



MASTER OF ARTS IN ENGLISH

SEMESTER-II

ENG-2.2: NON-FICTION – LETTER, ESSAY, BIOGRAPHY AND
AUTO - BIOGRAPHY

CREDIT: 04

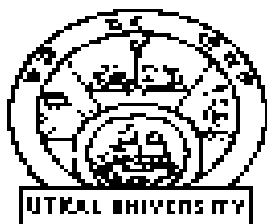
BLOCK: 1 - 4

AUTHOR

S. Deepika



ଦୂର ଓ ଅନୁଲାଇନ ଶିକ୍ଷା କେନ୍ଦ୍ର, ଉତ୍କଳ ବିଶ୍ୱବିଦ୍ୟାଳୟ
CENTRE FOR DISTANCE AND ONLINE EDUCATION
UTKAL UNIVERSITY



**C.D.O.E.
Education For All**

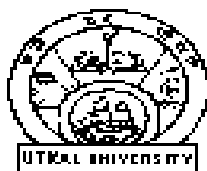
ABOUT THE UNIVERSITY

Founded in 1943, Utkal University is the 17th University of the country and the first of Orissa. It is the result of the efforts of Pandit Nilakantha Dash, Maharaja Krushna Chandra Gajapati, Pandit Godavarish Mishra and many others who envisioned a progressive education system for modern Odisha.

The University started functioning on 27 November 1943, at Ravenshaw College, Cuttack. It originated as an affiliating and examining body but shifted to its present campus spread over 400 acres of land at Vani Vihar in Bhubaneswar, in 1962.

A number of Postgraduate Departments and other centers were established in the University campus. There are presently more than two hundred general affiliated colleges under the University. It has eleven autonomous colleges under its jurisdiction, twenty-eight constituent postgraduate departments, 2 constituent law colleges and a Directorate of Distance & Continuing Education. It boasts of a centre for Population Studies, a School of Women's Studies, an Academic Staff College, a pre-school and a high school. The University also offers a number of self-financing courses.

NAAC accredited in its 3rd cycle with A+ status in 2023. It is a member of the Indian Association of Universities and the Commonwealth Association of Universities.



C.D.O.E.

Education For All

**CENTRE FOR DISTANCE & ONLINE EDUCATION UTKAL
UNIVERSITY: VANI VIHAR BHUBANESWAR: -751007**

From the Director's Desk

The Centre for Distance and Online Education, originally established as the University Evening College way back in 1962 has travelled a long way in the last 52 years. **‘EDUCATION FOR ALL’** is our motto. Increasingly the Open and Distance Learning institutions are aspiring to provide education for anyone, anytime and anywhere. CDOE, Utkal University has been constantly striving to rise up to the challenges of Open Distance Learning system. Nearly one lakh students have passed through the portals of this great temple of learning. We may not have numerous great tales of outstanding academic achievements but we have great tales of success in life, of recovering lost opportunities, tremendous satisfaction in life, turning points in career and those who feel that without us they would not be where they are today. There are also flashes when our students figure in best ten in their honours subjects. Our students must be free from despair and negative attitude. They must be enthusiastic, full of energy and confident of their future. To meet the needs of quality enhancement and to address the quality concerns of our stakeholders over the years, we are switching over to self-instructional material printed courseware. We are sure that students would go beyond the course ware provided by us. We are aware that most of you are working and have also family responsibility. Please remember that only a busy person has time for everything and a lazy person has none. We are sure, that you will be able to chalk out a well-planned programme to study the courseware. By choosing to pursue a course in distance mode, you have made a commitment for self-improvement and acquiring higher educational qualification. You should rise up to your commitment. Every student must go beyond the standard books and self-instructional course material. You should read number of books and use ICT learning resources like the internet, television and radio programmes etc. As only limited number of classes will be held, a student should come to the personal contact programme well prepared. The PCP should be used for clarification of doubt and counseling. This can only happen if you read the course material before PCP. You can always mail your feedback on the course ware to us. It is very important that one should discuss the contents of the course materials with other fellow learners.

We wish you happy reading.

DIRECTOR

**ENG-2.2: Non-Fiction – Letter, Essay, Biography And
Auto - Biography
Brief Syllabi**

Block No.	Block Name.	Unit No.	Unit
1.	NON - FICTION	1.	Introduction to Prose
		2.	Joseph Addison's Works
		3.	Addison & The Spectator Papers
		4.	The Spectator Papers – An Analysis

Block No.	Block Name	Unit No.	Unit
2.	CHARLES LAMB	5.	Introduction to Essays
		6.	Charles Lamb and His Age
		7.	My Relations – An Analysis
		8.	My Relations and Other Essays

Block No.	Block Name	Unit No.	Unit
3.	MATTHEW ARNOLD	9.	Victorian Poetry & Biography
		10.	Criticism in Victorian Age
		11.	Arnold's theory and his Works
		12.	Arnold's Preface to Lyrical Ballads

Block No.	Block Name	Unit No.	Unit
4.	INDIAN NATIONALISM & AUTO - BIOGRAPHY	13.	Tagore and His Writings
		14.	Nationalism in the West – An Analysis
		15.	Theory of Auto - Biography
		16.	Russell's Auto - Biography

**CENTRE FOR DISTANCE AND ONLINE EDUCATION, UTKAL
UNIVERSITY, BHUBANESWAR**

Program Name: Master in ENGLISH

Program Code: 010306

Course Name: Non-Fiction – Letter, Essay, Biography and Auto - Biography

Course Code: ENG-2.2 Semester: II Credit: 4 B l o c k No. 1 to 4 Unit No. 1 to 16

EXPERT COMMITTEE:

Prof. Jatindra Kumar Nayak,

Retd. Prof. in English, Utkal University

Prof. Himansu Sekhar Mohapatra

Retd. Prof. in Department of English, Utkal University

Prof. Asim Ranjan Parhi,

Prof. in Department of English, Utkal University

Prof. Kalyani samantaray,

Retd. Associate Prof. in the Department of English, Utkal University

COURSE WRITER:

S. Deepika,

Asst. Prof. in Department of English, Utkal University

COURSE EDITOR

Dr. Prajna Paramita Panigrahi,

Asst. Prof. in Department of English, C.D.O.E, Utkal University

CONTENT AND STRUCTURE EDITOR

Priyanka Priyadarshini

Faculty in Department of English, C.D.O.E, Utkal University

MATERIAL PRODUCTION

Utkal University Press

**ENG-2.2: NON-FICTION – LETTER, ESSAY, BIOGRAPHY AND AUTO -
BIOGRAPHY
Content**

Block/Unit	Page No.
BLOCK-1: NON - FICTION	1 - 50
UNIT 1: Introduction to Prose	
UNIT 2: Joseph Addison's Works	
UNIT 3: Addison & The Spectator Papers	
UNIT 4: The Spectator Papers – An Analysis	
BLOCK-2: CHARLES LAMB	51 - 99
UNIT 5: Introduction to Essays	
UNIT 6: Charles Lamb and His Age	
UNIT 7: My Relations – An Analysis	
UNIT 8: My Relations and Other Essays	
BLOCK-3: MATTHEW ARNOLD	100 - 155
UNIT 9: Introduction to Victorian Poetry & Biography	
UNIT 10: Criticism in Victorian Age	
UNIT 11: Arnold's theory and his Works	
UNIT 12: Arnold's Preface to Lyrical Ballads	
BLOCK-4: INDIAN NATIONALISM & AUTO – BIOGRAPHY	156 - 215
UNIT 13: Tagore and His Writings	
UNIT 14: Nationalism in the West – An Analysis	
UNIT 15: Theory of Auto – Biography	
UNIT 16: Russell's Auto – Biography	

BLOCK-1: NON - FICTION

UNIT 1: Introduction to Prose

UNIT 2: Joseph Addison's Works

UNIT 3: Addison & The Spectator Papers

UNIT 4: The Spectator Papers – An Analysis

UNIT 1: INTRODUCTION TO PROSE

STRUCTURE

- 1.1 Objectives
- 1.2 Introduction
- 1.3 Critics in the Romantic Age rediscovered English
- 1.4 Influences in English Renaissance Prose
 - 1.4.1 Prose and poetry almost hand in hand
 - 1.4.2 Drama influences prose
- 1.5 Variety in prose writing
- 1.6 The Contribution of the Age to Prose
- 1.7 Prose Romance
- 1.8 Translators
- 1.9 Summary
- 1.10 Key Terms
- 1.11 Review Questions
- 1.12 References

1.1 Objectives

The learners shall know the following:

- What is Prose?
- How is prose different from other genres of literature
- Origin of prose in literature
- Relevance of prose in today's world.

1.2 Introduction

Prose writing began in English Renaissance the Romantics critics who rightly weighed the quality of English Renaissance Prose Francis Bacon, Lyly, Gascoigne as prose writers:

Pamphleteers
Religious Prose
Character sketches
Prose Romances

The eighteenth century was a great period for English prose, though not for English poetry. Matthew Arnold called it an "age of prose and reason," implying thereby that no good poetry was written in this century, and that, prose dominated the literary realm. Much of the poetry of the age is prosaic, if not altogether prose-rhymed prose. Verse was used by many poets of the age for purposes which could be realized, or realized better, through prose. Our view is that the eighteenth century was not altogether barren of real poetry.

Even then, it is better known for the galaxy of brilliant prose writers that it threw up. In this century there was a remarkable proliferation of practical interests which could best be expressed in a new kind of prose-pliant and of a work a day kind capable of rising to every occasion. This prose was simple and modern, having nothing of the baroque or Ciceronian colour of the prose of the seventeenth-century writers like Milton and Sir Thomas Browne. Practicality and reason ruled supreme in prose and determined its style. It is really strange that in this period the language of prose was becoming simpler and more easily comprehensible, but, on the other hand, the language of poetry was being conventionalized into that artificial "poetic diction" which at the end of the century was so severely condemned by Wordsworth as "gaudy and inane phraseology."

It is difficult to concretely state the beginning of prose writing in English Literature. Nevertheless, using Renaissance as a term to describe a literary phenomenon and age, then Sidney's *Arcadia* or Burton's *Anatomy of Melancholy*, or the essays of Bacon and the writings of Milton, and Browne, and of course, the very development of the English Bible are to be seen as a cultural phenomenon that ushered prose writing in English Literature.

1.3 Critics in the Romantic Age rediscovered English

➤ Renaissance prose

What is interesting is the fact that it is the scholars of the Romantic Age who through their critical appreciation gave Renaissance prose its due credibility at par with the poetry and drama of the age. Foremost credit for this should be given to Coleridge and his circle. It was Coleridge's enthusiastic rediscovery of the prose writers of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries that changed perception for this genre. For Coleridge, the great models of the classical style in English prose writings were Hooker, Bacon, Milton and Taylor. Coleridge saw the existence of an 'individual idiom' in each of the Renaissance prose writers. When speaking of the glory of Renaissance prose writers, Coleridge had Sir Thomas Browne in mind but interestingly it is Jeremy Taylor who won the most extravagant

praises from a number of Romantic critics. Charles Lamb was also another Browne enthusiastic but he too had much praise for Taylor saying that the latter had more knowledge and more equipped in providing details of human life and manners. Such was the euphemism that Lamb had ended up comparing Taylor's gentle prose style and sweetness to none other than Shakespeare! The icing for Taylor came from the pen of another great in the field of essay writing, Hazlitt who had this to say: "when the name of Jeremy Taylor is no longer remembered with reverence, genius will have become a mockery, and virtue an empty shade." Hazlitt's prediction had proved wrong as today Taylor is much less remembered than his other contemporaries though the fact had been that Taylor had been regularly reprinted in the eighteenth as well as the nineteenth centuries. On the other hand, Eighteenth Century had not been very enthusiastic about Renaissance prose mostly finding it unreadable. Instead of the usual Bacon, Taylor, this century had more readily accepted Burton's *The Anatomy of Melancholy* that went to have its seventh edition in 1676 but thereafter it did not feature mainstream till in 1800 when Keats, Lamb and others reclaimed it. Coleridge felt it was the flavour of the native land in the writing of the prose writers of Renaissance that gave them a specific texture. Hazlitt in the introduction to his *Lectures on the Dramatic Literature of the Age of Elizabeth* in which he makes comparative study of Bacon, Browne and Taylor too speaks and endorses this common feature of Renaissance prose in general being rooted in the soil. Again, while writing in *The Edinburgh Review* in 1812, Scot Francis Jeffrey spoke of prose writers of Renaissance citing Taylor, Burton, Hooker, and Bacon as examples of native poetic genius who outdid any verse that had been written in Europe around that time. Largely, the Romantic critics agreed that English Renaissance prose was a distinctive national product, whose progeny would flourish later in restoration and then elsewhere in Europe too. Of the lot of prose writing in Renaissance, Bible translation expectedly finds a definitive place. De Quincy sums up that the final Bible translation under the umbrella of state authority was a blessing because a translation under the Pope would not have been so acceptable nor would have been the language so smooth. It would not wrong to say that the Coleridge circle of critics devised various projects to demonstrate the supremacy of English Renaissance prose writing. One was the extensive study of English prose style proposed by Coleridge for the Bibliotheca Britannica, which went the same way as many other Coleridgean projects. Another was the anthologizing of especially luminous extracts from the chosen writers of the period. As mentioned earlier Taylor had been much respected as a prose writer. In this light, let us bring to notice what Lamb had written to Robert Lloyd in 1801. Lamb said it was an easy task to disentangle and understand the rich texture of Taylor's works! Four years later Coleridge's friend Basil Montagu, whose *Selections from the Works of Taylor, Hooker* began with a hundred and fifty pages from Taylor and went on to include Latimer in it. Montaigne's anthology was successful is proved by the fact that it was reprinted in 1807 and again in 1829. A later Coleridge influenced anthology was Robert Aris Willmott's *Precious Stones* (1850), which not only included Montagu but contained extracts from Sidney, Spenser, and Jonson, as well as other religious writings. Willmott too had published a biography of Jeremy Taylor. His anthology began with Latimer and Cranmer and moved onto the eighteenth century but clearly nothing excited him as Renaissance. He said the prose writers between Elizabeth and Charles II 'wore purple over armour'. Interestingly both Willmott and Lamb used a near metaphor conceiving writing as a dress though for Lamb it was more decorative than it had been for Willmott.

1.4 Influences in English Renaissance Prose

There is no denying that the literary temper of Elizabethan England was distinguished by a splendid vitality and vivacity and covered a wide range of subjects that was reflected both in prose and poetry of the time. The enthusiasm for the Greek and Latin classics, the passion for extending the limits of human knowledge remains central to English Renaissance as it had been in Italy or France. Hellenism or the desire to cultivate beauty both on the physical and moral level can be felt in the textures of literature of the time. Moral sensibility and its exploration was deeply a part of English Renaissance. It is true that to be appreciating Elizabethan literature one has to see it as having stemmed from European Renaissance. The Elizabethan studied and imitated foreign authors with aptness and gusto. In spite of this free spirit of borrowing and myriad influences, the national spirit was strong enough in Elizabethan England that gave its literature individuality and thus it was able to survive foreign invasion almost on all levels. This becomes a significant achievement when seen in the light that it was in Italy where the intellectual movement of the Renaissance matured earliest and flourished longest well before sixteenth century when England had hardly achieved any literary repute or merit. In the French Renaissance one gets to see coherent literary harvest, something that English literature of the time lacked. If there is a parallel that English Renaissance then this would be Spanish Renaissance. The career of Cervantes (1547-1616) is parallel to Shakespeare in England. In both Spain and England, the favoured literary genre was drama!

It is most clear from the above discussions that the first harbingers of a literary revival in Tudor England had been influenced by Italy and France. Needless to say that the early Tudor experiments in poetry did not show complexity but prose on the other hand showed simple directness and vigor though monotony was evident in such writings. This probably explains that the works of Surrey, Wyatt, Lord Berners, and their contemporaries almost lost popularity with the end of their lives. Elizabethan period of English literature did not begin right with Queen Elizabeth coming to the English throne, the reason simple: King Henry's reign had not been marked by rigorous literary activity. There were glimpses of literary activities but it is with Edmund Spenser's (1552?-99) *Shepherds Calendar* in 1579 and thereafter Sir Philip Sidney's (1554-86) *Apologie for Poetrie* that began the steady flow of literature in England. Strange as it may sound but in the initial years of Queen Elizabeth's reign, the most notable literary work came in the form of a man called Thomas Sackville (1536-1608), a young barrister at that time.. Sackville made two interesting contributions to English literature: he designed a long poem on the vicissitudes of great personages in English history and the blank verse in the play *Gorboduc* that he wrote in collaboration.

The works of George Gascoigne (1525?-77) need to be talked about though temperamentally it was different from Sackville's. His inspiration was Italy and the areas that earlier no one had looked at. He wrote both comedy and tragedy. His comedy *The Supposes* was inspired by Ariosto's prose work. So if Sackville and Norton's tragedy taught the Englishmen that blank verse was indeed the most suitable vehicle for tragedy then Gascoigne's English representation of Ariosto's *Isuppositi* proposed that the suitable vehicle for comedy was prose! At the same time Gascoigne showed his interest in another popular genre of Italy that is the novel. Boccaccio had been

the earliest master of Italian prose fiction and was overcome in popularity by his disciples namely Bandello and Cinthio. The latter two were quite popular in the second half of Queen Elizabeth's reign. It was Gascoigne who ignited the interest in contemporary Italian novel by translating one of Bandello's popular stories in English. He also wrote a satire in rhyming verse in emulation of Juvenal and Perseus that can be taken as the forerunner of English poetic and rounded it off with writing with the first critical treatise on poetic workmanship and technique.

1.4.1 Prose and poetry almost hand in hand

In the year *Shepherd's Calendar* gave English poetry its boost, John Lyly (1554-1606), who was about the same age as Spenser, published the first volume of his moral romance called *Euphues*; the second and concluding volume followed within a year most notably in prose. The moral journey and its subject is not so much of interest as is the author's style of using direct mannerism in prose. We see in him, the usage of balanced sentences, antitheses couples with a slightly epigrammatic tendency, also with equal ease uses alliteration as well as similes. The style of Lyly shows affectation of early Spanish prose reminding one of the mannered proses of Guevara. This should not be used as an argument that Lyly was not original because his compositions were marked by self-imposed rules of writing. Nearly all his nine comedies were written and produced between 1581 and 1593. With one exception they are in prose, though all are interspersed with simply worded songs. Naturally, *Euphues* got due recognition and also simulated a desire of taking up prose writing. *Euphues* gained such a refined status that the ladies of the Court adored being called Lyly's scholars and being well parley with Euphuism was seen as a stamp of culture and civilization. Contemporary prose under the influence of Lyly would be exaggeratingly filled with antitheses and sometimes bizarre allusions. It began with exaggeration in style but it nevertheless tempered English Literature to move towards epigrammatic style that marked Bacon's essay. With Bacon's essay, English prose achieved another level. Lyly's work opened future English romances being written to various influences ranging from Italy to France but the one quality that seems to have been most assimilated in English prose fiction was his didacticism. Lyly would even go to inspire Sidney's *Arcadia*, though Sidney himself had much exposure to many forms of foreign romances. Just not Sidney but even Robert Greene (1560?-92) and his disciple, Thomas Lodge (1558?-1625) unhesitatingly said that their works were a sort of continuation of Lyly's romances. One of Greene's volumes was named *Euphues, his Censure to Philautus* (1587); another was called *Menaphon: Camilla's alarm to Slumbering Euphues*. Lodge's romance *Rosalynde* on which Shakespeare based his play of *As You Like It* came with the subsidiary title *Euphues' Golden Legacy*. Elizabethan society was undergoing rapid changes in terms of social changes, it saw rise in literacy rates, a growing middle class most importantly the emergence of literate bourgeois tradesmen. Such changing social structure can be seen in the prose fiction writing but on a much weaker scale of one Thomas Delaney (1543-1600), a silk-weaver by profession. His three tales *Jack of Newbwy*, *The Gentle Craft*, and *Thomas of Reading* (all 1590) show him as a story teller of the bourgeois craftsmen. In the second named, he glorifies the craft of shoemakers. Delaney's style is quite homely and he found quite an audience for his works. Thomas Nash (1567-1601) was the most original personality among occasional writers in prose and wrote voraciously on different subjects. The contemporary society was satirized by Nash for lacking frankness. Nash was affected by boisterous mode of speech. In his prose romance of Jack Wilton he produced a novel of adventure, the first of its kind in English. Thomas Nashe was influenced by a different source, the picaresque novels of Spain. In these stories the hero, or picaresque, is a man of no social standing who is free to travel and engage in adventures. Nashe's most famous works are *The Unfortunate Traveller or the Life of*

Jack Wilton (1594) and *The Terrors of the Night (1594)*. Thereafter, Dekker subsequently carried on a part of Nash's work. Dekker is found writing on the darker side of London life but with humorous illuminations.

1.4.2 Drama influences prose

It is largely accepted that the English Renaissance was dominated by drama. Though drama was hugely popularly but there was a section of the public who thought drama was a moral nuisance. The puritans added fuel by suggesting that theatres are part of pagan culture and hence should not find place in a Christian society. Naturally bitter attacks flew. One such came from the pen of Stephen Gosson in 1579 who not only attacked drama in his work but without seeking permission dedicated it to Sir Philip Sidney who was quite a name in the literary circle at that time. Sidney reacted as we all know through his *Apologie for Poetry*. Sidney not only supported drama and poetry but initiated a more liberal outlook in literature. And, need we remind ourselves that all these were being said in prose?

The close of the Queen's reign saw the flourish of prose like never before. The literary flow that reached its zenith in poetry was now to be seen in prose. The subject matter in prose was wide: from travel to religion, to society to politics. The Elizabethan translation of the Bible was long drawn project of the Renaissance prose. The Bishops' Bible was published in 1568 and was then constantly reprinted until it found culmination in the *Authorized Version* of 1611 under the reign of James I. However, the most dignified contribution to prose literature of the age was made by the theologian Richard Hooker (1554-1600) whose style was largely based on Latin models, cumbersome at times but reaching heights of poetic eloquence. Hooker's masterly work *Of the Laws of Ecclesiastical Policy* is the greatest of the non-fictional prose works of the Elizabethan age. It began appearing volume by volume from 1594 and continued till his death. It was the first book in England which used English for a serious philosophic discussion. Hooker was a Protestant and the purpose in writing the book was to defend the Church of England and to support certain principles of the Church government. Hooker modelled his style on Cicero and his syntax was extremely Latinized.

➤ Francis Bacon

No discussion on Elizabethan prose can be complete without mentioning Francis Bacon (1561-1626) whose career started when Hooker ended his. Bacon was unlike Hooker because he was not adopting the Cicerian model. Bacon borrowed the term and the conception of the essay from the French writer Montaigne whose *Essays* first appeared in 1580. Incidentally Bacon's great philosophical work was mostly in Latin prose but when writing in English, Bacon showed equal capability. Like the flavour of the time, Bacon's English writing was embedded with native taste. In his *Advancement of Learning*, his chief philosophical work in English, his vocabulary is exceptionally large. Bacon proved his versatility by making an experiment in aphoristic style that virtually came to be identified

with him. There is no denying that it is the brevity of his language that gave Bacon his due place in the canon of English Literature. Even though his essays differ from the kind which was later established in England, he is a worthy predecessor of the line of essayists who were to come up in English Literature.

Check Your Progress

1. Discuss in details the prose works by Francis Bacon.

1.5 Variety in prose writing

The 18th century in Britain was marked by the rise of the middle class, industrialization, and a newfound interest in science and reason. This period witnessed a significant shift in literary styles, away from the ornate and complex style of the previous century, towards a more straightforward, rational, and practical style. The rise of periodicals such as the Tatler and Spectator also played a significant role in the development of prose writing. Characteristics of 18th Century Prose: The prose of the 18th century was characterized by clarity, simplicity, rationality and elegance, which was reflected in the prose of the time. Prose became more straightforward and clear, and writers sought to convey their ideas in a logical and concise manner. There was a greater focus on realism and observation of the world. Writers of this period emphasized logic and reason, which resulted in a more precise and direct style of writing. They were concerned with creating works that were easy to understand and that conveyed their ideas in a clear and concise manner. They were also interested in exploring the human condition and the complexities of society. Satire and irony were commonly used to critique the shortcomings of society, and the writers of this period were not afraid to use their works as a means of social commentary, with authors often mocking social and political issues. The prose of this period also reflected a new emphasis on the individual and the importance of personal experience. Additionally, the emergence of the novel as a popular form of literature allowed writers to explore complex characterizations and plotlines in a more in-depth manner than ever before. The 18th century in Britain was marked by the rise of the middle class, industrialization, and a newfound interest in science and reason.

