliantly expressed in the body of plays that have come to be known collectively as the theater of the absurd. By abandoning traditional
devices of the drama, including logical plot development, meaningful dialogue, and intelligible characters, absurdist playwrights sought to convey modern humanity's feelings of bewilderment, alienation, and despair—the sense that reality is itself unreal. In their plays human beings often portrayed as dupes, clowns who, although not without dignity, are at the mercy of forces that are inscrutable.

The tradition of psychological realism and of the realistic drama and realistic stage picture has remained through the twentieth century the continued common enemy of the many modernist movements in theatre, and this common enemy has given the avant-garde, somewhat paradoxically, a rather consistent tradition of its own. That tradition, however, has steadily increased in the range of its experimentation, in its variety, in its technical means and in the complexity of its inter-relationships with other experimentation, with the traditional theatre, and with the cultural and social world in which it occurs. It has long since become clear that modernism is not centrally involved, as its practitioners once thought, in anticipating the art works of the future, but rather in providing the richest possible variety of artistic expression to the ever-changing present.

Sources/Suggested Reading

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