This period witnessed a significant shift in literary styles, away from the ornate and complex style of the previous century, towards a more straightforward, rational, and practical style. The rise of periodicals such as the *Tatler* and *Spectator* also played a significant role in the development of prose writing. Characteristics of 18th Century Prose: The prose of the 18th century was characterized by clarity, simplicity, rationality and elegance, which was reflected in the prose of the time. Prose became more straightforward and clear, and writers sought to convey their ideas in a logical and concise manner. There was a greater focus on realism and observation of the world. Writers of this period emphasized logic and reason, which resulted in a more precise and direct style of writing. They were concerned with creating works that were easy to understand and that conveyed their ideas in a clear and concise manner. They were also interested in exploring the human condition and the complexities of society. Satire and irony were commonly used to critique the shortcomings of society, and the writers of this period were not afraid to use their works as a means of social commentary, with authors often mocking social and political issues. The prose of this period also reflected a new emphasis on the individual and the importance of personal experience. Additionally, the emergence of the novel as a popular form of literature allowed writers to explore complex characterizations and plotlines in a more in-depth manner than ever before. Some random names and the kind of subjects they chose to write will acquaint us with variety in prose of Renaissance. William Baldwin (1547–53) wrote *Beware the Cat* (1553) which is often considered the first novel in English. Then there had been Geoffrey Fenton (1539?–1608), a translator of stories from French and Italian which were collected as in *Certain Tragical Discourses* (1567). And it is not possible to forget George Chapman (1559?–1634) the poet and dramatist who translated classics like Homer's *Iliad* and *Odyssey*. Roger Ascham, a great educationist is known to have written *The School of Shooting*. His second work, *The School Master* contains intellectual instructions for the young. Ascham's prose style is conspicuous for its economy and precision and it was not wrong to call him the first English stylist as far as language is concerned. Thomas More's *Utopia* occupies its unique place in the territory of prose writings. One also has to mention Sir Thomas Elyot and Sir John Cheke Elyot's *The Governor* which is a treatise on moral philosophy and education. Cheke had been a teacher of Greek art at Cambridge. He wrote *The Heart of Sedition* which shows the influence of classicism and antiquity. His prose is vigorous, argumentative, eloquent and humorous. Needless to say, the icing on the cake came in the form of Ben Jonson who wrote aphoristic essays that were compiled in *The Timber of Discoveries* published posthumously in 1641. His essays are moral and critical in nature. John Selden's *Table Talk* is sharp and full of aphorisms. As a practitioner of aphoristic essay he stands next only to Bacon and Ben Jonson. He also wrote *The Titles of Honour* and *The History of Titles*. John Donne, the metaphysical poet also has quite a bulk of prose writings to his credit. *Ignatius His Conclave* (1611) was a satire upon Ignatius Loyola and the Jesuits. Nevertheless, *Devotions* (1614) oft considered Donne's best prose work is on his spiritual struggles during illness. He also wrote sermons that number to around 160.

➤ Character writing: a type of essay

The seventeenth century initiated another type of essay writing known as character writing. The character writers could trace their influence to Theophrastus, Seneca and other classical dramatists and amongst the immediate predecessors to Bacon. Amongst those who practiced character essay writing was Thomas Dekker, the author of *The Bellman of London* and *A Strange Horse Race* which is full of vivid character portrayals. Joseph Hall, another character essay writer wrote *The Good Magistrate* and *Virtues and Vices* – a presentation of satirical characters. Next we can mention Thomas Overbury's *Characters* which is full of well portrayed characters. He usually packs the characters to some trade or occupation thus creating a sense of contact with such characters. Earle, the author of *Microcosmography* is superior to both Hall and Overbury as a character writer as his style is more confident and vigorous. Another metaphysical George Herbert wrote *A Priest in the Temple* or *A Country Parson* which is actually a short treatise in thirty seven chapters. Each of the characters delineates a phase of the parson's life, thus giving reality to the character. The aim this work had been to preach of saintly and pious life. Thomas Fuller's *Holy War* and *Profane States* sees him mixing his character sketches with interesting stories. He also imparts personal touch to his essays. Character writings thus cover variety of aspects.

➤ Religious Prose

The age also saw religious controversies. It is thus but natural that prose works that dealt with religious subjects would abound. Some of the religious prose works of the time are: Sir John Tyndale remembered most famously for the *Translation of the Bible* and *the Book of Common Prayer*. This translation formed the basis for *Authorized Bible* (1611). It is written in traditional prose. His style is simple and direct. The reason was simple: Tyndale wanted the Bible to read by the commonest of the common. Latimer wrote *Sermon on the Ploughers*. There were other sermon writers who wrote in simple and direct manner. At the beginning of the 17th Century, sermon rose to the level of literary importance. Apart from Donne, mention of James Ussher (1581-1656) and Joseph Hall as sermon writers can be made. Ussher a protestant wrote in easy argumentative style. For a long time, his *Chronologia Sacra* was considered to be the standard work on Biblical Chronology. Hall, on the other hand was the Bishop of Exeter had written a series of satires called *Virgidemiarum* (1597) that made him run into trouble with the church. A London preacher at that time wielded considerable power.

1.6 The Contribution of the Age to Prose

Much of eighteenth-century prose is taken up by topical journalistic issues-as indeed is the prose of any other age. However, in the eighteenth century we come across, for the first-time in the history of English literature, a really huge mass of pamphlets, journals, booklets, and magazines. The whole activity of life of the eighteenth century is embodied in the works of literary critics, economists, "letter-writers," essayists, politicians, public speakers, divines, philosophers, historians, scientists,

biographers, and public projectors. Moreover, a thing of particular importance is the introduction of two new prose genres in this century. The novel and the periodical paper are the two gifts of the century to English literature, and some of the best prose of the age is to be found in its novels and periodical essays. Summing up the importance of the century are these words of a critic: "The eighteenth century by itself had created the novel and practically created the literary history; it had put the essay into general circulation; it had hit off various forms and abundant supply of lighter verse; it had added largely to philosophy and literature. Above all, it had shaped the form of English prose-of-all-work, the one thing that remained to be done at its opening. When an age has done so much, it seems somewhat illiberal to reproach it with not doing more." Even Matthew Arnold had to call the eighteenth century "our excellent and indispensable eighteenth century."

The essay, satire, and dialogue (in philosophy and religion) thrived in the age, and the English novel was truly begun as a serious art form. Literacy in the early 18th century passed into the working classes, as well as the middle and upper classes. Furthermore, literacy was not confined to men, though rates of female literacy are very difficult to establish. For those who were literate, circulating libraries in England began in the Augustan period. Libraries were open to all, but they were mainly associated with female patronage and novel reading.

Check Your Progress

1. Explain the contribution of prose writings to the 18th century.

1.7 Prose Romance

Another remarkable development of the time was prose romances. They anticipated novel which came into being during the eighteenth century. The prose romances of this period mostly consisted of tales of adventure as well as of romance, dealing with contemporary life and events of the past, the life at the court and city life. It was by turns humorous and didactic, realistic and again fanciful. In short, it represented the first rough drafts of the English novel. The prose romances of varied forms and shapes were written by many writers. George Gascoigne wrote the *Adventures of Master E.J.* that gave a lively sketch of English country house life. John Lyly is considered to be the pioneer of the English novel, the first stylist in prose, and the most popular writer of the age as already mentioned in our discussion earlier. It kind of foretells the rise of the novel of manners. It moves away from the fanciful idealism of medieval romance and suggests an interest in contemporary life. Can we ever avoid mentioning Sir Philip Sidney's *Arcadia* (1590) that upholds the restless spirit of adventure of the age? Robert Greene is remembered for his prose romances *Pandosta*, *Mamitia* and *Menaphone*. His romances are in moral tone and what is interesting is that he sketched very well defined women characters.

1.8 Translators

It is well augmented that this discussion on the prose of the age is ended with the topic: translators. No doubt the age showed a zeal for learning and this is prominently apparent when we look at the body of translation work done during the period. Phaer translated Virgil (1558) while Plutarch's *Lives* was translated by North (1579). Senecan plays had been translated by 1581 but Machiavelli's *The Prince* had not been translated before 1640. Castiglione's *The Cautyer* was translated by Hoby in 1561. There were needless to say many more that only endorses the presence of a vibrant prose culture at that time.

1.9 Summary

One of the outstanding achievements of eighteenth-century Spanish culture was the rehabilitation of prose as a valid, expressive medium for literary composition. For many years mainstream literary criticism, which tended to privilege the poetry and drama of the Golden Age, interpreted the widespread use of prose in the eighteenth century as a failing. Presentday literary scholarship has reversed that judgment, considering the use of prose in essays, novels, memoirs, polemical writings, satires, and works of scholarship as a major accomplishment.

1.10 Key Terms

- **Allegory:** A story that uses extended symbolism in order to communicate meanings, generally moral or abstract ideas, beyond the literal meaning of events, environments, and characters.
 - **Chronotope:** The configuration of time and space in language and narrative discourse.
 - **Cliché:** A figure of speech that has been so overused that it has lost much of its original force and is perceived in negative terms.
 - **Conceit (also, Farfetched trope):** A figure of speech that seems too strange, complex, awkward, or extreme to be effective, and tends to call attention to itself, often in a negative way.
 - **Dialogism:** The use in narrative of different perspectives or viewpoints, whose interaction or contradiction is important to the story's interpretation. Dialogue: Representation of verbal or speech interactions between characters, often accompanied by dialogue or speech tags.
-

1.11 Review Questions

1. Discuss the evolution of prose.
2. Elucidate the prose of Renaissance period.
3. Discuss the contribution of Francis Bacon towards the evolution of prose.
4. How is Prose romance different from other forms of prose? Explain.
5. Explain the three varieties of prose writings of the age.

1.12 References

- Boas, F.S. *University Drama in the Tudor Age*. London: Oxford University Press, 1914.
- — (ed). *Five Pre-Shakespearean Classics*. London: Oxford University Press, 1970.
- Bradbrook, M. C. *The Growth and Structure of Elizabethan Comedy*. London: Chatto and Windus, 1961.
- Compton-Rickett, Authur. *A History of English Literature: From Earliest Times to 1916*. New Delhi: Universal Book, 1991.
- Happé, Peter. *English Drama Before Shakespeare*. London and New York: Longman, 1999.
- Leech, Clifford, T. W. Craik and et al. *The Revel's History of Drama in English, Vol II, 1500-1576*. London: Routledge, 1980.

UNIT 2: JOSEPH ADDISON'S WORKS

STRUCTURE

- 2.1 Objectives
- 2.2 Introduction
- 2.3 The Eighteenth-Century Periodical Essay
- 2.4 The Beginnings of the Periodical Essay
- 2.5 The Periodical Essay and the Eighteenth-Century Social life
- 2.6 Pamphlet writing
- 2.7 Joseph Addison
- 2.8 Contribution of Joseph Addison to Literature
- 2.9 Summary
- 2.10 Key Terms
- 2.11 Review Questions
- 2.12 References

2.1 Objectives

The learners shall know the following:

- Forms of prose writing
- Pamphlet writing as a form of prose writing
- Joseph Addison as a prose writer
- Works of Joseph Addison

2.2 Introduction

It can also be argued that some of the more important and successful genres of earlier centuries began to lose their importance in the eighteenth century as culture advanced toward modernity. Among forms which ceased to meet the needs of writers, or for that matter their audiences, were the epic and certain categories of poetry and drama, which were replaced by new prose genres, more up-to-date and in tune with the demands of society. Thus the essay, the novel, and bourgeois drama responded to new social circumstances and the ever-increasing need of the public to see itself and its social world

reflected in culture. This required authors to convert contemporary reality into literature, taking models from the world around them rather than looking to writings and literary conventions from the past, and abandoning the traditional imitation of the universal to concentrate on the particular. Being challenged to produce an effect upon the reader or spectator, authors felt obliged to write in prose, setting aside the artifice of poetic meter. Modern Spanish theatre gradually abandoned the use of verse, and one of the achievements of Leandro Fernández de Moratín (1760–1828) was to create a prose that was genuinely poetic, which other writers would only gradually adopt.

2.3 The Eighteenth-Century Periodical Essay

In the eighteenth century British periodical literature underwent significant developments in terms of form, content, and audience. Several factors contributed to these changes. Prior to 1700 the English popular press was in its infancy. The first British newspaper, *The Oxford Gazette*, was introduced in 1645. Two years later the Licensing Act of 1647 established government control of the press by granting the *Gazette* a strictly enforced monopoly on printed news. As a result, other late seventeenth-century periodicals, including *The Observer* (1681) and *The Athenian Gazette* (1691), either supplemented the news with varied content, such as political commentary, reviews, and literary works, or provided specialized material targeting a specific readership. During this time, printing press technology was improving. Newer presses were so simple to use that individuals could produce printed material themselves. British society was in transition as well. The burgeoning commercial class created an audience with the means, education, and leisure time to engage in reading. When the Licensing Act expired in 1694, publications sprang up, not just in London, but all across England and its colonies.

Joseph Addison and Richard Steele are generally regarded as the most significant figures in the development of the eighteenth-century periodical. Together they produced three publications: *The Tatler* (1709-11), *The Spectator* (1711-12), and *The Guardian* (1713). In addition, Addison published *The Free-Holder* (1715-16), and Steele, who had been the editor of *The London Gazette* (the former *Oxford Gazette*) from 1707 to 1710, produced a number of other periodicals, including *The Englishman* (1713-14), *Town-Talk* (1715-16), and *The Plebeian* (1719). The three periodicals Addison and Steele produced together were great successes; none ceased publication because of poor sales or other financial reasons, but by the choice of their editors. Beginning in the eighteenth century and continuing to the present day, there has been debate among critics and scholars over the contributions of Addison and Steele to their joint enterprises. In 1712, Addison wrote his most famous work, *Cato, a Tragedy*. Based on the last days of Marcus Porcius Cato Uticensis, it deals with conflicts such as individual liberty versus government tyranny, Republicanism versus Monarchism, logic versus emotion, and Cato's personal struggle to retain his beliefs in the face of death. It has a prologue written by Alexander Pope and an epilogue by Samuel Garth.

Addison's character has been described as kind and magnanimous, albeit somewhat cool and unimpassioned, with a tendency for convivial excess. His appealing manners and conversation

contributed to his general popularity. He often put his friends under obligations for substantial favours, but he showed great forbearance toward his few enemies. His essays are noted for their clarity and elegant style, as well as their cheerful and respectful humour.

Periodicals in the eighteenth century included social and moral commentary, and literary and dramatic criticism, as well as short literary works. They also saw the advent of serialized stories, which Charles Dickens, among others, would later perfect. One of the most important outgrowths of the eighteenth-century periodical, however, was the topical, or periodical, essay. Although novelist Daniel Defoe made some contributions to its evolution with his *Review of the Affairs of France* (1704-13), Addison and Steele are credited with bringing the periodical essay to maturity. Appealing to an educated audience, the periodical essay as developed by Addison and Steele was not scholarly, but casual in tone, concise, and adaptable to a number of subjects, including daily life, ethics, religion, science, economics, and social and political issues. Another innovation brought about by the periodical was the publication of letters to the editor, which permitted an unprecedented degree of interaction between author and audience. Initially, correspondence to periodicals was presented in a limited, question-and-answer form of exchange. As used by Steele, letters to the editor brought new points of view into the periodical and created a sense of intimacy with the reader. The feature evolved into a forum for readers to express themselves, engage in a discussion on an important event or question, conduct a political debate, or ask advice on a personal situation. Steele even introduced an advice to the lovelorn column to *The Tatler* and *The Spectator*. Addison and Steele and other editors of the eighteenth century saw their publications as performing an important social function and viewed themselves as moral instructors and arbiters of taste. In part these moralizing and didactic purposes were accomplished through the creation of an editorial voice or persona, such as Isaac Bickerstaff in *The Tatler*, Nestor Ironside in *The Guardian*, and, most importantly, Mr. Spectator in *The Spectator*. Through witty, sometimes satirical observations of the contemporary scene, these fictional stand-ins for the editors attempted to castigate vice and promote virtue. They taught lessons to encourage certain behaviors in their readers, especially self-discipline. Morals were a primary concern, especially for men in business. Women, too, formed a part of the readership of periodicals, and they were instructed in what was expected of them, what kind of ideals they should aspire to, and what limits should be on their concerns and interests.

The impact of periodicals was both immediate and ongoing. Throughout the eighteenth century and beyond there were many imitators of Addison and Steele's publications. These successors, which arose not just in England, but in countries throughout Europe and in the United States as well, modeled their style, content, and editorial policies on those of *The Tatler*, *The Spectator*, and *The Guardian*. Some imitators, such as *The Female Spectator* (1744), were targeted specifically at women. Addison and Steele's periodicals achieved a broader influence when they were translated and reprinted in collected editions for use throughout the century. The epistolary exchanges, short fiction, and serialized stories included in the periodicals had an important influence on the development of the novel. In addition, celebrated figures from Benjamin Franklin and Jean-Jacques Rousseau to Mark Twain have acknowledged the impact of the eighteenth-century periodical, particularly *The Spectator*, on their development as writers and thinkers.

2.4 The Beginnings of the Periodical Essay

The periodical essay was a new literary form that emerged during the early part of the eighteenth century. Periodical essays typically appeared in affordable publications that came out regularly, usually two or three times a week, and were only one or two pages in length. Unlike other publications of the time that consisted of a medley of information and news, essay periodicals were comprised of a single essay on a specific topic or theme, usually having to do with the conduct or manners. They were often narrated by a persona or a group of personas, commonly referred to as a “club.” (DeMaria 529)

For the most part, readers of the periodical essay were the educated middle class individuals who held learning in high esteem but were not scholars or intellectuals. Women were a growing part of this audience and periodical editors often tried to appeal to them in their publications. (Shevelov 27-29)

The Tatler (1709-1711) and *The Spectator* (1711-1712) were the most successful and influential single-essay periodicals of the eighteenth century but there are other periodicals that helped shape this literary genre. While the periodical essay emerged during the eighteenth century and reached its peak in publications like *The Tatler* and *The Spectator*, its roots can be traced back to the late seventeenth century. An important forerunner to the *Spectator* is John Dunton’s *Athenian Mercury*, which played a key role in the development of the periodical essay. (DeMaria 529-530)

The *Athenian Mercury* began publication in 1691 with the purpose of ‘resolving weekly all the most nice and curious questions propos’d by the ingenious.’ It did not publish essays. Instead it followed a question and answer or “advice column” format and is one of the first periodicals to solicit questions from its audience. Readers submitted questions anonymously and their candid inquiries were answered by a collection of “experts” known as the Athenian Society or simply the “Athenians.” (Graham 19) Dunton hinted that the Athenian Society was made up of a group of learned individuals, but in reality the society only consisted of three people who were not necessarily “authorities.” Their identities remained a secret, however, and this is one of the first instances of a periodical using a fictional social group or club to answer questions or narrate. (Hunter 13-15). Originally known as *A Weekly Review of the Affairs of France; Purg’d from the Errors and Partiality of Newswriters and Petty Statesmen of All sides*, the *Review* began publication in 1704 as an eight page weekly. The title, length and frequency of the periodical changed in subsequent issues until it eventually became a triweekly periodical entitled *The Review*. (Defoe, Second xvii-xviii)

Most issues of *The Review* consisted of a single essay, usually covering a political topic, which was followed by questions-and-answers section called the *Mercure Scandal: or Advice from the Scandal Club*, translated out of French. Defoe eventually replaced the translated out of French with *A Weekly History of Nonsense, Impertinency, Vice and Debauchery*. (DeMaria 531) In this section, a fictional group known as the “Scandal Club” answered readers’ questions on a variety of subjects including

drinking, gambling, love and the treatment of women. The advice column component of *The Review* was so popular among readers that Defoe began publishing a twenty-eight page monthly supplement devoted entirely to readers' questions. By May 1705 Defoe dropped the Advice from the Scandal Club from *The Review* and began publishing the questions-and-answers separately in a publication entitled *The Little Review*. (Graham 48-49). With their advice column elements, the *Advice from the Scandal Club* and *The Little Review* were obvious imitators of the *Athenian Mercury*. However, the questions and answers in Defoe's periodicals were longer and mostly written as letters and this type of prose writing would eventually evolve into the single essay format of *The Tatler* and *The Spectator*. (Graham 50) Like other periodicals of the time, the *Advice from the Scandal Club* and *The Little Review* addressed questions of behavior and conduct but Defoe's tone was more satirical and he would often mock the stuffiness of the *Athenian Mercury* in his essays. Defoe's periodicals were also less mannerly and he often placed ads for products like remedies for venereal disease within their pages. (DeMaria 532).

The Tatler was a single-sheet paper that came out three times a week and in the beginning, consisted of short paragraphs on topics related to domestic, foreign and financial events, literature, theater and gossip. Each topic fell under the heading of a specific place, such as a coffee house, where that discussion was most likely to take place. (Mackie 15) Isaac Bickerstaff, the sixty-something fictional editor, narrated *The Tatler* and his thoughts on miscellaneous subjects were included under the heading "From my own Apartment." As *The Tatler* progressed, these popular entries began taking up more and more space until the first issue consisting of a single, "From my own Apartment" essay appeared on July 30, 1709. (DeMaria 534) In an attempt to appeal to his female audience, Steele introduced the character Jenny Distaff, Isaac Bickerstaff's half sister, and she narrated some of the essays later in the periodical's run. (Italia 37).

The last issue of *The Tatler* appeared in January 1711 and by the following March, Steele launched a new periodical, *The Spectator*, with Joseph Addison. *The Spectator* was published daily and consisted of a single essay on a topic usually having to do with conduct or public behavior and contained no political news. *The Spectator* was narrated by the fictional persona, Mr. Spectator, with some help from the six members Spectator Club.

Check Your Progress

1. Trace out the beginning of periodical essays.

2.5 The Periodical Essay and the Eighteenth-Century Social life

Life in and around eighteenth-century London provided much material for criticism and satirization; one great value of the literary periodicals is the full picture of the times that they give. The essayists concentrated on social conditions and customs in the city, which had a population at the time of about 600,000, and on the (usually) petty vices and idiosyncrasies of urban individuals.

In the eighteenth century, there was still considerable difficulty in travel and communication for those who lived in the country, so the periodicals had for most of their “material” and audience the ladies and gentlemen of the metropolis. The daily life of these people was “sedentary and artificial to a degree hardly credible to modern readers.” They seemed to have little to do besides dressing themselves and attending various amusements of the city; their interest in fashion and fashionable manners was excessive. The fascination of the upper classes with ornament—in speech, manners, and dress—was subject to increasing ridicule by the advocates of sense and moderation, and with good reason. Both men and women used a great amount of cosmetics, and were perfumed and powdered to the hilt. Dress of both sexes was characterized by frills and bright colors. The elaborate headpieces and enormous hats of the women paralleled the excesses in men’s dress. This extravagance in style carried through all the dress of both sexes; the cost of clothing and accessories was high, and many of the gallants owed their tailors more than they could pay.

Other favorite objects for satire and ridicule were the amusements, often in doubtful taste that Londoners were fond of, such as animal-baiting, cock-fights—“the eighteenth century loved such shows and cared very little for the cruelty involved”—boxing and wrestling matches and various ‘rough sports’ at fairs. Gambling, on cards, horses, lotteries, cock fights, etc., was a vice to which all classes were partial. Card playing in particular was universally popular and was indulged in by many ladies and gentlemen almost to the exclusion of other interests (like work). The more serious vices—duelling, sexual immorality, and drinking—were not ignored by the periodical writers; the aim of the essayists was to correct these vices and to raise moral standards.

2.6 Pamphlet writing

Another form of prose that is pamphlet writings also abounded in the era. With the printing press and the Universities providing an ambience of some amount of free expression on various topics, pamphlet writing can be seen as a natural outcome. It was thought that pamphlet writing was not exactly the work to be indulged in by a gentleman scholar, so when Henry Howard, Earl of Northampton, got involved in the prose controversy in the 1580, he was of course an exception. It was a general belief that writers who did not seek remuneration for their work wrote in prestigious genres. Print for a long time continued to be stigmatized and was not seen as respectable. A gentleman did not wish to make his writing public or common. But by 1580s, this disrepute associated with

printing was losing its base and it was prestige of different kind to get printed. A little later in the age, Milton was writing some very powerful pamphlets on topics such as divorce, religion etc. Some of the pamphleteers of the time are Thomas Nash, Robert Greene and Thomas Lodge who wrote on varied topics.

2.7 Joseph Addison

Addison was born in Milston, Wiltshire, but soon after his birth his father, Lancelot Addison, was appointed Dean of Lichfield and the Addison family moved into the cathedral close. He was educated at Charterhouse School, where he first met Richard Steele, and at The Queen's College, Oxford. He excelled in classics, being specially noted for his Latin verse, and became a Fellow of Magdalen College. In 1693, he addressed a poem to John Dryden, and his first major work, a book of the lives of English poets, was published in 1694. His translation of Virgil's Georgics was published the same year. Dryden, Lord Somers and Charles Montagu, 1st Earl of Halifax, took an interest in Addison's work and obtained for him a pension of £300 to enable him to travel to Europe with a view to diplomatic employment, all the time writing and studying politics. While in Switzerland in 1702, he heard of the death of William III, an event which lost him his pension, as his influential contacts, Halifax and Somers, had lost their employment with the Crown.

2.8 Contribution of Joseph Addison to Literature

It is as an essayist that Addison is remembered today. He began writing essays quite casually. In April 1709, his childhood friend Richard Steele started the *Tatler*. Addison contributed 42 essays to the *Tatler*, while Steele wrote 188. Regarding Addison's help, Steele remarked, "when I had once called him in, I could not subsist without dependence on him". The *Tatler* was discontinued on 2 January 1711. *The Spectator* began publication on 1 March of that year, and it continued – being issued daily, and achieving great popularity – until 6 December 1712. It exercised an influence over the reading public of the time, and Addison soon became the leading partner in it, contributing 274 essays out of a total of 635; Steele wrote 236. Addison also assisted Steele with *The Guardian*, which began in 1713. Addison is the originator of the quote, "Reading is to the mind what exercise is to the body". The quote can be found in Issue 147 of the *Tatler*.

The breezy, conversational style of the essays later prompted Bishop Richard Hurd to reprove Addison for what he called an "Addisonian Termination", or preposition stranding, a grammatical construction that ends a sentence with a preposition. Alexander Pope in his 1735 *Epistle to Dr Arbuthnot* made Addison an object of derision, naming him "Atticus", and comparing him to an adder, "willing to wound, and yet afraid to strike".

He wrote an essay entitled *Dialogues on Medals* which was translated into French by eighteenth-century priest and journalist Simon-Jérôme Bourlet de Vauxcelles (1733–1802). His essay "Adventures of a Shilling" (1710) is a brief, early example of an it-narrative or object narrative, a

genre that would become more common later in the century. He also left an incomplete work, *Of the Christian Religion*.

2.9 Summary

Joseph Addison (1 May 1672 – 17 May 1719) was an English essayist, poet, playwright, and politician. He was the eldest son of Lancelot Addison. His name is usually remembered alongside that of his long-standing friend Richard Steele, with whom he founded *The Spectator* magazine. His simple prose style marked the end of the mannerisms and conventional classical images of the 17th century.

2.10 Key Terms

- **Epiphany:** A sudden and life-changing moment of illumination that provides a new understanding of the world to the characters.
- **Event:** A change of state occurring in the storyworld, including actions undertaken by characters and anything that happens to a character or its environment.
- **Exposition:** Initial stage in the evolution of a plot where the setting and the characters are introduced.
- **External narrator or narratee:** A narrator or narratee who is a figure of discourse but not an existent of the storyworld.
- **Genre:** Conventional grouping of texts (or other semiotic representations) based on certain shared features.

2.11 Review Questions

1. What is periodical essay? Discuss.
2. How are periodical essays important in 18th century? Elucidate.
3. Who is Joseph Addison? Explain his contribution to literature.
4. What are the important works written by Joseph Addison during his age?
5. Discuss the social life of 18th century.

2.12 References

- Leech, Clifford, T. W. Craik and et al. *The Revel's History of Drama in English, Vol II, 1500-1576*. London: Routledge, 1980.
- McIlwraith, A. K. (ed). *Five Elizabethan Tragedies*. London: Oxford University Press, 1959.
- Rees, B. R. 'English Seneca: A Preamble.' *Greece & Rome*, Second Series, Vol. 16, No. 2 (October, 1969), pp. 119-133.
- Salinger, L. G. 'The Social Setting.' Boris Ford (ed), *The Age of Shakespeare*, Vol II, Hammondsworth, England: Penguin, 1955.
- Watson, Sara Ruth. 'Gorboduc and the Theory of Tyrannicide'. *The Modern Language Review*, Vol. 34, No. 3 (July, 1939), pp. 355-366.
- Winston, Jessica. 'Seneca in Early Elizabethan England.' *Renaissance Quarterly*, Vol. 59, No. 1(Spring 2006), pp. 29-58

UNIT 3: ADDISON & THE SPECTATOR PAPERS

STRUCTURE

- 3.1 Objectives
- 3.2 Introduction
- 3.3 The Political Background of 1710-11
- 3.4 The Coffee House Culture
- 3.5 The Spectator in General
- 3.6 Summary
- 3.7 Key Terms
- 3.8 Review Questions
- 3.9 References

3.1 Objectives

The learners shall know the following:

- Details about Joseph Addison
- More of his contributions to literature
- Beginning of Spectator papers
- The historical context about the text

3.2 Introduction

Addison returned to England at the end of 1703. For more than a year he remained without employment, but the Battle of Blenheim in 1704 gave him a fresh opportunity of distinguishing himself. The government, more specifically Lord Treasurer Godolphin, commissioned Addison to write a commemorative poem, and he produced *The Campaign*, which gave such satisfaction that he was forthwith appointed a Commissioner of Appeals in Halifax's government. His next literary venture was an account of his travels in Italy, which was followed by an opera libretto titled *Rosamund*. In 1705, with the Whigs in political power, Addison was made Under-Secretary of State and accompanied Halifax on a mission to Hanover. Addison's biographer states: "In the field of his foreign responsibilities Addison's views were those of a good Whig. He had always believed that England's power depended upon her wealth, her wealth upon her commerce, and her commerce upon the freedom of the seas and the checking of the power of France and Spain."

From 1708 to 1709 he was MP for the rotten borough of Lostwithiel. Addison was shortly afterwards appointed secretary to the new Lord Lieutenant of Ireland, Lord Wharton, and Keeper of the Records of that country. Under the influence of Wharton, he was Member of Parliament in the Irish House of Commons for Cavan Borough from 1709 until 1713. From 1710, he represented Malmesbury, in his home county of Wiltshire, holding the seat until his death.

He encountered Jonathan Swift in Ireland and remained there for a year. Subsequently, he helped found the Kitcat Club and renewed his association with Richard Steele. In 1709 Steele began to bring out *The Tatler*, to which Addison became almost immediately a contributor: thereafter he (with Steele) started *The Spectator*, the first number of which appeared on 1 March 1711. This paper, which at first appeared daily, was kept up (with a break of about a year and a half when *The Guardian* took its place) until 20 December 1714. His last undertaking was *The Freeholder*, a political paper, 1715–16.

Steele's ceasing work on *The Tatler* may have been influenced in part by his recognition that another writer was bringing to perfection the form which he (Steele) had brought to popularity. Joseph Addison, although he did not originate the form and method of his medium, explored to the fullest the possibilities which Steele had suggested.

When Addison contributed to *The Tatler*, the two friends found that their veins of humor ran parallel. A month after the paper ceased publication, "Addison and Steele met at a club and laid the keel for a fresh paper: non-political, that it might live, daily, that it might pay." The paper was to concentrate on reforming the morals and manners of society, "to enliven morality with wit," to keep, if possible from becoming embroiled in government controversies. The new paper must "look on, but must be neutral and discreet, merely a spectator—and so it was called."

The character of the Spectator, as outlined in the first number, was designed to attract the readers of the now defunct *Tatler*; he was faintly reminiscent of the sage Mr. Bickerstaff, but was even more mysterious, a man who never spoke, but who poked his head into all the talkative parts of the town. Although Steele wrote only slightly fewer papers for the new periodical than his friend (240 to Addison's 274), the "spirit of the spectator" is Addison's; it is Addison's character that the Spectator assumes—that of a scholar, well-versed in classical literature, a curious though timid student of human nature, a sensitive observer of all that goes on around him. He describes himself and the Spectator:

I had not been long at the university, before I distinguished myself by a most profound silence; for during the space of eight years...I scarce uttered the quantity of an hundred words; and indeed do not remember that I ever spoke three sentences together in my whole life...Thus I live in the world rather as a Spectator of mankind than as one of the species; by which means I have made myself a speculative statesman, soldier, merchant, and artisan, without ever meddling with any practical part in life.

Steele must assume this character when he writes, and it is harder to distinguish between their works in *The Spectator* than in *The Tatler*, except for the careful phrasing of Addison which marks all of his essays.

Steele and Addison provide a natural contrast to one another, both in their personalities and in their work. Both men were interested in reforming the manners and morals of the eighteenth century, but Steele wrote more from “outer” experience of the faults, foibles, and weaknesses he was satirizing in human beings, while Addison wrote from “inner” experience, drawing on his habit of thought and introspection. His tone is calmer than Steele’s, though he is less warm and sympathetic. His prose is more balanced and symmetrical, easier to follow, though perhaps less “natural”. His essays attempt a conscious perfection of style that Steele may not have had time for.

3.3 The Political Background of 1710-11

In politics, the year 1710 had been a notable one, and eventful both for Addison and Steele. The position maybe briefly surveyed. When the year opened the Whigs were in power, and the war with France was proceeding, and within measurable distance of complete success. In that year King Louis, anticipating Marlborough’s presence with his army in Paris itself made fresh overtures for peace. But Britain, on her part also, was slackening and indisposed for the final firmness needful for the reaping of her triumph. Many causes were at work. In September, 1709, Malplaquet had been fought, a triumph for Marlborough and the allies, yet at so great cost in blood that Britain was sickened with war, and the Tory opposition began to pronounce for peace.

Had only the fruits of the Revolution of 1688 been secure, and the country free from fears of a Stuart invasion and Jacobite rising, peace might have been Britain’s proper policy. But Scotland had not yet settled down to accept the very unpopular Union of the Parliaments, and in 1710, a landing of the Pretender had actually been planned in France, to take place in the month of August at Stonehaven. Within Queen Anne’s household, likewise, the influence of the Whigs and Marlborough and the War part was on the wane, and changes were in prospect.

Marlborough’s duchess, Keeper of the Privy Purse, and chief possessor of Queen Anne’s ear, had overdone the hectoring of her mistress, and was being ousted from favour by Mrs. Masham, the friend of Harley, leader of the Tories. Most potent political factor, however, and chief influence against the Whigs, probably was the political blunder of the impeachment of Dr. Sacheverel, a London clergyman, for the high Tory sermon he had preached on Nov. 5, 1709, against the Revolution and the War, Low Churchmen, Dissenters, and Toleration, glancing also at the chief minister, Godolphin, under his nickname of Volpone.

The trial before the House of Lords had been concluded, and sentence upon Sacheverel pronounced at Westminster Hall only on March 20, 1710. Queen Anne favored Sacheverel’s high-church and anti-toleration views, although his condemnation of the Revolution was virtual condemnation of her own possession of the throne, and she regarded the prosecuting Whig ministry with corresponding disfavor. So in September, 1710, her palace clique, with Harley behind them, had persuaded her, in the midst of the anti-Whig feeling, to dissolve Parliament and hold a General Election.

This was fatal to the party of Addison and Steele, although Addison's great personal popularity easily secured his return as member for Malmesbury. The Whig ministry fell; with their fall, Addison of course lost his Irish Secretaryship, and Steele as unnecessarily forfeited his post of Gazetteer, because in his political ardour he could not keep clear of party politics in *The Tatler*. By this time, however, Addison, though beaten and stripped as a party politician, was in circumstances far removed from the poor author in the fourth storey lodging whom Godolphin had employed in 1704 to write *The Campaign*. He could now afford to take his ease, and let his talk flow from his pen. In the very year of his political fall, he purchased the estate of Bilton in Warwickshire for no less a sum than then thousand pounds.

It was in these circumstances, on 1st March, 1711, that the enterprise of Steele brought forth *The Spectator* to fill the place left vacant by the premature decease of *The Tatler*—the politics being now however tabooed. No connection between *The Tatler* and *The Spectator* was declared, but the public were not long in doubt. As Nahum Tate, the poet Laureate, wittily put it, people soon perceived that the sun had only set to rise again.

The attempt to keep abreast of all the interests of the town in each issue was abandoned; one topic only was selected for the day's lucubration, or speculation, as *The Spectators* now chose to call it. To that form indeed the later *Tatlers* had been rapidly gravitating. Neither was the new paper in any sense a record of news, as *The Tatler* had professed to be: it was concerned with comment and criticism alone. *The Spectator*, in fact, was a paper made up of a clever leading article or entertaining essay, followed by a few advertisements.

3.4 The Coffee House Culture

The chief outlets for the periodicals and the soil in which the ideas introduced in the essays took root were the coffee houses, the intellectual and social centers of the eighteenth century. Coffee had been brought into England about the middle of the preceding century and by the early 1700's had become an institution. Coffee houses were the chief gathering places for men of letters and were the natural centers for the dissemination of ideas and information. Each coffee house had its own clientele, and discussion was on topics of interest and import to the particular trade or social group that "belonged" there.

In the coffee houses circles were formed to mull over the matters of the day; the opinions of the coffee houses became the criteria for pronouncing judgment on ideas and events of the times. The give and take of conversation was an important feature of London life and influenced it in many ways. Men's ideas were moulded and refined through contact with others' thoughts, and conversation became clearer and more polished. The coffee houses had a direct effect on the literary style of the periodicals; because the papers were circulated and discussed in these centers, the writing needed to be as clear and colloquial as conversation. The coffee houses were an admirable part of eighteenth century life,

but other facets of the times were less pleasant. The unpleasant aspects of the century—the prevalence of violence and crime in the poorly lighted London streets, the cruel punishments of criminals, the quackery of “medical” men, the extreme poverty of the lower classes—were not reflected to as great a degree as upper class morals and manners, but it was in this atmosphere that the periodical essay developed and did more, perhaps, than any other institution toward improving social conditions.

As the age cried out to be educated, to be instructed in sane living, the periodicals answered with their sage and reasoned advice. The best, most readable of these “advisors of the age” were Richard Steele’s *The Tatler*, Joseph Addison’s *The Spectator*, Samuel Johnson’s *The Rambler*, and Oliver Goldsmith’s collection of essays, *The Citizen of the World*.

Check Your Progress

1. What were the coffee houses meant for? Explain.

3.5 The Spectator in General

A fresh literary fiction was put forth that the new paper would be the pronouncement of a club of representative men, corresponding roughly to the special clubs from which the *Tatler* was supposed to draw his information and ideas. But still less than in the case of *The Tatler* was this scheme carried out, even in name. The scheme supplied themes for two opening papers, and then *The Spectator*’s editorial committee was practically forgotten. In actual reality, Steele and Addison were responsible for the supply of the daily essay, and no others provided any of the first fifty numbers.

The Spectator, laid upon the London breakfast tables at a penny, was single folio sheet, double-columned on either side, four columns in all, not unlike in size to a single sheet of any one of the existing weeklies like *The Athenaeum* or *Nature*. As indicating the public which the original *Spectators* had in view, we may note that the Latin motto at the head of each number is left untranslated. Advertisements of eight books fill up the first number, the advertisements in later issues becoming more varied and embracing the theaters and other entertainments and sales of things in general. The famous publisher and bookseller, Jacob Tonson, advertises the ninth edition of *Paradise Lost* five times in the first fifty issues, “to be sold at Shakespeare’s Head.”

In the public eye the new enterprise was another of Steele’s, and even Swift, who was likely to be more than ordinarily well informed, assigned to Addison only a subordinate part. We know that Steele’s confession with regard to *The Tatler* was even more applicable to its successor. “Addison is ‘The Spectator,’” says Macaulay. The number of papers contributed by each editor was not very

different, viz., 274 by Addison as against 240 by Steele. Yet general consent goes with Macaulay's pronouncement. The outstanding papers are, as a rule, Addison's, the attractive literary grace is Addison's, Addison's special humor is regarded as distinctive of *The Spectator*, the whole change in form from *The Tatler* is a recognition of Addison's special strength.

The success of *The Spectator* was great, as many as fourteen thousand being the estimate of the sale of one number without any suggestion that the sale of that number was abnormal. Considering how few were readers at the beginning of the eighteenth century, Macaulay is of opinion that *The Spectator* had as great a popularity as "the most successful works of Walter Scott and Dickens in our own time." So great was its hold that in August, 1712, when Government imposed a halfpenny stamp on journals, and many "came down," *The Spectator* raised its price to twopence, and continued to flourish.

Check Your Progress

1. Trace the essay *Spectator* in details.

3.6 Summary

The Glorious Revolution of 1688 witnessed a victory of the town over the court, and the town having rejected the court's standards in manners and morals, was now struggling to find its own standards, to root itself in a social and ethical code. The town had defeated the court, and now the town had to be educated up to its new position. It was mainly to recover English society from "that desperate state of vice and folly" into which the age had fallen, which Addison and Steele to pool their talents in a task to refine the taste of their contemporaries and to widen their outlook, and to create a common ground for the meeting of the Puritan and the man of the world, mainly "to enliven morality with wit, and to temper wit with morality." Thus, aimed at the "advancement of the public weal", *The Spectator* stormed into popular favor on March 1, 1711.

3.7 Key Terms

- **Ideology:** An interconnected set of beliefs, ideas, values, and norms that structures the worldview of a person or group.
 - **Implied author:** The projection of the real author in the text, as can be inferred by the reader from the text itself.
 - **Implied reader:** The virtual reader to whom the implied author addresses its narrative, and whose thoughts and attitudes may differ from an actual reader.
 - **Individuation:** The ascription of mental, physical, or behavioural properties (characteristics) to a character.
 - **Prose:** Written or spoken language without metrical structure.
 - **Rhetoric:** The art of crafting effective or persuasive discourse.
-

3.8 Review Questions

1. Bring out for why Addison wrote the spectator papers.
 2. Discuss the political background of the text?
 3. How were the coffee houses presented in the essay? Explain.
 4. What social life is being discussed in the paper? Elucidate.
 5. When and where was the spectator written? What is the contribution of Addison towards literature?
-

3.9 References

- Brian Cowan, 'Reasonable Ecstasies: Shaftesbury and the Languages of Libertinism', *Journal of British Studies* (37:2, April 1998), p. 111-138.
- Edward A. Bloom and Lillian D. Bloom, *Joseph Addison's Sociable Animal: In the Marketplace, on the Hustings, in the Pulpit* (Providence: Brown Univ. Press, 1971).
- James Boswell, *London Journal 1762-1763*, ed. Gordon Turnbull (London: Penguin, 2010), p. 22, 23; Lawrence Klein, 'Addisonian Afterlives: Joseph Addison in Eighteenth-Century Culture', *Journal of Eighteenth-Century Studies* (35:1, 2012), p. 101-118; Philip Carter, 'James Boswell's Manliness' in Tim Hitchcock and Michèle Cohen (eds), *English Masculinities 1660-1800* (London: Longman, 1999), p. 111-130.
- Joseph Spence, *Observations, Anecdotes and Characters of Books and Men*, James M. Osborn (ed.), 2 vols. (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1966), 1:304; 1:77; 1:78; 1:62; 1:333; Joseph Addison,

The Works of Joseph Addison, ed. Greene, 6 vols., (New York: Derby & Jackson, 1859), 6:728.

- Nathan Drake, *Essays, Biographical, Critical and Historical* (1805), 3 vols. (London, 1805), 1:23–24; Brian Cowan, 'Periodical Literature', in Nicholas McDowell and Henry Power (eds.), *The Oxford Handbook of English Prose, 1640-1714* (Oxford: Oxford Univ. Press, forthcoming, c. 2022).
- Lawrence Klein, 'Joseph Addison's Whiggism', in David Womersley (ed.), 'Cultures of Whiggism': *New Essays on English Literature and Culture in the Long Eighteenth Century* (Newark: Univ. of Delaware Press, 2005).

UNIT 4: THE SPECTATOR PAPERS – AN ANALYSIS

STRUCTURE

- 4.1 Objectives
- 4.2 Introduction
- 4.3 The Form and Content of the Periodical Essay
- 4.4 The Spectator's Account of Himself: (Spectator. No. 1, March 1, 1711)
- 4.5 The Uses of The Spectator: Text (Spectator. No. 10, March 12, 1711)
- 4.6 Of the Spectator: (March 2, 1711)
- 4.7 Summary
- 4.8 Key Terms
- 4.9 Review Questions
- 4.10 References

4.1 Objectives

The learners shall know the following:

- About the Spectator Papers.
- The form and content of the periodical essay.
- The in – depth writing style of Addison.
- The analysis of the chapters and important incidents.

4.2 Introduction

Addison, in his own way, unveils the cultural and social picture of his age. We can arrive at a fairly convincing picture of the society of his age by piecing together the numerous hints and bits afforded by his periodical papers. And this picture is not only a great deal authentic; it is also vivid and pulsating with life. The *Spectator* papers have long been recognized as valuable human documents for the student of the social and cultural history of the Age of Queen Anne. They are good documentary records of the day—records supplemented by frequent comments. Both the country and town scenes are handled with equal authenticity and mastery. A.R. Humphrey says in this connection:

“Even more than The Tatler is The Spectator famous for the variety and vividness of its social panorama. The scope of London’s life, and something of the country’s, is mirrored—coffee house life with its debates, news-sheets, clubs of common interests (even the common interests of oddities) and indeed its whole routine... We observe street scenes, commercial houses (No. 69 creates a splendid pattern of Royal-exchange activity and the romance behind the process of trade), monied and trading interests (Nos. 21 and 108 recommend business), theatres with accounts of performers and performances and fun at the extravagances of the reigning Italian opera, current gossip, street-cries, Churches great and small, the ships and traffic of the Thames, fashions and fashionable affectations, and beyond the town, the country with its sports, superstitions, and the comedy of its old-fashioned social life.”

The Spectator covered everything necessary to a proper social education, from what kind of hats ladies should wear to how to appreciate Milton, indeed it presented a faithful and well composed portrait of the age. The vivid reflections of London and the country life not only serve as a feast of delight for the readers, but it also offers an unpretentious image of the eighteenth century English society.

4.3 The Form and Content of the Periodical Essay

The periodical essay of the eighteenth century invited men of the Age of Reason to pour into it their talent and thought; it was a form in which they could make their points briefly and effectively; it was flexible, and was eventually familiar enough to be well-received. The form itself reflected the common-sense practicality, restraint and moderation that the periodical writers were advocating. In one balanced, comparatively short piece of writing, a thought was developed-- in an easy, quiet and painless manner-- that could be driven home in later essays over a long period of time. If a writer had a pet idea or philosophy, he was given a medium for fixing it firmly in his reader's mind by repeating his thought at irregular intervals. The moral issues with which periodical writers dealt had a "cumulative" impact in being stressed in a number of papers; the periodical essay differed from a newspaper in that the newspaper was concerned with matters of the moment brought as soon as possible before the public, and the essay could proceed on a more leisurely course. Both media used the same format and had essentially the same audience-- the middle and upper middle classes. The periodical essay dealt with matters that were contemporary but not immediate--with manners and morals, with tendencies of the time rather than actual events.

The periodical essay took the long view, it dealt with the needs of men to improve themselves gradually; it may have seemed to center on trivial matters in comparison with the great import of current events, but its end, and therefore its method, was entirely different from that of the newspaper. The aim of the literary periodical of the eighteenth century was admittedly the analysis and criticism of the contemporary life--for a reformatory purpose; men needed to have an instruction and an example in order to know how to act, and that example was provided by the periodicals. In his first *Tatler*, Steele states blandly that his paper will serve those who are public-spirited enough to "neglect their own affairs and look into the actions of state," men who are "persons of strong zeal and weak intellect," and will instruct those politic persons "what to think." Addison, in his statement of purpose in *The Spectator*, No. 10, is even more explicit: "to the end that their virtue and discretion may not be short, transient intermittent starts of thought, I have resolved to refresh their memories from day to day, till I have recovered them out of that desperate state of vice and folly into which the age is fallen."

Addison was echoing the thoughts of a number of thinkers of his age; the beginnings of the eighteenth century saw a desire for reform in many areas of living, "for a purer and simpler morality, for gentler manners, for...dignified self-respect," a new civilization, in effect. The periodical writers were following a powerful tendency of the eighteenth century, "the reaction against the moral license of Restoration society which came with the rise of the middle class to prominence and affluence." The tendency toward moralization and satire may have been influenced too by disgust with its opposite force, the immense self-satisfaction of men of the time.

Englishmen in the early years of the century had ample reasons for being satisfied with their lot; England had emerged in these years as a victorious power, commerce was expanding, the middle class was wealthy and growing--the mainstay of an apparently stable society. When men of the Age of Reason looked back on the conflicts and controversies of the seventeenth century, their reliance on "good sense" and moderation seemed to be justified. Lord Shaftesbury, in his *Characteristicks of Men, Manners, Opinions, Times*, published in 1711, expressed the prevailing concept of "order" as the basis and end of human action:

The sum of philosophy is to learn, what is just
in society and beautiful in nature and the order
of the world.... The taste of beauty and the
relish of what is decent, just, and amiable, perfects the character of the
gentleman and the philosopher.

This glib and rather vague ideal-- self-perfection by the improvement of taste-- was rooted in the belief that the world was not becoming a better place for intelligent human beings; men had only to raise themselves by conscious efforts toward self-improvement. The periodical writers echoed, to some extent, the complacency of the times, the sense of security and calm, but also tried to correct the faults that were products of this complacency. Of their readers, they demanded sane, level-headed actions backed by the dictates of reason and common sense.

Eighteenth- century writers, and particularly the periodical essayists, showed the same concern for order, reason, and good sense in their writing. Reacting against the passion and complexity of the seventeenth- century metaphysical school, they strove for clearness, for correctness, and for a balanced style that would underline their rational persuasions. Their principal aim was to be understood-, and the lucidity and symmetry which their prose attained is a result of the conscious effort to fix a standard of clarity.

One chief contribution that the periodical writers made to English literature were the colloquial manner they adopted in order to appeal to a wider public; they required that a piece of prose or poetry be “interesting, agreeable, and above all comprehensible.” The periodical essay was designed to reach the always expanding and powerful middle classes, and to interest them in the forming of manners and morals, that would fit them for the new age.

The belief in the perfectibility of man and the clear, reasoned prose in which this belief was proclaimed were inspired by the effect of scientific discovery and research on the period. Newtonian science had induced men to accept the fact that the natural order was explainable, that man and nature operated under fixed laws, and that all human endeavor was equally ordered and subject to rules that, if they were not understood at the present time, would be grasped eventually. Thus, the best writing was that which strove for mathematical clearness and precision. Of course, writers could not succumb completely to such an idea, but the ‘scientific spirit’ did influence a literary genre that in its best examples is justifiably famous for its clear, balanced, familiar, and very reasonable prose.

4.4 The Spectator’s Account of Himself: (Spectator. No. 1, March 1, 1711)

Non fumum ex fulgore, sed ex fumo dare
lucem Cogitat, ut speciosa dehinc miracula promat.. — HORACE

He does not lavish at a blaze his fire, Sudden
to glare, and in a smoke expire; But rises
from a cloud of smoke to light,
And pours his specious miracles to sight — FRANCIS

I HAVE observed, that a reader seldom peruses a book with pleasure, till he knows whether the writer of it be a black [dark] or a fair man, of a mild or choleric disposition, married or a

bachelor, with other particulars of the like nature, that conduce very much to the right understanding of an author. To gratify this curiosity, which is so natural to a reader, I design this paper and my next as prefatory discourses to my following writings, and shall give some account in them of the several persons that are engaged in this work. As the chief trouble of compiling, digesting, and correcting will fall to my share, I must do myself the justice to open the work with my own history.

I was born to a small hereditary estate, which, according to the tradition of the village where it lies, was bounded by the same hedges and ditches in William the Conqueror's time that it is at present, and has been delivered down from father to son whole and entire, without the loss or acquisition of a single field or meadow, during the space of six hundred years. There runs a story in the family, that when my mother was gone with child of me about three months she dreamt that she was brought to bed of a judge whether this might proceed from a law-suit which was then depending in the family, or my father's being a justice of the peace, I cannot determine; for I am not so vain as to think it presaged any dignity that I should arrive at in my future life, though that was the interpretation which the neighbourhood put upon it.

The gravity of my behaviour at my very first appearance in the world, and all the time that I sucked, seemed to favour my mother's dream: for, as she has often told me, I threw away my rattle before I was two months old, and would not make use of my rattle till they had taken away the bells from it.

As for the rest of my infancy, there being nothing in it remarkable, I shall pass it over in silence. I find, that during my non-age, I had the reputation of a very sullen youth, but was always a favourite of my school-master, who used to say, that my parts were solid, and would wear well. I had not been long at the university, before I distinguished myself by a most profound silence; for during the space of eight years, excepting in the public exercises of the college, I scarce uttered the quantity of an hundred words; and indeed do not remember that I ever spoke three sentences together in my whole life. Whilst I was in this learned body, I applied myself with so much diligence to my studies, that there are very few celebrated books, either in the learned or modern tongues, which I am not acquainted with.

Upon the death of my father, I was resolved to travel into foreign countries, and therefore left the university with the character of an odd, unaccountable fellow, that had a great deal of learning, if I would but show it. An insatiable thirst after knowledge carried me into all the countries of Europe in which there was anything new or strange to be seen: nay, to such a degree was my curiosity raised, that having read the controversies of some great men concerning the antiquities of Egypt, I made a voyage to Grand Cairo, on purpose to take the measure of a pyramid; and as soon as I had set myself right in that particular, returned to my native country with great satisfaction.

I have passed my latter years in this city, where I am frequently seen in most public places, though there are not above half a dozen of my select friends that know me; of whom my next

paper shall give a more particular account. There is no place of general resort, wherein I do not often make my appearance; sometimes I am seen thrusting my head into a round of politicians at Will's, and listening with great attention to the narratives that are made in those little circular audiences. Sometimes I smoke a pipe at Child's, and whilst I seem attentive to nothing but the Postman [a newspaper], overhear the conversation of every table in the room. I appear on Sunday nights at St. James's Coffee-house, and sometimes join the little committee of politics in the inner room, as one who comes there to hear and improve. My face is likewise very well known at the Grecian, the Cocoa-Tree, and in the theatres both of Drury Lane and the haymarket. I have been taken for a merchant upon the Exchange for above these ten years, and sometimes pass for a Jew in the assembly of stock-jobbers at Jonathan's: in short, wherever I see a cluster of people, I always mix with them, though I never open my lips but in my own club.

Thus I live in the world rather as a Spectator of mankind than as one of the species; by which means I have made myself a speculative statesman, soldier, merchant, and artisan, without ever meddling with any practical part in life. I am very well versed in the theory of a husband or a father, and can discern the errors in the economy, business, and diversion of others, better than those who are engaged in them; as standers-by discover plots, which are apt to escape those who are in the game. I never espoused any part with violence, and am resolved to observe an exact neutrality between the Whigs and Tories, unless I shall be forced to declare myself by the hostilities of either side. In short I have acted in all the parts of my life as a looker-on, which is the character I intend to preserve in this paper.

I have given the reader just so much of my history and character, as to let him see I am not altogether unqualified for the business I have undertaken. As for other particulars in my life and adventures, I shall insert them in following papers, as I shall see occasion. In the mean time, when I consider how much I have seen, read, and heard, I begin to blame my own taciturnity; and since I have neither time nor inclination to communicate the fullness of my heart in speech, I am resolved to do it in writing, and to print myself out, if possible, before I die. I have been often told by my friends, that it is pity so many useful discoveries which I have made should be in the possession of a silentman. For this reason, therefore, I shall publish a sheet-full of thoughts every morning, for the benefit of my contemporaries; and if I can any way contribute to the diversion or improvement of the country in which I live, I shall leave it, when I am summoned out of it, with the secret satisfaction of thinking that I have not lived in vain.

There are three very material points which I have not spoken to in this paper; and which, for several important reasons, I must keep to myself, at least for some time: I mean an account of my name, my age, and my lodgings. I must confess, I would gratify my reader in anything that is reasonable; but as for these three particulars, though I am sensible they might tend very much to the embellishment of my paper, I cannot yet come to a resolution of communicating them to the public. They would indeed draw me out of that obscurity which I have enjoyed for many

years, and expose me in public places to several salutes and civilities, which have been always very disagreeable to me; for the greatest pain I can suffer is the being talked to, and being stared at. It is for this reason likewise, that I keep my complexion and dress as very great secrets; though it is not impossible, but I may make discoveries of both in the progress of the work I have undertaken. After having been thus particular upon myself, I shall in to-morrow's paper give an account of those gentlemen who are concerned with me in this work ; for, as I have before intimated, a plan of it is laid and concerted (as all other matters of importance are) in a club. However, as my friends have engaged me to stand in the front, those who have a mind to correspond with me, may direct their letters to the SPECTATOR, at Mr. Buckley's, in Little Britain. For I must further acquaint the reader, that though our club meets only on Tuesdays and Thursdays, we have appointed a Committee to sit every night, for the inspection of all such papers as may contribute to the advancement of the public weal.

➤ Summary of the paper

In the above paper Addison gives a brief character sketch of Mr. Spectator (the name assumed by himself and his fellow writers like Steele, Budgell and Tickell who also contributed to The Spectator. The following are the traits of Mr. Spectator's personality on which he throws light:

- a. He was born to a small family estate which dates back to the very ancient times.
- b. He is a very widely traveled gentleman.
- c. True to his name, he is a 'spectator' of humanity and is curious to study the manners and conditions of all its sections. This curiosity impels him to visit public resorts like coffee-houses, exchanges, even foreign countries.
- d. He is very reticent and reserved. Even while he was a child, he was tremendously sober and sedate. He hates "being talked to, and being stared at."
- e. His persistent observation of humanity has paid him rich dividends in so far as it has made him an adept at all trades. But he is just an arm-chair philosopher, not a man of action.
- f. He is the chief organizer of the "Spectator club" which meets twice a week. He will bring out a "sheet-full of thoughts" every morning for the pleasure and profit of his countrymen.

Addison begins the first paper of *The Spectator* with a subtle ironical remark. He says that a reader is justly curious about the character of the writer whose work he is studying. It is essential

to satisfy this curiosity of the reader about particulars such as the marital status, the temperament and the complexion of the writer, because such knowledge is of great value for the right understanding of an author. Keeping this point in view, Mr. Spectator will throw some light on his own character.

Mr. Spectator was born to a small estate which among his ancestors had changed hands from father to son without the least change in its area. Six months before his birth his mother dreamt that her child would become a judge. After his birth, as an infant, Mr. Spectator behaved in such a dignified and sober manner that his mother became certain of the truth of her dream. Unlike other children he hated noise-producing toys such as rattles and corals.

Then Mr. Spectator comes to his educational career at the school and the university. As a student he was a hard and intelligent worker and his school teacher had a high opinion of his talents. However, he remained reticent and reserved. Then he talks about his travels. After his father's death he left the university and embarked on a long spell of travelling. He visited all the countries of Europe and went as far as Egypt. There he took the exact measurement of a pyramid, which had been a very controversial issue.

After recapitulating his past biography, Mr. Spectator comes to the present and tells us something about his personal activities and aptitudes. We are told that he is very fond of mixing with all sorts of people so as to increase his knowledge about humanity. He is particularly happy to be at public places like markets, exchanges and coffee-houses because they provide him with ample opportunity to *see* and meet people belonging to all walks of life. His passion is to see, but not to *talk* to people.

Through his minute and painstaking observation of all kinds of people Mr. Spectator has become qualified in all the theoretical aspects of most professions and pursuits of life. However, he is not a man of action. Further, Mr. Spectator assures us of his political impartiality.

Thus Mr. Spectator builds up an impression of his being a well-read, well-travelled, widely aware and keenly observant man of speculation well-equipped for the job he has taken in hand. He has much to communicate, but he dislikes talking. Therefore, everyday from this day onwards Mr. Spectator would be publishing a sheet- full containing his thoughts which he is averse to communicating in speech. He will aim at the entertainment and edification of his countrymen, and the achievement of this aim will give him much satisfaction that he has done his duty.

Though Mr. Spectator has revealed much of himself in this paper hitherto, yet he does not want to reveal three important points concerning himself. They are:

- a. His name,
- b. Age, and
- c. Lodgings.

The disclosure of these particulars would have made for much embarrassment to him; because people would have greeted him everywhere and liked to have talked with him. Mr. Spectator wishes to remain obscure to avoid being talked to or stared at. In the end, Mr. Spectator points out that he will give an account of the members of the “Spectator Club” in the next paper. He invites the readers to write him letters if they like. The Club will examine all such papers as may tend to public welfare.

4.5 The Uses of The Spectator: Text (Spectator. No. 10, March 12, 1711)

Non aliter quam qui adverso vix flumine lembum
Remigiis subigit: si brachia forte remisit,
Atque ilium in praeceps prono rapit alveus amni.—VIRGIL.

So the boat's brawny crew the current stem,
And, slow advancing, struggle with the stream:
But if they slack their hands or cease to strive,
Then down the flood with headlong haste they drive— DRYDEN.

IT is with much satisfaction that I hear this great city inquiring day by day after these my papers, and receiving my morning lectures with a becoming seriousness and attention. My publisher tells me, that there are already three thousand of them distributed every day: so that if I allow twenty readers to every paper, which I look upon as a modest computation, I may reckon about threescore thousand disciples in London and Westminster, who I hope will take care to distinguish themselves from the thoughtless herd of their ignorant and unattentive brethren. Since I have raised to myself so great an audience, I shall spare no pains to make their instruction agreeable, and their diversion useful. For which reasons I shall endeavour to enliven morality with wit, and to temper wit with morality, that my readers may, if possible, both ways find their account in the speculation of the day. And to the end that their virtue and discretion may not be short, transient, intermitting starts of thought, I have resolved to refresh their memories from day to day, till I have recovered them out of that desperate state of vice and folly into which the age is fallen. The mind that lies fallow but a single day, sprouts up in follies that are only to be killed by a constant and assiduous culture. It was said of Socrates that he brought Philosophy down from heaven, to inhabit among men; and I shall be ambitious to have it said of me, that I have brought Philosophy out of closets and libraries, schools and colleges, to dwell in clubs and assemblies, at tea-tables and in coffee-houses.

I would therefore in a very particular manner recommend these my speculations to all well-regulated families that set apart an hour in every morning for tea and bread and butter; and would earnestly advise them for their good to order this paper to be punctually served up, and to be looked upon as a part of the tea equipage.

Sir Francis Bacon observes, that a well-written book, compared with its rivals and antagonists, is like Moses's serpent, that immediately swallowed up and devoured those of the Egyptians. I shall not be so vain as to think that, where the SPECTATOR appears, the other public prints will vanish; but shall leave it to my readers' consideration, whether it is not much better to be let into the knowledge of one's self, than to hear what passes in Muscovy or Poland; and to amuse ourselves with such writings as tend to the wearing out of ignorance, passion, and prejudice, than such as naturally conduce to inflame hatreds, and make enmities irreconcilable.

In the next place, I would recommend this paper to the daily perusal of those gentlemen whom I cannot but consider as my good brothers and allies, I mean the fraternity of Spectators, who live in the world without having anything to do in it; and either by the affluence of their fortunes, or laziness of their dispositions, have no other business with the rest of mankind, but to look upon them. Under this class of men are comprehended all contemplative tradesmen, titular physicians, fellows of the Royal Society, Templars that are not given to be contentious, and statesmen that are out of business; in short, every one that considers the world as a theatre, and desires to form a right judgment of those who are the actors on it.

There is another set of men that I must likewise lay a claim to, whom I have lately called the blanks of society, as being altogether unfurnished with ideas, till the business and conversation of the day has supplied them. I have often considered these poor souls with an eye of great commiseration, when I have heard them asking the first man they have met with, whether there was any news stirring? and by that means gathering together materials for thinking. These needy persons do not know what to talk of, till about twelve a clock in the morning; for by that time they are pretty good judges of the weather, know which way the wind sits, and whether the Dutch mail be come in. As they lie at the mercy of the first man they meet, and are grave or impertinent all the day long, according to the notions which they have imbibed in the morning, I would earnestly entreat them not to stir out of their chambers till they have read this paper, and do promise them that I will daily instil into them such sound and wholesome sentiments, as shall have a good effect on their conversation for the ensuing twelve hours.

But there are none to whom this paper will be more useful than to the female world. I have often thought there has not been sufficient pains taken in finding out proper employments and diversions for the fair ones. Their amusements seemed contrived for them, rather as they are women, than as they are reasonable creatures; and are more adapted to the sex than to the species. The toilet is their great scene of business, and the right adjusting of their hair the principal employment of their lives. The sorting of a suit of ribbons is reckoned a very good morning's work; and if they make an excursion to a mercer's or a toy-shop, so great a fatigue makes them unfit for anything else all the day after. Their more serious occupations are sewing and

embroidery, and their greatest drudgery, the preparation of jellies and sweet-meats. This, I say, is the state of ordinary women; though I know there are multitudes of those of a more elevated life and conversation, that move in an exalted sphere of knowledge and virtue, that join all the beauties of the mind to the ornaments of dress, and inspire a kind of awe and respect, as well as love, into their male beholders. I hope to increase the number of these by publishing this daily paper, which I shall always endeavour to make an innocent if not an improving entertainment, and by that means at least divert the minds of my female readers from greater trifles. At the same time, as I would fain give some finishing touches to those which are already the most beautiful pieces in human nature, I shall endeavour to point out all those imperfections that are the blemishes, as well as those virtues which are the embellishments, of the sex. In the meanwhile I hope these my gentle readers, who have so much time on their hands, will not grudge throwing away a quarter of an hour in a day on this paper, since they may do it without any hinderance to business.

I know several of my friends and well-wishers are in great pain for me lest I should not be able to keep up the spirit of a paper which I oblige myself to furnish every day: but to make them easy in this particular, I will promise them faithfully to give it over as soon as I grow dull. This I know will be matter of great raillery to the small wits ; who will frequently put me in mind of my promise, desire me to keep my word, assure me that it is high time to give over, with many other pleasantries of the like nature, which men of a little smart genius cannot forbear throwing out against their best friends, when they have such a handle given them of being witty. But let them remember that I do hereby enter my caveat against this piece of raillery.

4.6 Of the Spectator: (March 2, 1711)

--- Ast Alli sex

Et plures uno conclamant ore.-- Juv.

THE first of our Society is a Gentleman of Worcestershire, of antient Descent, a Baronet, his Name Sir ROGER DE COVERLY. His great Grandfather was Inventor of that famous Country-Dance which is call d after him. All who know that Shire are very well acquainted with the Parts and Merits of Sir ROGER. He is a Gentleman that is very singular in his Behaviour but his Singularities proceed from his good Sense, and are Contradictions to the Manners of the World, only as he thinks the World is in the wrong. However, this Humour creates him no Enemies, for he does nothing with Sourness or Obstinacy; and his being unconfined to Modes and Forms, makes him but the readier and more capable to please and oblige all who know him. When he is in town he lives in Soho Square. It is said, he keeps himself a Batchelour by reason he was crossed in Love by a perverse beautiful Widow of the next County to him. Before this Disappointment, Sir ROGER was what you call a fine Gentleman, had often supped with my Lord Rochester and Sir George Etherege fought a duel upon his first coming to Town, and kick'd Bully

Dawson in a publick Coffee-house for calling him Youngster. But being ill used by the above-mentioned Widow, he was very serious for a year and a half; and tho his Temper being naturally jovial, he at last got over it, he grew careless of himself and never dressed afterwards; he continues to wear a Coat and Doublet of the same Cut that were in Fashion at the Time of his Repulse, which, in his merry Humours, he tells us, has been in and out twelve times since he first wore it. Tis said Sir ROGER grew humble in his Desires after he had forgot this cruel Beauty, insomuch that it is reported he has frequently offended in Point of Chastity with Beggars and Gypsies: but this is look'd upon by his Friends rather as Matter of Raillery than Truth. He is now in his Fifty-sixth Year, cheerful, gay, and hearty, keeps a good House in both Town and Country; a great Lover of Mankind; but there is such a mirthful Cast in his Behaviour, that he is rather beloved than esteemed. His Tenants grow rich, his Servants look satisfied, all the young Women profess Love to him, and the young Men are glad of his Company: When he comes into a House he calls the Servants by their Names, and talks all the way Up Stairs to a Visit. I must not omit that Sir ROGER is a Justice of the Quorum; that he fills the chair at a Quarter-Session with great Abilities, and three Months ago, gained universal Applause by explaining a Passage in the Game-Act.

The Gentleman next in Esteem and Authority among us, is another Batchelour, who is a Member of the Inner Temple: a Man of great Probity, Wit, and Understanding; but he has chosen his Place of Residence rather to obey the Direction of an old humoursome Father, than in pursuit of his own Inclinations. He was placed there to study the Laws of the Land, and is the most learned of any of the House in those of the Stage. Aristotle and Longinus are much better understood by him than Littleton or Cooke. The Father sends up every Post Questions relating to Marriage-Articles, Leases, and Tenures, in the Neighbourhood; all which Questions he agrees with an Attorney to answer and take care of in the Lump. He is studying the Passions themselves, when he should be inquiring into the Debates among Men which arise from them. He knows the Argument of each of the Orations of Demosthenes and Tully, but not one Case in the Reports of our own Courts. No one ever took him for a Fool, but none, except his intimate Friends, know he has a great deal of Wit. This Turn makes him at once both disinterested and agreeable: As few of his Thoughts are drawn from Business, they are most of them fit for Conversation. His Taste of Books is a little too just for the Age he lives in; he has read all, but approves of very few. His Familiarity with the Customs, Manners, Actions, and Writings of the Ancients, makes him a very delicate Observer of what occurs to him in the present World. He is an excellent Critick, and the Time of the Play is his Hour of Business exactly at five he passes through New Inn., crosses through Russel Court; and takes a turn at Will's till the play begins; he has his shoes rubb'd and his Perriwig power'd at the Barber's as you go into the Rose. It is for the Good of the Audience when he is at a Play, for the Actors have an Ambition to please him.

The Person of next Consideration is Sir ANDREW FREEPORT, a Merchant of great Eminence in the City of London: A Person of indefatigable industry, strong Reason, and great Experience. his Notions of Trade are noble and generous, and (as every rich Man has usually some sly Way of Jestings, which would make no great Figure were he not a rich Man) he calls the Sea the British

Common. He is acquainted with Commerce in all its Parts, and will tell you that it is a stupid and barbarous Way to extend Dominion by Arms; for true Power is to be got by Arts and industry. He will often argue, that if this Part of our Trade were well cultivated, we should gain from one Nation ; and if another, from another. I have heard him prove that Diligence makes more lasting Acquisition than Valour, and that Sloth has ruin d more Nations than the Sword. He abounds in several frugal Maxims, amongst which the greatest Favourite is, A Penny saved is a Penny got. A General Trader of good Sense is pleasanter Company than a general Scholar ; and Sir ANDREW having a natural unaffected Eloquence, the Perspicuity of his Discourse gives the same Pleasure that Wit would in another Man. He has made his Fortunes himself; and says that England may be richer than other Kingdoms, by as plain Methods as he himself is richer than other Men; tho at the same Time I can say this of him, that there is not a Point in the Compass, but blows home a Ship in which he is an Owner.

Next to Sir ANDREW in the Club-room sits Captain SENTRY, a Gentleman of great Courage, good Understanding, hut Invincible Modesty. He is one of those that deserve very well, but are very awkward at putting their Talents within the Observation of such as should take notice of them. He was some Years a Captain, and behaved himself with great Gallantry in several Engagements, and at several Sieges; but having a small Estate of his own, and being next Heir to Sir ROGER, he has quitted a Way of Life in which no Man can rise suitably to his Merit, who is not something of a Courtier, as well as a Soldier. I have heard him often lament, that in a Profession where Merit is placed in so conspicuous a View, Impudence should get the better of Modesty. When he has talked to this Purpose, I never heard him make a sour Expression, but frankly confess that he left the World, because he was not fit for it. A strict Honesty and an even regular Behaviour, are in themselves Obstacles to him that must press through Crowds who endeavour at the same End with himself; the Favour of a Commandcr. He will, however, in this Way of Talk, excuse Generals, for not disposing according to Men s Desert, or enquiring into it : For, says he, that great Man who has a Mind to help me, has as many to break through to come at me, as I have to come at him : Therefore he will conclude, that the Man who would make a Figure, especially in a military Way, must get over all false Modesty, and assist his Patron against the Importunity of other Pretenders, by a proper Assurance in his own Vindication. He says it is a civil Cowardice to be backward in asserting what you ought to expect, as it is a military Fear to be slow in attacking when it is your Duty. With this Candour does the Gentleman speak of himself and others. The same Frankness runs through all his Conversation. The military Part of his Life has furnished him with many Adventures, in the Relation of which he is very agreeable to the Company; for he is never over-bearing, though accustomed to command Men in the utmost Degree below him ; nor ever too obsequious, from an Habit of obeying Men highly above him.

But that our Society may not appear a Set of Humourists unacquainted with the Gallantries and Pleasures of the Age, we have among us the gallant Will.. HONEYCOMB, a Gentleman who, according to his Years, should be in the Decline of his Life, but having ever been very careful of

his Person, and always had a very easy Fortune, Time has made but very little Impression, either by Wrinkles on his Forehead, or Traces in his Brain. His Person is well turned, and of a good Height. He is very ready at that sort of Discourse with which Men usually entertain Women. He has all his Life dressed very well, and remembers Habits as others do Men. He can smile when one speaks to him, and laughs easily. He knows the History of every Mode, and can inform you from which of the French King's Wench's our Wives and Daughters had this Manner of curling their hair, that Way of placing their Hoods; whose Frailty was covered by such a Sort of Petticoat, and whose Vanity to show her Foot made that Part of the Dress so short in such a Year. In a Word, all his Conversation and Knowledge has been in the female World: As other Men of his Age will take Notice to you what such a Minister said upon such and such an Occasion, he will tell you when the Duke of Monmouth danced at Court such a Woman was then smitten, another was taken with him at the Head of his Troop in the Park. In all these important Relations, he has ever about the same Time received a kind Glance, or a Blow of a Fan, from some celebrated Beauty, Mother of the present Lord such-a-one. If you speak of a young Commoner that said a lively thing in the House, he starts up, He has good Blood in his Veins, Tom Mirabell begot him, the Rogue cheated me in that Affair; that young Fellow's Mother used me more like a Dog than any Woman I ever made Advances to. This Way of Talking of his, very much enlivens the Conversation among us of a more sedate Turn; and I find there is not one of the Company but myself, who rarely speak at all, but speaks of him as of that Sort of Man, who is usually called a well-bred fine Gentleman. To conclude his Character, where Women are not concerned, he is an honest worthy Man.

I cannot tell whether I am to account him whom I am next to speak of, as one of our Company; for he visits us but seldom, but when he does, it adds to every Man else a new Enjoyment of himself. He is a Clergyman, a very philosophick Man, of general Learning, great Sanctity of Life, and the most exact good Breeding. He has the Misfortune to be of a very weak Constitution, and consequently cannot accept of such Cares and Business as Preferments in his Function would Oblige him to: He is therefore among Divines what a Chamber-Counsellor is among Lawyers. The Probity of his Mind, and the Integrity of his Life, create him Followers, as being eloquent or loud advances others. He seldom introduces the Subject he speaks upon; but we are so far gone in Years, that he observes when he is among us, an Earnestness to have him fall on some divine Topick, which he always treats with much Authority, as one who has no Interests in this World, as one who is hastening to the Object of all his Wishes, and conceives Hope from his Decays and Infirmities.

➤ Summary of the Paper:

In this paper Steele gives an account of the six gentlemen who, along with Mr. Spectator, are members of the Spectator Club. These gentlemen are:

- i. Sir Roger de Coverley: He is a good natured, jolly country baronet who was once very particular about elegant dress and sophisticated manners. However, after his unsuccessful love-affair with a widow, he has given up attending to his dress and polite pursuits.
- ii. A member of the Inner Temple: His name is not mentioned. Though his profession is law, he does not much attend to legal studies. Rather, he gives full attention to theatre and literature.
- iii. Sir Andrew Freeport: He is a prosperous merchant and is a champion of free trade and commerce.
- iv. Captain Sentry: He is an ex-serviceman. He is modest and self-critical.
- v. Will Honeycomb: He is an old man-about-town and a lady-killer. He is also a recognized authority on fashions and fads of the town.
- vi. An unnamed clergyman: He enjoys but poor health. He is a great authority on divinity.

The Spectator (Steele) in this paper gives thumbnail sketches of the six members of the Club. The first of them is a well-known country baronet. He has some oddities and does not follow the rest of the world in some particulars. He is fifty six but still a bachelor. It is said that as a young man he fell in love with an obstinate widow who broke his heart. From then onwards he gave up his fashionable pursuits and elegant manner of dressing up and is sticking ever since to very old fashioned clothes. He is loved by everyone and is very free with his servants. Sometimes he acts as a justice of the quorum. He is naturally jovial and a lover of all mankind.

The next member of the Club is also a bachelor. He is a member of the Inner Temple. His profession is law, but his interests lie elsewhere. He is fond of literature and drama. He is honest, intelligent and industrious. His father wants to see him as a lawyer. In literature he is a very discriminating critic and allows merit to only a few writers. He is perfectly conversant with ancient life and manners and assesses modern life and manners by comparing them with old. He is a regular play-goer, so much so that it seems as if seeing plays were his real “business”. All the actors do their best to please him and cannot give slipshod performance when he is around because they know that no flaw will go unnoticed by him.

The third is Sir Andrew Freeport—an eminent merchant of London. He is very well-experienced, industrious and has strong common sense about him. He goes on repeating incessantly what he calls a “joke”. According to him England can dominate other countries by trade, not by war. He is all support for expansion of trade and industry. He is very prosperous and the trade-ships owned by him (singly or in partnership with others) ply in all directions of the world.

The fourth is Captain Sentry who is very courageous but very modest. Indeed it is on account of his modesty that he was obliged to renounce his career in the army. In the army a man cannot make headway unless he tries to catch the attention of his superiors by exhibition of his merits. But being very modest, Captain Sentry could not do so and he saw less deserving men being promoted in preference to him. Hence he resigned captainship. However, he is not bitter at his misfortune and gives all the blame to himself for his modesty. Financially, he is not ill disposed. He has a small estate of his own and is the next heir to Sir Roger.

The fifth is an old swashbuckler, an authority on women and sartorial fashions. In spite of his age he looks young and healthy. He remembers the history and genesis of every new and old fashion. He has many love affairs to his credit. His jolly and unreserved conversation enlivens the atmosphere of the Club. Towards the end Will Honeycomb, in a Spectator Paper, is shown as a married to a country belle and thereafter leading a subdued and reformed life.

Lastly, there is an unnamed clergyman who is but a casual visitor to the Club. He is very religious, learned and philosophic. But because his health is very poor, he does not act in professional capacity. However, he does advise other clergymen regarding matters connected with their work. Whenever he observes that the other members of the Club are in a mood to listen to him talk about divine matters, he obliges them duly.

Steele in his brief portrayal of the six characters in this paper may also have been indebted to the seventeenth century character writers—notably Hall, Stephen, Earle and Overbury. These writers chose some real characters from life and word-painted them briefly. Mostly they concentrated on representative rather than individual traits of their “modes”. On the whole, their performance falls below excellence. Their characters are generally wooden and lack flexibility and liveliness. It is so probably because they modeled their performance rather too slavishly on the precedent set by Theophrastus, the first Greek character-writer. On the other hand, on account of his disregard of slavish imitation and his observation, experience, insight, humanity and uncanny mastery of detail, Steele’s characters are very life-like. They are not gowns or walking sticks, but men, alive and kicking. Thus, in spite of his indebtedness to some predecessors, Steele’s achievement is in a good measure his own.

Check Your Progress

1. Discuss the main elements in the spectator papers.

4.7 Summary

The Glorious Revolution of 1688 witnessed a victory of the town over the court, and the town having rejected the court's standards in manners and morals, was now struggling to find its own standards, to root itself in a social and ethical code. The town had defeated the court, and now the town had to be educated up to its new position. It was mainly to recover English society from "that desperate state of vice and folly" into which the age had fallen, which Addison and Steele to pool their talents in a task to refine the taste of their contemporaries and to widen their outlook, and to create a common ground for the meeting of the Puritan and the man of the world, mainly "to enliven morality with wit, and to temper wit with morality." Thus, aimed at the "advancement of the public weal", *The Spectator* stormed into popular favor on March 1, 1711.

Although *The Spectator* performed the role of a moral educator, however for a modern reader its interest and function remains manifold. It is at once the monument of a noble friendship between Steele and Addison; certain *Spectator* papers, namely the *Coverley Essays* are considered to be the precursor of the great eighteenth century novel. It gave way to a new kind of prose writing which was both serious and entertaining, but above all, it presented a faithful mirror of the Augustan Age in England viewed with an aloof and dispassionate observation. These periodicals had a dual aim to amuse and to improve. It was a through a deft management of the second of these, while not neglecting the first, that Steele and Addison achieved their great success.

In its aim "to enliven morality with wit, and to temper wit with morality", *The Spectator* adopted a fictional method of presentation through a 'Spectator Club, whose imaginary members represented the author's own ideas about society. These members included representatives of commerce, the army, the town (respectively, Sir Andrew Freeport, Captain Sentry, and Will Honeycomb), and of the country gentry (Sir Roger de Coverley). They represented considerable classes or sections of the community and were men of strongly marked opinions, prejudices, and foibles, all of which provided enough matter of comment to the spectator himself, who delivers

the judgement of reason and commonsense.

The main object of *The Spectator* papers was to mirror the Augustan Age in England and to present that life in such a graceful, humorous and elegant style, that the people may themselves know their own defects and remedy them in the light of suggestion dropped from the author of the paper. It was thus an organ of social criticism, literary discussion, and moral edification. Addison's ambition was to be known as amoral philosopher who, "brought philosophy out of closets and libraries, schools and colleges to dwell in clubs and assemblies, at tea-tables and coffee-houses." His belief was that it was better "to amuse ourselves with such writings as tend to the wearing out of ignorance, passion and prejudice than such as naturally conducts to inflame hatred and make enmities irreconcilable."

In short, through *The Spectator* Addison not only gave expression to his sense of morality and wisdom but also reflected the age, bringing before us the true picture of the eighteenth century life, with its gay fopperies, ball dances, club-sittings, cock hunting, intense party-spirit, and its literary discussions. In the words of Macaulay, "In *The Spectator* and *The Tatler*, we once again see the inevitable eighteenth century with the Churches thronging with the daily worshippers, the beaux gathering in the coffee-houses, the gentry going to the drawing room, the ladies thronging to the toy-shops, the chairman jostling in the streets..."

Although from the time of the Restoration, London had been more and more the center of English cultural life, England was still essentially an agricultural country, and while the peasantry played little part in the literary life of the time, the squirearchy was continuously present in the imagination of those who wrote and thought about England. And in *The Coverley Papers* the concern to bridge the gap between the town and the country is very much evident. Here one finds the full length portrayal of a character, Sir Roger de Coverley, who has endeared himself to successive generations of readers, in addition to a number of other more sketchy but still convincing delineations of English types.

Sir Roger de Coverley, first introduced by Steele in the second issue of *The Spectator*, is an old fashioned country gentleman, but as his character was developed by Addison in subsequent numbers, he becomes an eccentric and lovable Squire, whose foibles are held up for the sympathetic amusement of a Whig audience. He eventually becomes a symbol of an ideal feudal paternalism. Sir Roger is seen at home, ruling his household and the village with a genial if somewhat autocratic sway; then in London he is seen taking the cicerone who pilots him round Westminster Abbey for a monument of wit and learning, and so on and so forth.

Amiable and urbane, laughing at his fellowmen but laughing without scorn, rather as one who understands and sympathizes—the spectator points out their foibles and cajoles as much as argues them out of their propensities. In *The Spectator*, popular superstitions, popular whims, caprices, idiosyncracies, social manners, pursuits, fashions in their turn find themselves within the hold of the spectator to be examined, dandled, caressed, rebuked, sentenced, but all with a mild hand and genial humor.

In fact many of Addison's papers were directed against the coarser vices of the time, against gambling, drinking, swearing, indecency of conversation, cruelty, practical joking, dueling etc, while some of *The Spectator* papers attack the triviality of life, special follies, and foibles of dress, manners, or of thought; others, the lack of order and comfort in life of the community.

To sum up, Addison's picture of the society of Queen Anne's period is fairly authentic and fairly comprehensive. He was one of the pioneers who set the tone of realism. Summing up the achievement of Addison we can justly say with Compton- Rickett:

"Small wonder that, at a time when Richardson was quietly performing his work as a compositor, and Fielding indulging in schoolboy exploits; when Smollet and Goldsmith and Sterne were yet unborn, a public should be found for his picture of contemporary life and manners."

4.8 Key Terms

Readership: Despite a modest daily circulation of approximately 3,000 copies, *The Spectator* was widely read; Joseph Addison estimated that each number was read by thousands of Londoners, about a tenth of the capital's population at the time.

Coffee-houses: A **coffeehouse**, **coffee shop**, or **café** is an establishment that primarily serves various types of coffee, espresso, latte, and cappuccino. Some coffeehouses may serve cold drinks, such as iced coffee and iced tea, as well as other non-caffeinated beverages. A coffeehouse may also serve food, such as light snacks, sandwiches, muffins, fruit, or pastries. In continental Europe, some cafés also serve alcoholic beverages. Coffeehouses range from owner-operated small businesses to large multinational corporations. Some coffeehouse chains operate on a franchise business model, with numerous branches across various countries around the world.

Tea-tables: THE TEA-TABLE is an object, an event and a concept. In the first iteration, the tea-table is a piece of furniture, a table on which the tea equipage is placed. The term also refers, in a second iteration, to the social gathering at which tea is consumed.

4.9 Review Questions

1. Discuss Steele's prose style in *The Spectator* Club.
2. How many essays were published in *The Spectator*?
3. Can you provide a character sketch of the Templar in *The Spectator*?
4. Analyze Addison's self-assessment in the essay "The Spectator."
5. Which three classes of people make up the audience for *The Spectator*, according to Joseph Addison?

4.10 References

- The standard edition of *The Spectator* is Donald F. Bond's edition in five volumes, published in 1965. Selections can be found in *The Norton Anthology of English Literature*.
- Ross, Angus (ed.) *Selections from The Tatler and The Spectator* (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1982) ISBN 0-14-043-130-6. Edited with an introduction and notes. Out of print.
- Felsenstein, Frank, ed. (1999). *English Trader, Indian Maid: Representing Gender, Race, and Slavery in the New World*. Johns Hopkins UP.
- Addison, Joseph (1837). *The Works of Joseph Addison*, Vol. I, p.31. Harper & Brothers.
- Bowers, Terence. "Universalizing Sociability: The *Spectator*, Civic Enfranchisement, and the Rule(s) of the Public Sphere." In Newman, Donald J., ed. (2005). *The Spectator: Emerging Discourses*, pp. 155-56. University of Delaware Press.
- Ralph Ketcham, *James Madison, A Biography*, 1971, pp. 39-48

BLOCK-2: CHARLES LAMB

UNIT 5: Introduction to Essays

UNIT 6: Charles Lamb and His Age

UNIT 7: My Relations – An Analysis

UNIT 8: My Relations and Other Essays

UNIT 5: INTRODUCTION TO ESSAYS

STRUCTURE

- 5.1 Objectives
- 5.2 Introduction
- 5.3 Definition
- 5.4 History of Essays
- 5.5 Forms and styles
- 5.6 Employment
- 5.7 Non – Literary Types
- 5.8 Summary
- 5.9 Key Terms
- 5.10 Review Questions
- 5.11 References

5.1 Objectives

The learners shall know the following:

- Origin and development of essays.
- The forms and styles of writing essays.
- The other types of essays.
- Essays as a literary genere.

5.2 Introduction

An **essay** is, generally, a piece of writing that gives the author's own argument, but the definition is vague, overlapping with those of a letter, a paper, an article, a pamphlet, and a short story. Essays have been sub-classified as formal and informal: formal essays are characterized by "serious purpose, dignity, logical organization, length," whereas the informal essay is characterized by "the personal element (self-revelation, individual tastes and experiences, confidential manner), humor, graceful style, rambling structure, unconventionality or novelty of theme," etc.

Essays are commonly used as literary criticism, political manifestos, learned arguments, observations of daily life, recollections, and reflections of the author. Almost all modern essays are written in prose, but works in verse have been dubbed essays (e.g., Alexander Pope's *An Essay on Criticism* and *An Essay on Man*). While brevity usually defines an essay, voluminous

works like John Locke's *An Essay Concerning Human Understanding* and Thomas Malthus's *An Essay on the Principle of Population* are counterexamples.

In some countries (e.g., the United States and Canada), essays have become a major part of formal education.

Secondary students are taught structured essay formats to improve their writing skills; admission essays are often used by universities in selecting applicants, and in the humanities and social sciences essays are often used as a way of assessing the performance of students during final exams.

The concept of an "essay" has been extended to other media beyond writing. A film essay is a movie that often incorporates documentary filmmaking styles and focuses more on the evolution of a theme or idea. A photographic essay covers a topic with a linked series of photographs that may have accompanying text or captions.

5.3 Definition

The word *essay* derives from the French infinitive *essayer*, "to try" or "to attempt". In English *essay* first meant "a trial" or "an attempt", and this is still an alternative meaning. The Frenchman Michel de Montaigne (1533–1592) was the first author to describe his work as essays; he used the term to characterize these as "attempts" to put his thoughts into writing.

Subsequently, *essay* has been defined in a variety of ways. One definition is a "prose composition with a focused subject of discussion" or a "long, systematic discourse". It is difficult to define the genre into which essays fall. Aldous Huxley, a leading essayist, gives guidance on the subject.

He notes that "the essay is a literary device for saying almost everything about almost anything", and adds that "by tradition, almost by definition, the essay is a short piece". Furthermore, Huxley argues that "essays belong to a literary species whose extreme variability can be studied most effectively within a three-poled frame of reference". These three poles (or worlds in which the essay may exist) are:

- The personal and the autobiographical: The essayists that feel most comfortable in this pole "write fragments of reflective autobiography and look at the world through the keyhole of anecdote and description".
- The objective, the factual, and the concrete particular: The essayists that write from this pole "do not speak directly of themselves, but turn their attention outward to some literary or scientific or political theme. Their art consists of setting forth, passing judgment upon, and drawing general conclusions from the relevant data".
- The abstract-universal: In this pole "we find those essayists who do their work in the world of high abstractions", who are never personal and who seldom mention the particular facts of experience.

Huxley adds that the most satisfying essays "...make the best not of one, not of two, but of all the three worlds in which it is possible for the essay to exist."

5.4 History of Essays

Montaigne

Montaigne's "attempts" grew out of his commonplacing. Inspired in particular by the works of Plutarch, a translation of whose *Œuvres Morales (Moral works)* into French had just been published by Jacques Amyot, Montaigne began to compose his essays in 1572; the first edition, entitled *Essais*, was published in two volumes in 1580. For the rest of his life, he continued revising previously published essays and composing new ones. A third volume was published posthumously; together, their over 100 examples are widely regarded as the predecessor of the modern essay.

Europe

While Montaigne's philosophy was admired and copied in France, none of his most immediate disciples tried to write essays. But Montaigne, who liked to fancy that his family (the Eyquem line) was of English extraction, had spoken of the English people as his "cousins", and he was early read in England, notably by Francis Bacon.

Bacon's essays, published in book form in 1597 (only five years after the death of Montaigne, containing the first ten of his essays), 1612, and 1625, were the first works in English that described themselves as *essays*. Ben Jonson first used the word *essayist* in 1609, according to the *Oxford English Dictionary*. Other English essayists included Sir William Cornwallis, who published essays in 1600 and 1617 that were popular at the time,^[7] Robert Burton (1577–1641) and Sir Thomas Browne (1605–1682). In Italy, Baldassare Castiglione wrote about courtly manners in his essay *Il Cortigiano*. In the 17th century, the Spanish Jesuit Baltasar Gracián wrote about the theme of wisdom.

In England, during the Age of Enlightenment, essays were a favored tool of polemicists who aimed at convincing readers of their position; they also featured heavily in the rise of periodical literature, as seen in the works of Joseph Addison, Richard Steele and Samuel Johnson. Addison and Steele used the journal *Tatler* (founded in 1709 by Steele) and its successors as storehouses of their work, and they became the most celebrated eighteenth-century essayists in England. Johnson's essays appear during the 1750s in various similar publications. As a result of the focus on journals, the term also acquired a meaning synonymous with "article", although the content may not be the strict definition. On the other hand, Locke's *An Essay Concerning Human Understanding* is not an essay at all, or cluster of essays, in the technical sense, but still it refers to the experimental and tentative nature of the inquiry which the philosopher was undertaking.

In the 18th and 19th centuries, Edmund Burke and Samuel Taylor Coleridge wrote essays for the general public. The early 19th century, in particular, saw a proliferation of great essayists

in English—William Hazlitt, Charles Lamb, Leigh Hunt and Thomas De Quincey all penned numerous essays on diverse subjects, reviving the earlier graceful style. Thomas Carlyle's essays were highly influential, and one of his readers, Ralph Waldo Emerson, became a prominent essayist himself. Later in the century, Robert Louis Stevenson also raised the form's literary level.

In the 20th century, a number of essayists, such as T.S. Eliot, tried to explain the new movements in art and culture by using essays. Virginia Woolf, Edmund Wilson, and Charles du Bos wrote literary criticism essays.

In France, several writers produced longer works with the title of *essai* that were not true examples of the form. However, by the mid-19th century, the *Causeries du lundi*, newspaper columns by the critic Sainte-Beuve, are literary essays in the original sense. Other French writers followed suit, including Théophile Gautier, Anatole France, Jules Lemaître and Émile Faguet.

Japan

As with the novel, essays existed in Japan several centuries before they developed in Europe with a genre of essays known as *zuihitsu*—loosely connected essays and fragmented ideas. *Zuihitsu* have existed since almost the beginnings of Japanese literature. Many of the most noted early works of Japanese literature are in this genre. Notable examples include *The Pillow Book* (c. 1000), by court lady Sei Shōnagon, and *Tsurezuregusa* (1330), by particularly renowned Japanese Buddhist monk Yoshida Kenkō. Kenkō described his short writings similarly to Montaigne, referring to them as "nonsensical thoughts" written in "idle hours". Another noteworthy difference from Europe is that women have traditionally written in Japan, though the more formal, Chinese-influenced writings of male writers were more prized at the time.

China

The **eight-legged essay** (Chinese: 八股文; pinyin: *bāgǔwén*; lit. 'eight bone text') was a style of essay in imperial examinations during the Ming and Qing dynasties in China. The eight-legged essay was needed for those test takers in these civil service tests to show their merits for government service, often focusing on Confucian thought and knowledge of the Four Books and Five Classics, in relation to governmental ideals. Test takers could not write in innovative or creative ways, but needed to conform to the standards of the eight-legged essay. Various skills were examined, including the ability to write coherently and to display basic logic. In certain times, the candidates were expected to spontaneously compose poetry upon a set theme, whose value was also sometimes questioned, or eliminated as part of the test material. This was a major argument in favor of the eight-legged essay, arguing that it were better to eliminate creative art in favor of prosaic literacy. In the history of Chinese literature, the eight-legged essay is often said to have caused China's "cultural stagnation and economic backwardness" in the 19th century.

5.5 Forms and Styles

This section describes the different forms and styles of essay writing. These are used by an array of authors, including university students and professional essayists.

Cause and effect

The defining features of a "cause and effect" essay are causal chains that connect from a cause to an effect, careful language, and chronological or emphatic order. A writer using this rhetorical method must consider the subject, determine the purpose, consider the audience, think critically about different causes or consequences, consider a thesis statement, arrange the parts, consider the language, and decide on a conclusion.

Classification and division

Classification is the categorization of objects into a larger whole while division is the breaking of a larger whole into smaller parts.

Compare and contrast

Compare and contrast essays are characterized by a basis for comparison, points of comparison, and analogies. It is grouped by the object (chunking) or by point (sequential). The comparison highlights the similarities between two or more similar objects while contrasting highlights the differences between two or more objects. When writing a compare/contrast essay, writers need to determine their purpose, consider their audience, consider the basis and points of comparison, consider their thesis statement, arrange and develop the comparison, and reach a conclusion. Compare and contrast is arranged emphatically.

Expository

An expository essay is used to inform, describe or explain a topic, using important facts to teach the reader about a topic. Mostly written in third-person, using "it", "he", "she", "they," the expository essay uses formal language to discuss someone or something. Examples of expository essays are: a medical or biological condition, social or technological process, life or character of a famous person. The writing of an expository essay often consists of the following steps: organizing thoughts (brainstorming), researching a topic, developing a thesis statement, writing the introduction, writing the body of essay, and writing the conclusion. Expository essays are often assigned as a part of SAT and other standardized testing or as homework for high school and college students.

Descriptive

Descriptive writing is characterized by sensory details, which appeal to the physical senses, and details that appeal to a reader's emotional, physical, or intellectual sensibilities. Determining the purpose, considering the audience, creating a dominant impression, using descriptive language, and organizing the description are the rhetorical choices to consider when using a description. A description is usually arranged spatially but can also be chronological or

emphatic. The focus of a description is the scene. Description uses tools such as denotative language, connotative language, figurative language, metaphor, and simile to arrive at a dominant impression. Lyric essays are an important form of descriptive essays.

Dialectic

In the dialectic form of the essay, which is commonly used in philosophy, the writer makes a thesis and argument, then objects to their own argument (with a counterargument), but then counters the counterargument with a final and novel argument. This form benefits from presenting a broader perspective while countering a possible flaw that some may present. This type is sometimes called an ethics paper.

Exemplification

An exemplification essay is characterized by a generalization and relevant, representative, and believable examples including anecdotes. Writers need to consider their subject, determine their purpose, consider their audience, decide on specific examples, and arrange all the parts together when writing an exemplification essay.

Familiar

An essayist writes a *familiar essay* if speaking to a single reader, writing about both themselves, and about particular subjects. Anne Fadiman notes that "the genre's heyday was the early nineteenth century," and that its greatest exponent was Charles Lamb. She also suggests that while critical essays have more brain than the heart, and personal essays have more heart than brain, familiar essays have equal measures of both.

History

A history essay sometimes referred to as a thesis essay describes an argument or claim about one or more historical events and supports that claim with evidence, arguments, and references. The text makes it clear to the reader why the argument or claim is as such.

Narrative

A narrative uses tools such as flashbacks, flash-forwards, and transitions that often build to a climax. The focus of a narrative is the plot. When creating a narrative, authors must determine their purpose, consider their audience, establish their point of view, use dialogue, and organize the narrative. A narrative is usually arranged chronologically.

Argumentative

An argumentative essay is a critical piece of writing, aimed at presenting objective analysis of the subject matter, narrowed down to a single topic. The main idea of all the criticism is to provide an opinion either of positive or negative implication. As such, a critical essay requires research and analysis, strong internal logic and sharp structure. Its structure normally builds around introduction with a topic's relevance and a thesis statement, body paragraphs with arguments linking back to the main thesis, and conclusion. In addition, an argumentative essay may include a refutation section where conflicting ideas are acknowledged, described, and

criticized. Each argument of an argumentative essay should be supported with sufficient evidence, relevant to the point.

Process

A process essay is used for an explanation of making or breaking something. Often, it is written in chronological order or numerical order to show step-by-step processes. It has all the qualities of a technical document with the only difference is that it is often written in descriptive mood, while a technical document is mostly in imperative mood.

Economic

An economic essay can start with a thesis, or it can start with a theme. It can take a narrative course and a descriptive course. It can even become an argumentative essay if the author feels the need. After the introduction, the author has to do his/her best to expose the economic matter at hand, to analyze it, evaluate it, and draw a conclusion. If the essay takes more of a narrative form then the author has to expose each aspect of the economic puzzle in a way that makes it clear and understandable for the reader.

Reflective

A *reflective essay* is an analytical piece of writing in which the writer describes a real or imaginary scene, event, interaction, passing thought, memory, or form—adding a personal reflection on the meaning of the topic in the author's life. Thus, the focus is not merely descriptive. The writer doesn't just describe the situation, but revisits the scene with more detail and emotion to examine what went well, or reveal a need for additional learning—and may relate what transpired to the rest of the author's life.

Check Your Progress

- 1. Discuss on the various forms of essays in English literature.**

5.6 Employment

Employment essays detailing experience in a certain occupational field are required when applying for some jobs, especially government jobs in the United States. Essays known as Knowledge Skills and Executive Core Qualifications are required when applying to certain US federal government positions.

A KSA, or "Knowledge, Skills, and Abilities", is a series of narrative statements that are required when applying to Federal government job openings in the United States. KSAs are used along with resumes to determine who the best applicants are when several candidates qualify for a job. The knowledge, skills, and abilities necessary for the successful performance of a position are contained on each job vacancy announcement. KSAs are brief and focused

essays about one's career and educational background that presumably qualify one to perform the duties of the position being applied for.

An Executive Core Qualification, or ECQ, is a narrative statement that is required when applying to Senior Executive Service positions within the US Federal government. Like the KSAs, ECQs are used along with resumes to determine who the best applicants are when several candidates qualify for a job. The Office of Personnel Management has established five executive core qualifications that all applicants seeking to enter the Senior Executive Service must demonstrate.

5.7 Non – Literary Types

Film

A **film essay** (also **essay film** or **cinematic essay**) consists of the evolution of a theme or an idea rather than a plot per se, or the film literally being a cinematic accompaniment to a narrator reading an essay. From another perspective, an essay film could be defined as a documentary film visual basis combined with a form of commentary that contains elements of self-portrait (rather than autobiography), where the signature (rather than the life story) of the filmmaker is apparent. The cinematic essay often blends documentary, fiction, and experimental film making using tones and editing styles.

Music

In the realm of music, composer Samuel Barber wrote a set of "Essays for Orchestra", relying on the form and content of the music to guide the listener's ear, rather than any extra-musical plot or story.

Photography

A photographic essay strives to cover a topic with a linked series of photographs. Photo essays range from purely photographic works to photographs with captions or small notes to full-text essays with a few or many accompanying photographs. Photo essays can be sequential in nature, intended to be viewed in a particular order—or they may consist of non-ordered photographs viewed all at once or in an order that the viewer chooses. All photo essays are collections of photographs, but not all collections of photographs are photo essays. Photo essays often address a certain issue or attempt to capture the character of places and events.

Visual arts

In the visual arts, an essay is a preliminary drawing or sketch that forms a basis for a final painting or sculpture, made as a test of the work's composition (this meaning of the term, like several of those following, comes from the word *essay*'s meaning of "attempt" or "trial").

5.8 Summary

In countries like the United States and the United Kingdom, essays have become a major part of a formal education in the form of free response questions. Secondary students in these countries are taught structured essay formats to improve their writing skills, and essays are often used by universities in these countries in selecting applicants (*see* admissions essay). In both secondary and tertiary education, essays are used to judge the mastery and comprehension of the material. Students are asked to explain, comment on, or assess a topic of study in the form of an essay. In some courses, university students must complete one or more essays over several weeks or months. In addition, in fields such as the humanities and social sciences, mid-term and end of term examinations often require students to write a short essay in two or three hours.

5.9 Key Terms

Analytical: **Analysis** (pl.: **analyses**) is the process of breaking a complex topic or substance into smaller parts in order to gain a better understanding of it. The technique has been applied in the study of mathematics and logic since before Aristotle (384–322 B.C.), though *analysis* as a formal concept is a relatively recent development.

Economy: An **economy** is an area of the production, distribution and trade, as well as consumption of goods and services. In general, it is defined as a social domain that emphasize the practices, discourses, and material expressions associated with the production, use, and management of scarce resources.¹

5.10 Review Questions

1. What are the forms of essay? Explain.
 2. What is the origin of the Essays? Elucidate.
 3. Trace out the beginning of essay.
 4. How are essays useful to literature.
 5. What are the different types of non – literary types
-

5.11 References

- Holman, William (2003). *A Handbook to Literature* (9 ed.). New Jersey: Prentice Hall. p. 193.
- Owens, Derek (1996). "Essay". *Keywords in Composition Studies*. Portsmouth, NH: Boynton/Cook. pp. 85–88. ISBN 0-86709-399-4.
- Gale – Free Resources – Glossary – DE Archived 2010-04-25 at the Waybackmachine. Gale.cengage.com. Retrieved March 23, 2011.
- Aldous Huxley, *Collected Essays*, "Preface", London: Harper and Brothers, 1960, p. v.

- *"Book Use Book Theory: 1500–1700: Commonplace Thinking". Lib.uchicago.edu. Archived from the original on 2013-08-01. Retrieved 2013-08-10.*
- *Montaigne, Michel de (1580). Essais de messire Michel de Montaigne,... livre premier et second (I ed.). impr. de S. Millanges (Bourdeaux). Retrieved 22 November 2019 – via Gallica.*

UNIT 6: CHARLES LAMB AND HIS AGE

STRUCTURE

- 6.1 Objectives
- 6.2 Introduction
- 6.3 Life and works of Charles Lamb
- 6.4 Family Tragedy
- 6.5 Leading Characteristics of Lamb's Personality
- 6.6 Elia
- 6.7 Religious Views
- 6.8 Legacy
- 6.9 Summary
- 6.10 Key Terms
- 6.11 Review Questions
- 6.12 References

6.1 Objectives

The learners shall know the following:

- About Charles Lamb and his early life.
- 19th century style of writings.
- The characteristic of the essay writings of Lamb.
- The pen name of Lamb and its reasons.

6.2 Introduction

Lamb was born in London, the son of John Lamb (c. 1725–1799) and Elizabeth (died 1796), née Field. Lamb had an elder brother, also John, and sister, Mary; four other siblings did not survive infancy. John Lamb (Lamb's father) was a lawyer's clerk and spent most of his professional life as the assistant to barrister Samuel Salt, who lived in the Inner Temple in the legal district of London; it was there, in Crown Office Row, that Charles Lamb was born and spent his youth. Lamb created a portrait of his father in his "Elia on the Old Benchers" under the name Lovel. Lamb's older brother was too much his senior to be a youthful companion to the boy but his sister Mary, being born eleven years before him, was probably his closest playmate. Lamb was also cared for by his paternal aunt Hetty, who seems to have had a particular fondness for him. A number of writings by both Charles and Mary suggest that the

conflict between Aunt Hetty and her sister-in-law created a certain degree of tension in the Lamb household. However, Charles speaks fondly of her and her presence in the house seems to have brought a great deal of comfort to him.

Some of Lamb's fondest childhood memories were of time spent with Mrs Field, his maternal grandmother, who was for many years a servant to the Plumer family, who owned a large country house called Blakesware, near Widford, Hertfordshire. After the death of Mrs Plumer, Lamb's grandmother was in sole charge of the large home and, as William Plumer was often absent, Charles had free rein of the place during his visits.

Little is known about Charles's life before he was seven other than that Mary taught him to read at a very early age and he read voraciously. It is believed that he had smallpox during his early years, which forced him into a long period of convalescence. After this period of recovery Lamb began to take lessons from Mrs Reynolds, a woman who lived in the Temple and is believed to have been the former wife of a lawyer. Mrs Reynolds must have been a sympathetic schoolmistress because Lamb maintained a relationship with her throughout his life and she is known to have attended dinner parties held by Mary and Charles in the 1820s. E. V. Lucas suggests that sometime in 1781 Charles left Mrs Reynolds and began to study at the Academy of William Bird.

His time with William Bird did not last long, however, because by October 1782 Lamb was enrolled in Christ's Hospital, a charity boarding school chartered by King Edward VI in 1553. A thorough record of Christ's Hospital is to be found in several essays by Lamb as well as *The Autobiography of Leigh Hunt* and the *Biographia Literaria* of Samuel Taylor Coleridge, with whom Charles developed a friendship that would last for their entire lives. Despite the school's brutality, Lamb got along well there, due in part, perhaps, to the fact that his home was not far distant, thus enabling him, unlike many other boys, to return often to its safety. Years later, in his essay "Christ's Hospital Five and Thirty Years Ago", Lamb described these events, speaking of himself in the third person as "L".

"I remember L. at school; and can well recollect that he had some peculiar advantages, which I and other of his schoolfellows had not. His friends lived in town, and were near at hand; and he had the privilege of going to see them, almost as often as he wished, through some invidious distinction, which was denied to us."

Christ's Hospital was a typical English boarding school and many students later wrote of the terrible violence they suffered there. The upper master (i.e. principal or headteacher) of the school from 1778 to 1799 was Reverend James Boyer, a man renowned for his unpredictable and capricious temper. In one famous story Boyer was said to have knocked one of Leigh Hunt's teeth out by throwing a copy of Homer at him from across the room. Lamb seemed to have escaped much of this brutality, in part because of his amiable personality and in part because Samuel Salt, his father's employer and Lamb's sponsor at the school, was one of the institute's governors.

Charles Lamb had a stutter and this "inconquerable impediment" in his speech deprived him of Grecian status at Christ's Hospital, thus disqualifying him for a clerical career. While Coleridge and other scholarly boys were able to go on to Cambridge, Lamb left school at fourteen and was forced to find a more prosaic career. For a short time he worked in the office of Joseph Paice, a London merchant, and then, for 23 weeks, until 8 February 1792, held a small post in the Examiner's Office of the South Sea House. Its subsequent downfall in a pyramid scheme after Lamb left would be contrasted to the company's prosperity in the first Elia essay. On 5 April 1792 he went to work in the Accountant's Office for the British East India Company, the death of his father's employer having ruined the family's fortunes. Charles would continue to work there for 25 years, until his retirement with pension (the "superannuation" he refers to in the title of one essay).

In 1792 while tending to his grandmother, Mary Field, in Hertfordshire, Charles Lamb fell in love with a young woman named Ann Simmons. Although no epistolary record exists of the relationship between the two, Lamb seems to have spent years wooing her. The record of the love exists in several accounts of Lamb's writing. "Rosamund Gray" is a story of a young man named Allen Clare who loves Rosamund Gray but their relationship comes to nothing because of her sudden death. Miss Simmons also appears in several Elia essays under the name "Alice M". The essays "Dream Children", "New Year's Eve", and several others, speak of the many years that Lamb spent pursuing his love that ultimately failed. Miss Simmons eventually went on to marry a silversmith and Lamb called the failure of the affair his "great disappointment".

6.3 Life and Works of Charles Lamb

Charles Lamb was an important English poet and literary critic of Welsh origin. He was born in London on February 10th 1775. As an expert of the Shakespearean period as well as an author of talent, Lamb would come to be considered one of the most significant literary critic of his time. Moreover, Lamb would be celebrated for his simple, yet not simplistic, personal reflections on daily life, which would always be supplemented with a distinctive sense of both humor and tragedy. Lamb's two most famous works were to be *Essays of Elia*, and, *Tales from Shakespeare*, in fact a children's book. He would actually write the latter in collaboration with his sister, Mary Lamb (1764 - 1847). Charles Lamb also had an older brother, John, named after their father, as well as four other brothers and sisters who would not survive their infancy. Lamb would come to be described by his main biographer, E.V. Lucas, as the most touching character in English literature.

Lamb's parents were Elizabeth Field and John Lamb. Charles would be their last child after Mary, who was born 11 years earlier while John, the brother, would be born even earlier than his sister. The father was a clerk for a lawyer. Years later Charles would write a kind of biographical portrait of him in a piece entitled "Elia on the Old Benchers" and would refer to him by the name of "Lovel".

Charles Lamb would become a close friend of the famous British philosopher, literary critic and poet Samuel Taylor Coleridge (1772 - 1834). In fact Lamb's first published work would be four sonnets which would be included in the 1796 *Poems on Various Subjects* by Coleridge. And yet because Lamb had a stutter he would not only be disqualified at boarding school for a clerical career, but while Coleridge and others would be able to go on to university, Lamb stopped his schooling at the age of 14. Notwithstanding this would not prevent Lamb to become an important member, and indeed to play an important part in a circle of famous authors. This included important literary figures such as poet William Wordsworth (1770 - 1850), essayist and poet Leigh Hunt (1784 - 1859), writer and literary critic William Hazlitt (1778 - 1830) as well as poet Robert Southey (1774 - 1843).

In 1819 at the age of 44, Lamb who had never married mostly because of his commitment to his troubled family would fall in love with Fanny Kelly, an actress from Covent Garden. He would eventually propose to her but she would refuse and he would in the end die single. Unmarried, Lamb would live with his sister, Mary Lamb, who too would stay single as she almost perpetually would suffer from serious mental disorders. In fact, in 1796, in a fit of insanity, she would stab their mother, Elizabeth, killing her with a kitchen knife. After that, in spite of the difficult turn of events Charles did all he could to stay close to his sister and would even in fact end up becoming Mary's official guardian, thus making it possible for her to be released from the mental hospital. It is noteworthy

to keep in mind that when she felt at home and well enough, Mary could be one of the most creative, lively woman.

Case in point, together with his sister Charles would write the famous *Tales from Shakespeare*, a collection of 20 tales inspired by the eminent playwright. Published in 1807 this book remains to this day a classic of British literature for youth. The first publisher of the work was the British journalist, political philosopher and novelist William Godwin (1756 - 1836), husband of the English philosopher and one of the first advocates of women's rights Mary Wollstonecraft (1759 - 1797), and also father of British writer Mary Shelley (1797 - 1851). The book was to be constantly reprinted to this day and was even finally illustrated for the first time in 1899 by Arthur Rackham (1867 - 1939). The work would also be translated into several languages and thus made available across the globe.

In the *Essays of Elia*, Lamb's intimate and informal tone of voice would captivate many readers, old and young. The name of "Elia" had actually been the alias he had used whenever he would contribute to the renowned *London Magazine*. The essays describe the strange world of the author's fictional alter ego that is embodied in the melancholic character Elia. It is as a true painter of modern life that Lamb reinvents here the tradition of essay writing. He does so, for instance, by mixing subjective bias, sensuality and critical thinking. In those essays Lamb makes good use of irony, nostalgia, and shares with us his vivid fascination for the details of things, including the very minutes of everyday life. In sum, *Essays of Elia* constitute a singular text in which the author is clearly fascinated by the diversity of things, the unreality of the past, the absolute uniqueness of experience as well as a keen awareness of the limitation of writing.

Lamb's writings also include poetry with *Blank Verse* (1798), and with *Pride's Cure* (1802). Novels, such as *The Adventures of Ulysses* (1808) which was written with children in mind as the audience, it is thus reminiscent of *The Tales from Shakespeare*. But also *Specimens of English Dramatic poets who lived about the time of Shakespeare* (1808), which is essentially a kind of anthology of sections from Elizabethan dramas together with commentaries. This work has been said to have had a significant impact on the way nineteenth century English verses would come to be written. In *On the Tragedies of Shakespeare* (1811) Charles Lamb examines and is critical of Hamlet's "To be or not to be". He would controversially state in the piece that:

I confess myself utterly unable to appreciate that celebrated soliloquy in Hamlet, beginning 'To be or not to be', or to tell whether it be good, bad, or indifferent; it has been so handled and pawed about by declamatory boys and men, and torn so inhumanly from its living place and principle of continuity in the play, till it is become to me a perfect dead member.

We also have pieces such as *Witches and Other Night Fears* (1821) and *The Last Essays of Elia* (1833), which is the second volume of the famous *Essays of Elia* (1823). This last volume would in fact be published shortly before Lamb's death. It includes essay titles such as A Bachelor's Complaint of the Behaviour of Married People; The Two Races of Men; My First Play; Confessions of a Drunkard; Mrs. Battle's Opinions on Whist as well as others. In a very real sense, while in his lifetime Lamb was encouraged by many for his hard work in literature, he actually enjoyed very little appreciation for his unique talent while he was alive. Not surprisingly perhaps, he would thus go through difficult moments of doubt with regards to his work and seriously seems to have wondered about his ability to write anything worth mentioning. In fact, in similar ways to his sister, Mary, he too would suffer episodes of psychological illness. Be that as it may, Charles Lamb left us with a very rich legacy of work ranging from short stories, essays, poetry, even plays, as well as letters filled with his exceptional intimate style and humor.

Lamb would succumb to an infection he would unfortunately contract from a minor cut on his face after having fallen in the street, in fact only several months after Coleridge. Charles Lamb would die at Edmonton, a suburb of London on December 27th 1834 at the age of 59. He is buried at All Saint's Churchyard, also in Edmonton. Mary, his sister would survive him by more than a decade and would be buried next to him. It is interesting to note that in 1849, 15 years after Lamb's death, the French author Eugène Forcade (1820 - 1869) would describe Lamb as having been of an eminently friendly nature, an original writer, a kind of hero constantly caring for his poor sister.

6.4 Family Tragedy

Both Charles and his sister Mary suffered a period of mental illness. As he himself confessed in a letter, Charles spent six weeks in a mental facility during 1795, at the time while he was already making his name as a poet:

Coleridge, I know not what suffering scenes you have gone through at Bristol. My life has been somewhat diversified of late. The six weeks that finished last year and began this your very humble servant spent very agreeably in a mad house at Hoxton—I am got somewhat rational now, and don't bite any one. But mad I was—and many a vagary my imagination played with me, enough to make

a volume if all told. My Sonnets I have extended to the number of nine since I saw you, and will some day communicate to you.

—Lamb to Coleridge; May 27, 1796.

However, Mary Lamb's illness was particularly strongest, as it led her to become aggressive in a fatal occasion. On 22 September 1796, while preparing dinner, Mary became angry with her apprentice, roughly shoving the little girl out of her way and pushing her into another room. Her mother, Elizabeth, began yelling at her for this, and Mary suffered a mental breakdown as her mother continued yelling at her. A terrible event occurred: she took the kitchen knife she had been holding, unsheathed it, and approached her mother, who was sitting down. Mary, *"worn down to a state of extreme nervous misery by attention to needlework by day and to her mother at night"*, was seized with acute mania and stabbed her mother to the heart with a table knife. Charles ran into the house soon after the murder and took the knife out of Mary's hand.

Later in the evening, Charles found a local place for Mary in a private mental facility called Fisher House, which had been found with the help of a doctor friend of his. While reports were published by the media, Charles wrote a letter to Samuel Taylor Coleridge in connection to the matricide:

MY dearest friend — White or some of my friends or the public papers by this time may have informed you of the terrible calamities that have fallen on our family. I will only give you the outlines. My poor dear dearest sister in a fit of insanity has been the death of her own mother. I was at hand only time enough to snatch the knife out of her grasp. She is at present in a mad house, from whence I fear she must be moved to an hospital. God has preserved to me my senses, — I eat and drink and sleep, and have my judgment I believe very sound. My poor father was slightly wounded, and I am left to take care of him and my aunt. Mr.

Norris of the Bluecoat school has been very very kind to us, and we have no other friend, but thank God I am very calm and composed, and able to do the best that remains to do. Write, —as religious a letter as possible— but no mention of what is gone and done with. —With me *"the former things are passed away,"* and I have something more to do than to feel. God almighty have us all in his keeping.

—Lamb to Coleridge. September 27, 1796

Charles took over responsibility for Mary after refusing his brother John's suggestion that they have her committed to a public facility. Lamb used a large part of his relatively meagre

income to keep his beloved sister in the private "madhouse" in Islington. With the help of friends, Lamb would succeed in obtaining his sister's release from what would otherwise have been lifelong imprisonment. Although there was no legal status of "insanity" at the time, the jury returned the verdict of "lunacy" which was how she was freed from guilt of willful murder, on the condition that Charles take personal responsibility for her safekeeping.

The 1799 death of John Lamb was something of a relief to Charles because his father had been mentally incapacitated for a number of years since suffering a stroke. The death of his father also meant that Mary could come to live again with him in Pentonville, and in 1800 they set up a shared home at Mitre Court Buildings in the Temple, where they would live until 1809.

In 1800, Mary's illness came back and Charles had to take her back again to the mental facility. In those days, Charles sent a letter to Coleridge, in which he admitted he felt melancholic and lonely, "almost wishing that Mary were dead."

Later she would come back, and both he and his sister would enjoy an active and rich social life. Their London quarters became a kind of weekly salon for many of the most outstanding theatrical and literary figures of the day. Charles Lamb, having been to school with Samuel Coleridge, counted Coleridge as perhaps his closest, and certainly his oldest, friend. On his deathbed, Coleridge had a mourning ring sent to Lamb and his sister. Fortunately, Lamb's first publication was in 1796, when four sonnets by "Mr. Charles Lamb of the India House" appeared in Coleridge's *Poems on Various Subjects*. In 1797 he contributed additional blank verse to the second edition, and met the Wordsworths, William and Dorothy, on his short summer holiday with Coleridge at Nether Stowey, thereby also striking up a lifelong friendship with William. In London, Lamb became familiar with a group of young writers who favoured political reform, including Percy Bysshe Shelley, William Hazlitt, and Leigh Hunt.

Lamb continued to clerk for the East India Company and doubled as a writer in various genres, his tragedy, *John Woodvil*, being published in 1802. His farce, *Mr H*, was performed at Drury Lane in 1807, where it was roundly booed. In the same year, *Tales from Shakespeare* (Charles handled the tragedies; his sister Mary, the comedies) was published, and became a best seller for William Godwin's "Children's Library".

In 1819, at age 44, Lamb, who, because of family commitments, had never married, fell in love with an actress, Fanny Kelly, of Covent Garden, and proposed marriage. She refused him, and he died a bachelor.

His collected essays, under the title *Essays of Elia*, were published in 1823 ("Elia" being the pen name Lamb used as a contributor to the *London Magazine*).

The Essays of Elia would be criticized in the *Quarterly Review* (January, 1823) by Robert

Southey, who thought its author to be irreligious. When Charles read the review, entitled, "*The Progress of Infidelity*," he was filled with indignation, and wrote a letter to his friend Bernard Barton, where Lamb declared he hated the review, and emphasized that his words "*meant no harm to religion*." First, Lamb did not want to retort, since he actually admired Southey; but later he felt the need to write a letter Elia to Southey, in which he complained and expressed that the fact that he was a dissenter of the Church, did not make him an irreligious man. The letter would be published in the London Magazine, on October, 1823:

Rightly taken, Sir, that Paper was not against Graces, but Want of Grace; not against the ceremony, but the carelessness and slovenliness so often observed in the performance of it. . . You have never ridiculed, I believe, what you thought to be religion, but you are always girding at what some pious, but perhaps mistaken folks, think to be so.

—Charles Lamb, "Letter of Elia to Robert Southey, Esquire"

A further collection called *The Last Essays of Elia* was published in 1833, shortly before Lamb's death. Also, in 1834, Samuel Coleridge died. The funeral was confined only to the family of the writer, so Lamb was prevented from attending and only wrote a letter to Rev. James Gilman, a very close expressing his condolences.

He died of a streptococcal infection, erysipelas, contracted from a minor graze on his face sustained after slipping in the street, on 27 December 1834. He was 59. From 1833 till their deaths, Charles and Mary lived at Bay Cottage, Church Street, Edmonton north of London (now part of the London Borough of Enfield. Lamb is buried in All Saints' Churchyard, Edmonton. His sister, who was ten years his senior, survived him for more than a dozen years. She is buried beside him.

6.5 Leading Characteristics of Lamb's Personality

Lamb was really one of the most sweet-tempered persons, who could pass on his sweetness of temper even to his readers through his writings. It is surprising how a person, who was so poor and who had so many worries and calamities in his life, could retain such a sweet temper. How much of tremendous patience Lamb possessed and how much of courage he had in fighting with adversity can be seen in his contentment and also in his cheerful spirit and sweet temper. His sister, being deranged in brain and when particularly his sister killed her mother in fits of insanity, Lamb decided to remain a bachelor all his life. It is not true that his poverty prevented him from getting married; but it is his anxiety and care about his sister that deprived him forever of the blessings of married life. We do not know if he could retain the same temper, the same brotherly love, the same sense of responsibility if he had married Anna Simons with whom he had fallen in love, but unfortunately, whom he could not marry.

Lamb's hankering for marriage is reflected in his love of children, which he unconsciously depicts in his essay on Dream Children. Some of Lamb's biographers believe that Lamb took to drinking only to forget the pinches of poverty, the disappointment in love, and also the insanity of his sister, but then Lamb never got addicted to drinking.

Lamb was extremely fond of London life because he was born and educated in London and also he worked all his life in London. All his writings are full of the atmosphere of the city of London, particularly the intellectual atmosphere of it. Lamb has reflected in his *Essays* as well as in other writings the concentrated life of London, the bookish culture, and other such intellectual facilities, which are available in London only. Both Ollier and Hazlitt have pointed out how Lamb was enamored of London, how he had depicted London life, and how he had breathed into that congested city a picture of dreams and fancies that generally come to the poets like Wordsworth, Coleridge, Shelley, Keats, Byron, and other Romantic poets of the nineteenth century. Lamb's love for antiquity was inspired by his close association with the old buildings of the Inner Temple and Christ's Hospital but Lamb was never an antiquarian. In this connection, H.C. Hills says, "Lamb loved old books but disliked new readings, he loved old writers, but when a friend brought him leaves from the tree that grew by the tomb of Virgil, he threw them carelessly into the street. It would almost seem that the dead were in a sense alive to him, and that he resented anything that interfered with this fancy.

To one chief feature of city life, Lamb was indifferent. He took no interest in politics. Not only in his *Essays*, begun only five years after the close of the great Napoleonic wars, but even in his *Letters* there are hardly any references to politics. Politics were excluded from the subjects at his Wednesday evening assemblies. Procter supposes that his abstention from subjects connected with the great world was due to modesty, but it was so complete that one can hardly ascribe it to anything but indifference. It was, however, this avoidance of the ephemeral that has given him his continued popularity, for there are but few readers who take much interest in even the best political writers of a by-gone age. Still it is interesting to note that he owes his existence, as it were, to an ephemeral form of literature, the periodical magazine, which owes its origin so largely to politics. Hazlitt points out that Lamb, "from the peculiarity of his exterior and address as an author, would probably have never made his way by detached and independent efforts," but that, once brought before the public, beauty of his writing and the nature of his subjects attracted and compelled admiration.

It is curious that at the very moment when Wordsworth was originating a new nature-worship, one of his earliest and warmest admirers should be, so decidedly as Lamb was, a worshipper of the town. Wordsworth called him "a scorner of the fields," and his words do much to justify the accusation. In a letter to Wordsworth (January 30th, 1801), he writes: "Separate from the pleasure of your company, I don't much care if I never see a mountain in my life. I have passed all my days in London, until I have formed as many and intense local attachments as any of your mountaineers can have done with dead nature"; and, again (January 22nd, 1830), "O, let no native Londoner imagine that health and rest and innocent occupation, interchange of sweet and recreative study, make the country anything better than odious and detestable! A garden was the primitive prison till man, with Promethean felicity and boldness, luckily sinned himself out of it. Thence followed Babylon, Nineveh, Venice, London, haberdashers, goldsmiths, taverns, play-houses, satires, epigrams, puns—these all came into

town part of the thither side of innocence.” While such passages as these contain much and evident exaggeration, they mark very decidedly the direction in which Lamb’s preferences lay. On the other hand this preference did not prevent his showing a keen and loving appreciation of the beauties of the country. He could enjoy a holiday there, and could truly and sympathetically describe the scenery around him as we see in *Mackery End*, *Blackesmoor*, and *Dream Children*, for, as regards the places mentioned in these Essays, they had for him the local attachment which is necessary to stimulate genius into expression.

Lamb was a great observer and also a great thinker; otherwise he could not have given such realistic details of many things nor could he have scattered such pearls of wisdom throughout his writing. Wordsworth rightly says that “Lamb poured out truth in works by thoughtful love, inspired works potent over smiles and tears.” Lamb felt deeply for the lower animals and the poor people probably

because he was himself poor and found his own helplessness reflected in the lives of the lower animals, who could not fight against the laws of nature as he could not fight against the laws of mankind.

This all embracing love of Lamb’s was due to no sense of duty, but was in his nature, and showed itself in a gentleness and sweetness of look and manner, which, as Le Grice has told us, caused him even as a child to be distinguished by his Christian name. “So Christians should call one another,” Lamb writes in *Mackery End*. In later life it drew from Wordsworth the title of “gentle-hearted,” which, in spite of Lamb’s objection to the epithet, has clung, and must ever cling to his name. It is unfortunate that we have, in English, no word that will express gentleness without weakness. Lamb was right in objecting, for his was no weak character. He could not refuse money to a begging impostor. “Reader, be not frightened,” he writes in *The Decay of Beggars*, “at the harsh words imposition, imposture—give and ask no questions. Cast thy bread upon the waters”—he could not refuse that fatal “last glass” with a friend, he could not hate any man whom he knew, and Jeremy Taylor tells us that to be good we must hate bad men; but he could devote his whole life to a sister who killed her mother, and might at anytime kill him. This he did for the sake of love; but surely it was the love of a strongman. It was a burden of forty years’ endurance—an undertaking as truly heroic as any of the great deeds of the Elizabethan age.

Even in the underlying melancholy of his character Lamb resembles many of the Elizabethans, for melancholy is a common accompaniment of habits of deepthought, but in Lamb’s case his melancholy was due to a hereditary taint. His father’s dotage and his sister’s madness has been recorded to his brother John, we find Lamb writing on one occasion that he has fears of his mind. Lamb suffered only once from an attack of madness sufficiently serious to necessitate his confinement, but the gloominess noticeable in *New Year’s Eve*, in *Witches and Other Night Fears*, and in the *Confessions of a Drunkard*, as well as in many scattered passages, is strong proof of the disease latent in his nature. He can seldom write gaily for any length of time, the darker side of his life forces itself upon his attention.

He tells us somewhere that he had read large quantities of "dry divinity" to prevent his mind from dwelling on his misfortunes, but fortunately he found in the old strong writers who most interested him not merely a relief from sad thoughts, but the occasion of healthy thought also. He was no scholar in the modern sense of the word, his classical allusions, his references to the Bible, his quotations are hardly ever correct; but he had a full intelligent, and loving acquaintance with all the great writers from the time of Spenser to his own; he knew Wordsworth as well as any of his modern worshippers; and, as shown by his quotations, he read nearly all that was of any interest in the light literature and drama of his day. This appreciation of all kinds of books seems to be due partly to the accident of his having had in his childhood free access to the large library of Samuel Salt, partly, possibly, to the accident of town life, which tends to excite in the mind a vivid interest in all classes of our fellow-creatures, and in what we can learn of them.

Besides books Lamb loved pictures and prints. He constantly refers to them in his Essays. It is evident that he was a good judge of them, and that the taste for them was a family one is shown by his reference in his *My Relations* to his brother John's collection.

Besides his prose Lamb wrote many poems and a few dramatic works, but neither in Poetry nor in the Drama did he rise above the ordinary level. On the other hand the practice of versification gave him a wonderful command of prose, and the undeveloped dramatic instinct accounts for the vividness of characterization which distinguishes the personages whose acts and sayings form the ground-work of most of the Essays.

Lamb's essays and other writings are full of wisdom, truth, penetrating insight, sympathy, gentleness, and love for all things and persons, which he happens to observe and comment upon. He possesses an extraordinary commonsense, and that is why, whatever he says is not very far from truth or reality or fairness. We can find his wisdom and wit scattered in many of his essays, such as *Old China*, *Recollections of Christ's Hospital*, *Modern Gallantry*, *The Tombs in the Abbey*, and in many other essays. One thing, however, is very striking that in spite of Lamb's shrewd criticism of men and things, Lamb never became unpopular. Wordsworth, Coleridge, Hazlitt and others all have certified that it is due to Lamb's kindliness that people loved him.

It has been pointed out that spirituality played an important role in Lamb's personal life, and that, although he was not a churchman, and disliked organized religion, he yet "sought consolation in religion," as shown by letters to Samuel Taylor Coleridge and Bernard Barton, in which he described the New Testament as his "best guide" for life, and where he talked about how he used to read the Psalms for one or two hours without getting tired. Other papers have also dealt with his Christian beliefs. As his friend Samuel Coleridge, Lamb was sympathetic to Priestleyan Unitarianism[18] and was a dissenter, yet, he was described by Coleridge himself as one whose "faith in Jesus had been preserved" even after the family tragedy. Wordsworth also described him as a firm Christian in the poem *Written After the Death of Charles Lamb*. Alfred Ainger, in his work *Charles Lamb*, writes that Lamb's religion had become "an habit".

The poems "*On The Lord's Prayer*", "*A Vision Of Repentance*", "*The Young Catechist*", "*Composed at Midnight*", "*Suffer Little Children, And Forbid Them Not, To Come Unto Me*", "*Written a twelvemonth after the Events*", "*Charity*", "*Sonnet To A Friend*" and "*David*" reflect much about Lamb's faith, whereas the poem "*Living Without God In The World*" has been called a "poetic attack" to unbelief, in which Lamb expresses his disgust for atheism attributing its nature to pride.

6.6 Elia

Lamb took the name of Elia, which should, he said, be pronounced Ellia, from an old clerk, an Italian, at the South-Sea House in Lamb's time: that is, in

1791–1792. Writing to John Taylor in July, 1821, just after he had taken over the magazine (see below), Lamb says, referring to the South-Sea House essay, "having a brother now there, and doubting how he might relish certain descriptions in it, I clapt down the name of Elia to it, which passed off pretty well, for Elia himself added the function of an author to that of a scrivener, like myself. I went the other day (not having seen him [Elia] for a year) to laugh over with him at my usurpation of his name, and found him, alas! no more than a name, for he died of consumption eleven months ago, and I knew not of it. So the name has fairly devolved to me, I think; and 'tis all he has left me."

In the library at Welbeck is a copy of a pamphlet, in French, entitled *Considérations sur l'état actuel de la France au mois de Juin 1815*, par un Anglais, which was presented to the Duke of Portland by the author, F.A. Elia. This was probably Lamb's Elia. The pamphlet is reprinted, together with other interesting matter remotely connected with Lamb, in *Letters from the Originals at Welbeck Abbey*, privately printed, 1909.

Elia. Essays which have appeared under that signature in the *London Magazine*, was published early in 1823. Lamb's original intention was to furnish the book with a whimsical preface, as we learn from the following letter to John Taylor, dated December 7, 1822: —

Elia did not reach a second edition in Lamb's lifetime — that is to say, during a period of twelve years — although the editions into which it has passed between his death and the present day are legion. Why, considering the popularity of the essays as they appeared in the *London Magazine*, the book should have found so few purchasers is a problem difficult of solution. Lamb himself seems to have attributed some of the cause to Southey's objection, in the *Quarterly Review*, that Elia "wanted a sounder religious feeling;" but more probably the book was too dear: it was published at 9s. 6d.

Ordinary reviewers do not seem to have perceived at all that a rare humorist, humanist and master of prose had arisen, although among the finer intellects who had any inclination to search for excellence for excellence's sake Lamb made his way. William Hazlitt, for example, drew attention to the rich quality of Elia; as also did Leigh Hunt; and William Hone, who cannot, however, as a critic be mentioned with these, was tireless in advocating the book. Among strangers to Lamb who from the first extolled his genius was Miss Mitford. But Elia did not sell.

Ten years passed before Lamb collected his essays again, and then in 1833 was published *The Last Essays of Elia*, with Edward Moxon's imprint. The mass of minor essays in the *London Magazine* and elsewhere, which Lamb disregarded when he compiled his two collections, will be found in Vol. I. of the present edition. *The Last Essays of Elia* had little, if any, better reception than the first; and Lamb had the mortification of being asked by the Norris family to suppress the exquisite and kindly little memoir of Randal Norris, entitled "A Death-Bed" (see page 279), which was held to be too personal. When, in 1835, after Lamb's death, a new edition of *Elia* and *The Last Essays of Elia* was issued, the "Confessions of a Drunkard" took its place (see Vol. I.).

The *London Magazine*, with John Scott (1783–1821) as its editor was founded in 1820 by Baldwin, Cradock & Joy. Its first number was dated January, 1820, and Lamb's first contribution was in the number for August, 1820. Lamb had known Scott as editor of *The Champion* in 1814, but, according to Talfourd, it was Hazlitt who introduced Lamb to the *London Magazine*.

John Scott, who was the author of two interesting books of travel, *A Visit to Paris* in 1814 and *Paris Re-visited* in 1815, was an admirable editor, and all was going exceedingly well until he plunged into a feud with *Blackwood's Magazine* in general, and John Gibson Lockhart in particular, the story of which in full may be read in Mr. Lang's *Life and Letters of Lockhart*, 1896. In the duel which resulted Scott was shot above the hip. The wound was at first thought lightly of, but Scott died on February 27, 1821 — an able man much regretted.

The magazine did not at first show signs of Scott's loss; it continued to bear the imprint of its original publishers and its quality remained very high. With Lamb and Hazlitt writing regularly this could hardly be otherwise. But four months after the death of Scott and eighteen months after its establishment the *London Magazine* passed into the hands of the publishers Taylor & Hessey, the first number with their imprint being dated August, 1821. Although for a while no diminution of merit was perceptible and rather an access of gaiety — for Taylor brought Hood with him and John Hamilton Reynolds — yet the high editorial standards of Scott ceased to be applied. Thenceforward the decline of the magazine was steady.

John Taylor (1781–1864), senior partner in the firm of Taylor & Hessey, was known as the identifier of Sir Philip Francis with the author of "Junius," on which subject he had issued three books. Although unfitted for the post, he acted as editor of the *London Magazine* until it was again sold in 1825.

With the beginning of 1825 Taylor made a change in the magazine. He started a new series, and increased the size and the price. But the experiment did not answer; the spirit had evaporated; and in the autumn he sold it to Henry Southern (1799–1853), who had founded the *Retrospective Review* in 1820. The last number of the *London Magazine* to bear Taylor & Hessey's name, and (in my opinion) to contain anything by Lamb, was August, 1825. We have no definite information on the matter, but there is every indication in Lamb's *Letters* that Taylor was penurious and not clever in his relations with contributors. Scott Lamb seems to have admired and liked; but even in Scott's day payment does not seem to have been

prompt. Lamb was paid, according to Barry Cornwall, two or three times the amount of other writers, who received for prose a pound a page. But Lamb himself says that the rate for him was twenty guineas a sheet, a sheet being sixteen pages; and he told Moore that he had received £170 for two years' Elia. In a letter to Barton in January, 1823, Lamb remarks: "B— — [Baldwin] who first engaged me as 'Elia' has not paid me up yet (nor any of us without repeated mortifying appeals)."

The following references to the London in Lamb's letters to Barton tell the story of its decadence quite clearly enough. In May, 1823:—"I cannot but think the London drags heavily. I miss Janus [Wainewright]. And O how it misses Hazlitt — Procter, too, is affronted (as Janus has been) with their abominable curtailment of his things."

Check Your Progress

1. How and why did Lamb choose to be Elia? Explain.

6.7 Religious Views

Christianity played an important role in Lamb's personal life: although he was not a churchman he "sought consolation in religion," as shown in letters he wrote to Samuel Taylor Coleridge and Bernard Barton in which he describes the New Testament as his "*best guide*" for life and recalls how he used to read the Psalms for one or two hours without getting tired. Other writings also deal with his Christian beliefs. Like his friend Coleridge, Lamb was sympathetic to Priestleyan Unitarianism and was a Dissenter, and he was described by Coleridge himself as one whose "faith in Jesus ha[d] been preserved" even after the family tragedy. Wordsworth also described him as a firm Christian in the poem "Written After the Death of Charles Lamb", Alfred Ainger, in his work *Charles Lamb*, writes that Lamb's religion had become "an habit".

Lamb's own poems "On The Lord's Prayer", "A Vision of Repentance", "The Young Catechist", "Composed at Midnight", "Suffer Little Children, and Forbid Them Not to Come Unto Me", "Written a Twelvemonth After the Events", "Charity", "Sonnet to a Friend" and "David" express his religious faith, while his poem "Living Without God in the World" has been called a "poetic attack" on unbelief, in which Lamb expresses his disgust at atheism, attributing it to pride.

6.8 Legacy

There has always been a small but enduring following for Lamb's works, as the long-running and still-active *Charles Lamb Bulletin* demonstrates. Because of his quirky, even bizarre, style, he has been more of a "cult favourite" than an author with mass popular or scholarly appeal. Anne Fadiman notes regretfully that Lamb is not widely read in modern times: "I do not understand why so few other readers are clamoring for his company... [He] is kept alive largely through the tenuous resuscitations of university English departments.". Two of the houses at Christ's Hospital (Lamb A and Lamb B) are named in his honour. and he is also honoured by The Latymer School, a grammar school in Edmonton, a suburb of London where he lived for a time: it has six houses, one of which, Lamb, is named after him. A major academic prize awarded each year at Christ's Hospital School's speech day is "The Lamb Prize for Independent Study".

6.9 Summary

Charles Lamb (10 February 1775 – 27 December 1834) was an English essayist, poet, and antiquarian, best known for his *Essays of Elia* and for the children's book *Tales from Shakespeare*, co-authored with his sister, Mary Lamb (1764–1847). Friends with such literary luminaries as Samuel Taylor Coleridge, Robert Southey, William Wordsworth, Dorothy Wordsworth and William Hazlitt, Lamb was at the centre of a major literary circle in England. He has been referred to by E. V. Lucas, his principal biographer, as "the most lovable figure in English literature".

6.10 Key Terms

- **Antiquarian:** An **antiquarian** or **antiquary** (from Latin *antiquarius* 'pertaining to ancient times') is an aficionado or student of antiquities or things of the past. More specifically, the term is used for those who study history with particular attention to ancient artifacts, archaeological and historic sites, or historic archives and manuscripts. The essence of **antiquarianism** is a focus on the empirical evidence of the past, and is perhaps best encapsulated in the motto adopted by the 18th-century antiquary Sir Richard Colt Hoare, "We speak from facts, not theory."
- **Empirical evidence:** **Empirical evidence** for a proposition is evidence, i.e. what supports or counters this proposition, that is constituted by or accessible to sense experience or experimental procedure. Empirical evidence is of central importance to the sciences and plays a role in various other fields, like epistemology and law.

6.11 Review Questions

1. What characteristics of Romanticism are in Charles Lamb's essays?
2. Do you agree that Charles Lamb is the father of English prose?
3. What are some themes of Charles Lamb's essays?
4. Comment on the religious views of Elia.
5. Discuss the legacy of Charles Lamb.

6.12 References

- Bulgrien, Amy. "Copyright Timeline: A History of Copyright in the United States / Association of Research Libraries® | ARL®". www.arl.org. Retrieved 18 October 2018.
- Charles Lamb, *The Essays of Elia and Eliana*, Barry Cornwall, ed., London, George Bell & Sons, 1890.
- Lucas, Edward Verrall; Lamb, John (1905). *The Life of Charles Lamb*. Vol. 1. London: G.P. Putnam's Sons. p. xvii. OCLC 361094
- Lamb, Charles (1892). *The Last Essays of Elia*. Boston, Massachusetts: Little, Brown, and Company. p. 3.
- William Vaughan Moody and Charles Morss Lovett, *A History of English Literature*, New York, Charles Scribner's Sons, 1918; p. 330.
- Will D. Howe, *Charles Lamb and His Friends*, New York, Bobbs-Merrill, 1944; p. 269.

UNIT 7: MY RELATIONS – AN ANALYSIS

STRUCTURE

- 7.1 Objectives
- 7.2 Introduction
- 7.3 The Essay: Its Definition and Characteristics:
- 7.4 Subject of the Essay
- 7.5 Method of the Essay
- 7.6 My Relations: Text
- 7.7 Analysis of the essay
- 7.8 Summary
- 7.9 Key Terms
- 7.10 Review Questions
- 7.11 References

7.1 Objectives

The present paper has been prepared keeping the following objectives in view.

- To study, analyse and appreciate the personal essays of Charles Lamb.
- To attempt a critical analysis of the essays of Lamb with special emphasis on their thematic aspects

7.2 Introduction

Lamb's essays embody a wide variety of themes. His essays satisfy the appetite of every taste—from personal to professional, from imaginary to factual, from pathetic to humorous. However, the most striking feature about the contents of Lamb's essays is the self-revelation of their endearing and whimsical author. We read all about his stammer, his work at India House, the violence and intensity which threatened the good cheer of his life and almost everything about his life. To give a few examples, his essay, 'The Christ's Hospital' gives an account of his early education. In this essay, Lamb takes the readers into his confidence and talks to them of his boyhood days at school. In a reminiscent mood, he makes an intimate self-revelation – an account of his life at school, of his friends and companions and of his teachers. He says:

“I was a poor friendless boy. My parents and those who should care for me were far away. Those few acquaintances of theirs which they could reckon upon as being kind to me in the

great city, after a little forced notice, which they had the grace to take of me on my first arrival in town soon grew tired of me of my holiday visits”.

My Relations is another essay which is wholly reminiscent in nature. It contains Lamb's recollections of some of his relations. Here he gives character sketch of two 'familiar faces' of his family, his aunt Hetty and his brother John. The essay opens with a reference to the dead parents, but we know about them nothing more than that both of them are dead. After mentioning them Lamb passes on to describe his aunt and brother. Lamb writes;

“Male aunts, as somebody calls them, I had none to remember. by the uncle's side, I may be said to have been born an orphan. Brother or sister I never had any-to know them. a sister, I think, that should have been Elizabeth, died in both our infancies. What a comfort, or what a care may I not have missed in her! But I have cousins, sprinkled about in Hertfordshire.”

Lamb's aunt was a spinster who loved Lamb above all others in the world. Describing, Lamb says that she was very of reading books. She was also a lady of religious temperament. The only secular employment Lamb had seen her performing was the splitting of French beans, and dropping them into a China basin of fair water. While giving a portrait of his elder brother John who has been named as James Elia, Lamb says that James was an inexplicable cousin whom nature had made so obscure that even an acute critic would not be able to understand him. He loved works of art. But his theories and principles were contrary to his practice. His proud and independent spirit asserted itself in all circumstances. James Elia, remembers Lamb, was also a stoic who lived in a world of his own. He was, however, a tender-hearted person.

7.3 The Essay: Its Definition and Characteristics

➤ The Essay

“The History of Essay-writing”, says Henry Morley, “in modern literature begins with Montaigne and then passes to Bacon. Each used the word Essay in its true sense, as an assay or analysis of some subject of thought. Bacon's essay was of life, generally in many forms, with full attention to its outward circumstances. Montaigne's essay was of the inner life of man as it was to be found in the one man's life that he knew.” The Essay Proper, or Literary Essay, is not merely a short analysis of a subject, not a mere epitome, but rather a picture of the writer's mind as affected for the moment by the subject with which he is dealing. Its most distinctive feature is the egotistical element.

➤ Egotistical Element of the Essay

Montaigne tell us he chose himself for his subject because he was the only person whom he knew thoroughly, and therefore the only person he could truly describe to the world. This is an egotism devoid of self-assertion, except in so far as it claims that the character of the

writer is worth knowing, a claim quite consistent with modesty. Bacon's egotism shows itself at times, as in his treatment of *Friendship*, in a curious incapacity to take any view not based on his own experience. In Sir Thomas Brown egotism becomes as it were impersonal, he is to himself the type of the human race. It is egotism of this kind which we find in Lamb, though mixed with sweetness all his own. As Cowper thinks every trifling incident in his life will be interesting to his friend Unwin because of Unwin's love for him, so Lamb assumes the friendship of his reader, takes him into his confidence on all his private affairs, jokes with him, and mystifies him, exactly in the same way as he treated his actual friends.

Lamb's essays can therefore, be read as a kind of autobiography; in one he describes his childhood in the Temple, in another his school-days at Christ's Hospital, in others Blakesware in Hertfordshire where he spent his boyish holidays, in others his early poverty, his first literary beginnings, his Bohemian life in connection with the Press, his holiday trips to the sea-side with his sister Mary, his recovery from a serious illness, the drudgery of his office work, and his relief when he finally retires from his official duties; and everywhere we come across numberless details about his friends. They all appear in his *Essays*, and he jokes and takes liberties with them there as he did in real life; but even when laughing at them, as in the case of Dyer, he has a curious art which makes us doubt the realities of the stories he tells us, and when he says anything that might appear to be unkind, he immediately adds some pleasant trait of character to prevent our forming a wrong opinion.

Of his relations he gives us full and living pictures—his brother John is the James Elia of *My Relations*; his sister Mary, never absent from his mind in life, is present throughout the *Essays* as Bridget Elia, and is most lovingly described in *Mackery End*; his father is the Lovel of the *Old Benchers*; his aunt is referred to in *My Relations*; his grandmother in *Dream Children*. Then coming to matters more personal he describes in various places his want of skill in figuring his dread of novelty, his dislike of death, his imperfection of speech, his incapacity for music, his want of personal beauty, his short stature and unmilitary appearance, his ignorance of things generally known, his love of good cheer, his weakness for wine and tobacco. There is only one subject he is silent upon, and that is insanity. In *New Year's Eve* he has occasion to refer to melancholy madness, and to do so inserts a long question form Burton.

7.4 Subject of the Essay

Montaigne had very little but himself to write about, few books and hardly any society. Bacon was occupied with serious matters: he lived in a time when life was serious as well as vigorous. Steele and Addison in a purely literary age wrote for polite society: their satire was conventional, their subjects generally trifling. Lamb, Hazlitt, and Hunt had a wider range of subjects—the one essential being that the subject must be one of public interest—and they wrote for a large, educated, and thoughtful reading public. In Lamb's writings, as in

Montaigne's, the subject is the writer himself—not, however, the mere individual Lamb, but Lamb as he was connected with his numerous friends, and as his sympathy identified him with his inhabitants of the great city in which he lived.

7.5 Method of the Essay

When we study the Essay, that is the Literary Essay, we notice a number of peculiarities which differentiate it from other branches of literature:

- a) The Essay is a short composition, one which can be easily read though in any interval of leisure, and retained easily in the mind as a whole.
- b) It should be rather an assemblage of details carefully grouped than a system or theory worked out; it should suggest rather than prove, for in so short a work there must necessarily be much left undealt with. It is a picture, not a narrative or a thesis.
- c) It must be an artistic whole that is the development of a single idea, and not an aimless or casual wandering of the mind from one subject to another. Here some think that Lamb is defective. For instance, in the Essay on *Oxford in the Vacation* the greater part is concerned with Lamb's friend Dyer, and in *Old China* with a description of the early poverty of Lamb and his sister. In the former it would appear that the title of the Essay misleads us, the real subject being the influence of University life upon the characters of men studiously inclined, which he illustrates by a description of its effect upon himself in his short visits, and upon his friend Dyer, who has had the advantages which he himself had missed. In *Old China*, on the other hand, the fantastic reasoning with which, Mary maintains the advantages of comparative poverty shows the same absence of perspective as the pictures of the Chinese artist. In all cases it is the human interest that appeals to Lamb; he describes not so much things as their effect upon, or illustration in, human character. The artistic completeness of his treatment is perhaps best seen in *The Old and New Schoolmaster*, where every detail bears upon the subject suggested by the title.
- d) The subject must be lightly handled; not frivolously, but without any appearance of wishing to force the writer's opinion upon the reader. It must appeal like a poem, to the emotions and the heart rather than to the intellect. There need be no lack of wisdom in it, but this must be imparted by persuasion and not by argument; and here the egotism of the Essay justifies itself, for the writer's personal experience is always a ready example and illustration. Bacon effects this by his constant use of poetic imagery and simile; for the simile is not a statement of fact, but a picture of the impression made by a fact upon the mind of the writer. Still the simile is not so effective for this purpose as the direct "I" of Lamb. This is well seen in the opening paragraphs of *Witches and Other Night Fears*, where Lamb defends the wisdom of his ancestors, presenting his arguments as his personal feelings on the subject: "I have sometimes thought that I could not have existed in the days of received witchcraft; that I could not have slept in a village where one of those reputed hags dwelt. Our ancestors were bolder or more obtuse."

- e) Lastly, the Essays must appear to be written, not without thought, but freely and openly without any after-consideration. This is what Montaigne means when he says, "I speak unto paper as unto the first man I meet." The same quality gives their charm to Addison's Essays; and Lamb, talking of the Essays of Elia, says: "Crude they are, I grant you—a sort of unlicked, incondite things." It is not every man who can enjoy good company if he be poor, or sensible company if he be rich; and the attractiveness of the Essay is largely due to the fact that it provides company both good and sensible for the reader in his moments of leisure, at times when he thinks rather of relaxing his mind than on its improvement. When we remember how often many of Lamb's Essays were re-written, or, if not re-written, at least altered in many parts, we are surprised to observe the constant freshness which they retain. This is greatly due to his truthfulness. He might rewrite or modify a passage for reasons of taste, but the opinions he expressed were always really his, at any rate at the time of writing, and hence there is less alteration than one would expect to find. Again, the nature of his subjects—his constant reference to things never known by or forgotten by his readers, and yet connected with the town they lived in, or the nation they belonged to—produces the same effect as novelty. Then again he tells an old story, but with some slight modifications that quite change its effect. At other times an old idea running in his mind serves as the groundwork of a joke or pun; and lastly, in literary point, allusions, quotations, references, there is an amount of inaccuracy which we can hardly imagine to be possible in a carefully revised piece of writing.

7.6 My Relations: Text

I am arrived at that point of life, at which a man may account it a blessing, as it is a singularity, if he have either of his parents surviving. I have not that felicity -- and sometimes think feelingly of a passage in Browne's Christian Morals, where he speaks of a man that hath lived sixty or seventy years in the world. "In such a compass of time," he says, "a man may have a close apprehension what it is to be forgotten, when he hath lived to find none who could remember his father, or scarcely the friends of his youth, and may sensibly see with what a face in no long time OBLIVION will look upon himself."

I had an aunt, a dear and good one. She was one whom single blessedness had soured to the world. She often used to say, that I was the only thing in it which she loved; and, when she thought I was quitting it, she grieved over me with mother's tears. A partiality quite so exclusive my reason cannot altogether approve. She was from morning till night poring over good books, and devotional exercises. Her favourite volumes were Thomas Kempis, in Stanhope's Translation; and a Roman Catholic prayer Book, with the matins and complines regularly set down, -- terms which I was at that time too young to understand. She persisted in reading them, although admonished daily concerning their Papistical tendency; and went to church every Sabbath, as a good Protestant should do. These were the only books she studied; though, I

think, at one period of her life, she told me, she had read with great satisfaction the Adventures of an Unfortunate Young Nobleman. Finding the door of the chapel in Essex-street open one day -- it was in the infancy of that heresy -- she went in, liked the sermon, and the manner of worship, and frequented it at intervals some time after. She came not for doctrinal points, and never missed them. With some little asperities in her constitution, which I have above hinted at, she was a steadfast, friendly being, and a fine old Christian. She was a woman of strong sense, and a shrewd mind -- extraordinary at a repartee; one of the few occasions of her breaking silence -- else she did not much value wit. The only secular employment I remember to have seen her engaged in, was, the splitting of French beans, and dropping them into a China basin of fair water. The odour of those tender vegetables to this day comes back upon my sense, redolent of soothing recollections. Certainly it is the most delicate of culinary operations.

Male aunts, as somebody calls them, I had none -- to remember. By the uncle's side I may be said to have been born an orphan. Brother, or sister, I never had any -- to know them. A sister, I think, that should have been Elizabeth, died in both our infancies. What a comfort, or what a care, may I not have missed in her! -- But I have cousins, sprinkled about in Hertfordshire -- besides two, with whom I have been all my life in habits of the closest intimacy, and whom I may term cousins par excellence. These are James and Bridget Elia. They are older than myself by twelve, and ten, years; and neither of them seems disposed, in matters of advice and guidance, to waive any of the prerogatives which primogeniture confers. May they continue still in the same mind; and when they shall be seventy-five, and seventy-three, years old (I cannot spare them sooner), persist in treating me in my grand climacteric precisely as a stripling, or younger brother! James is an inexplicable cousin. Nature hath her unities, which not every critic can penetrate; or, if we feel, we cannot explain them. The pen of Yorick, and of none since his, could have drawn J. E. entire -- those fine Shandian lights and shades, which make up his story. I must limp after in my poor antithetical manner, as the fates have given me grace and talent. J. F. then -- to the eye of a common observer at least -- seemeth made up of contradictory principles. -- The genuine child of impulse, the frigid philosopher of prudence -- the phlegm of my cousin's doctrine is invariably at war with his temperament, which is high sanguine. With always some fire-new project in his brain, J. E. is the systematic opponent of innovation, and crier down of every thing that has not stood the test of age and experiment. With a hundred fine notions chasing one another hourly in his fancy, he is startled at the least approach to the romantic in others; and, determined by his own sense in every thing, commends you to the guidance of common sense on all occasions. -- With a touch of the eccentric in all which he does, or says, he is only anxious that you should not commit yourself by doing any thing absurd or singular. On my once letting slip at table, that I was not fond of a certain popular dish, he begged me at any rate not to say so -- for the world would think me mad. He disguises a passionate fondness for works of high art (whereof he hath amassed a choice collection), under the pretext of buying only to sell again -- that his enthusiasm may give no encouragement to yours. Yet, if it were so, why does that piece of tender, pastoral Dominichino hang still by his wall? -- is the ball of his sight much more dear to him? -- or what picture-dealer can talk like him?

Whereas mankind in general are observed to warp their speculative conclusions to the bent of their individual humours, his theories are sure to be in diametrical opposition to his constitution. He is courageous as Charles of Sweden, upon instinct; chary of his person, upon principle, as a travelling Quaker. -- He has been preaching up to me, all my life, the doctrine of bowing to the great -- the necessity of forms, and manner, to a man's getting on in the world. He himself never aims at either, that I can discover, -- and has a spirit, that would stand upright in the presence of the Cham of Tartary. It is pleasant to hear him discourse of patience -- extolling it as the truest wisdom -- and to see him during the last seven minutes that his dinner is getting ready. Nature never ran up in her haste a more restless piece of workmanship than when she moulded this impetuous cousin -- and Art never turned out a more elaborate orator than he can display himself to be, upon his favourite topic of the advantages of quiet, and contentedness in the state, whatever it may be, that we are placed in. He is triumphant on this theme, when he has you safe in one of those short stages that ply for the western road, in a very obstructing manner, at the foot of John Murray's street -- where you get in when it is empty, and are expected to wait till the vehicle hath completed her just freight -- a trying three quarters of an hour to some people. He wonders at your fidgetiness, --- "where could we be better than we are, *thus sitting, thus consulting?*" -- "prefers, for his part, a state of rest to locomotion," -- with an eye all the while upon the coachman -- till at length, waxing out of all patience, *at your want of it*, he breaks out into a pathetic remonstrance at the fellow for detaining us so long over the time which he had professed, and declares peremptorily, that "the gentleman in the coach is determined to get out, if he does not drive on that instant."

Very quick at inventing an argument, or detecting a sophistry, he is incapable of attending you in any chain of arguing. Indeed he makes wild work with logic; and seems to jump at most admirable conclusions by some process, not at all akin to it. Consonantly enough to this, he hath been heard to deny, upon certain occasions, that there exists such a faculty at all in man as reason; and wondereth how man came first to have a conceit of it -- enforcing his negation with all the might of reasoning he is master of. He has some speculative notions against laughter, and will maintain that laughing is not natural to him -- when peradventure the next moment his lungs shall crow like Chanticleer. He says some of the best things in the world -- and declareth that wit is his aversion. It was he who said, upon seeing the Eton boys at play in their grounds -- *What a pity to think, that these fine ingenuous lads in a few years will all be changed into frivolous Members of Parliament!*

His youth was fiery, glowing, tempestuous -- and in age he discovereth no symptom of cooling. This is that which I admire in him. I hate people who meet Time half-way. I am for no compromise with that inevitable spoiler. While he lives, J. E. will take his swing. -- It does me good, as I walk towards the street of my daily avocation, on some fine May morning, to meet him marching in a quite opposite direction, with a jolly handsome presence, and shining sanguine face, that indicates some purchase in his eye -- a Claude -- or a Hobbima -- for much of his enviable leisure is consumed at Christie's, and Phillips's -- or where not, to pick up pictures, and such gauds. On these occasions he mostly stoppeth me, to read a short lecture on

the advantage a person like me possesses above himself, in having his time occupied with business which he must do -- assureth me that he often feels it hang heavy on his hands -- wishes he had fewer holidays -- and goes off -- Westward Ho! -- chanting a tune, to Pall Mall -- perfectly convinced that he has convinced me -- while I proceed in my opposite direction tuneless.

It is pleasant again to see this Professor of Indifference doing the honours of his new purchase, when he has fairly housed it. You must view it in every light, till he has found the best -- placing it at this distance, and at that, but always suiting the focus of your sight to his own. You must spy at it through your fingers, to catch the aerial perspective -- though you assure him that to you the landscape shows much more agreeable without that artifice. Wo be to the luckless wight, who does not only not respond to his rapture, but who should drop an unseasonable intimation of preferring one of his anterior bargains to the present! -- The last is always his best hit -- his "Cynthia of the minute." -- Alas! how many a mild Madonna have I known to come in -- a Raphael ! -- keep its ascendancy for a few brief moons -- then, after certain intermedial degradations, from the front drawing-room to the back gallery, thence to the dark parlour, adopted in turn by each of the Carracci, under successive lowering ascriptions of filiation, mildly breaking its fall -- consigned to the oblivious lumber-room, go out at last a Lucca Giordano, or plain Carlo Maratti -- which things when I beheld musing upon the chances and mutabilities of fate below, hath made me to reflect upon the altered condition of great personages, or that woful Queen of Richard the Second set forth in pomp, She came adorned hither like sweet May. Sent back like Hollowmass or shortest day.

With great love for you, J. E. bath but a limited sympathy with what you feel or do. He lives in a world of his own, and makes slender guesses at what passes in your mind. He never pierces the marrow of your habits. He will tell an old established play-goer, that Mr. Such-a-one, of So-and-so (naming one of the theatres), is a very lively comedian -- as a piece of news! He advertised me but the other day of some pleasant green lanes which he had found out for me, knowing me to be a great walker, in my own immediate vicinity -- who have haunted the identical spot any time these twenty years ! -- He has not much respect for that class of feelings which goes by the name of sentimental. He applies the definition of real evil to bodily sufferings exclusively -- and rejecteth all others as imaginary. He is affected by the sight, or the bare supposition, of a creature in pain, to a degree which I have never witnessed out of womankind. A constitutional acuteness to this class of sufferings may in part account for this. The animal tribe in particular he taketh under his especial protection. A broken-winded or spur-galled horse is sure to find an advocate in him. An over-loaded ass is his client for ever. He is the apostle to the brute kind -- the never-failing friend of those who have none to care for them. The contemplation of a lobster boiled, or eels skinned alive, will wring him so, that "all for pity he could die." It will take the savour from his palate, and the rest from his pillow, for days and nights. With the intense feeling of Thomas Clarkson, he wanted only the steadiness of pursuit, and unity of purpose, of that "true yoke-fellow with Time," to have effected as much for the animal, as he bath done for the Negro Creation. but my uncontrollable cousin is but imperfectly

formed for purposes which demand cooperation. He cannot wait. His amelioration-plans must be ripened in a day. For this reason he has cut but an equivocal figure in benevolent societies, and combinations for the alleviation of human sufferings. His zeal constantly makes him to outrun, and put out, his coadjutors. He thinks of relieving, while they think of debating. He was black-balled out of a society for the Relief of , because the fervor of his humanity toiled beyond the formal apprehension, and creeping processes, of his associates. I shall always consider this distinction as a patent of nobility in the Elia family!

Do I mention these seeming inconsistencies to smile at, or upbraid, my unique cousin? Marry, heaven, and all good manners, and the understanding that should be between kinsfolk, forbid - - With all the strangenesses of this strangest of the Elias -- I would not have him in one jot or tittle other than he is; neither would I barter or exchange my wild kinsman for the most exact, regular, and every way consistent kinsman breathing.

In my next, reader, I may perhaps give you some account of my cousin Bridget -- if you are not already surfeited with cousins -- and take you by the hand, if you are willing to go with us, on an excursion which we made a summer or two since, in search of more cousins -

Through the green plains of pleasant Hertfordshire

7.7 Analysis of the Essay

The essay opens with the author discussing the uniqueness of having survived parents, comparing it to a man who has lived for sixty or seventy years. They express apprehension about being forgotten, and how it can lead to a sense of OBLIVION, as seen in a person's face in a long time. The author's aunt, a dear and good one, was devoted to her family and loved them unconditionally. She read books and devotional exercises, including Thomas Kempis and a Roman Catholic prayer book, despite being warned about their Papistical tendencies. Despite being too young to understand, she continued to attend church.

The author's aunt studied only books, but enjoyed reading *The Adventures of an Unfortunate Young Nobleman*. She frequented a chapel in Essex-street, not for doctrinal points but for the sermon and worship. She was a steadfast, friendly, and fine old Christian, with strong sense and a shrewd mind. Her only secular employment was splitting French beans, which she still enjoys today.

The author is born an orphan and has no siblings, except for a sister who died in infancy. They have two close cousins, James and Bridget Elia, who are older than them but still maintain close intimacy. They wish they would continue to treat them as younger brothers, even as they grow older. James is a unique cousin with a unique perspective on nature. His writings are filled with Shandian elements, making his story unique. However, James's doctrine is contradictory and contradictory to his temperament, which is high sanguine. He is a systematic

opponent of innovation and rejects anything that hasn't been tested. He is a man with a thousand ideas, but is hesitant to approach the romantic in others. He encourages common sense and cautions against absurd or singular actions. He disguises his passion for high art, buying only to sell it, to avoid promoting his own interests. He questions why a piece of art is displayed by him, and who can talk like him.

The author describes James as courageous and chary, preaching the doctrine of bowing to the great and the necessity of forms and manner in a man's life. He is known for his patience and wisdom, and is admired for his elaborate oratorship on the advantages of quiet and contentedness in the state. The philosopher's spirit is reminiscent of the Cham of Tartary. He is in an obstructing train station at John Murray's street, waiting for the train to complete its freight. He is frustrated and wishes for a rest, while the coachman is resentful for detaining them for so long. The coachman is determined to leave if the driver doesn't drive on time. A quick thinker is adept at inventing arguments and detecting sophistry, but struggles with logic and reasoning. He denies the existence of reason and wonders how humans came to understand it. He has speculative notions against laughter and believes wit is his aversion. He once criticized the Eton boys for becoming frivolous Members of Parliament, stating that these ingenuous lads will soon become frivolous.

The author admires J. E.'s fiery youth and his unwavering determination to keep his swing. They dislike people who meet time halfway, and J. E. will continue his swing while he lives. On a sunny May morning, they meet J. E. with a jolly, handsome presence and a sunny face. J. E. enjoys spending his leisure time at Christie's and Phillips's, often stopping to read about the advantages of having a busy life. Then the author describes him as "Professor of Indifference" who is pleased with his new purchase and encourages viewers to view it in various light conditions, ensuring the focus is on the object. The landscape is more appealing without the aerial perspective. The Professor is disappointed if the reader does not respond to his rapture and prefers his earlier deals. The Professor mentions the various types of objects, such as a Madonna, Raphael, and Lucca Giordano, which have varying degrees of success. The Professor reflects on the fates of great personages and the Queen of Richard the Second.

J. E. bath has limited sympathy for J. E.'s feelings and actions, as he lives in his own world and makes slender guesses about J. E.'s thoughts. He doesn't respect sentimental feelings and only applies the definition of real evil to bodily sufferings. J. E. is affected by the sight or supposition of a creature in pain, which he has never witnessed in humankind. He takes the animal tribe under his especial protection, making broken-winded or spur-galled horses and over-loaded asses his clients. He is an apostle to the brute kind, a friend of those without care. He is wretched by the thought of boiled lobsters or skinned eels, and desires a steady pursuit and unity of purpose. However, he is imperfectly formed for purposes that demand cooperation and is constantly seeking relief. He was blackballed out of a society for the Relief of — because his humanity toiled beyond formal apprehension.

The speaker expresses their disapproval of their unique cousin, Bridget, and their desire to

marry and maintain good manners. They also mention a recent excursion they made to search for more cousins, taking the reader on a journey through the green plains of pleasant Hertfordshire.

Check Your Progress

1. Discuss the importance of Romanticism in Lamb's Essays.

7.8 Summary

To sum up, it may be said that Lamb shows a rich variety in his choice of theme for his essays. It is the diversity of his thematic concerns that lends his essays a charming appeal. His essays have something to provide to every type of readers. Children, youth and the old can equally enjoy Lamb's essays which are characterised by rich subjective elements, sense of humour, minute observation of man and manners and also deep insight into the working of human mind. It is by virtue of the universal appeal of his essays that Lamb still continues to enjoy readership throughout the world.

7.9 Key Terms

- **Eloquent:** Able to use language and express your opinions well, especially when you speak in public
- **Multitude:** A very large number of people or things
- **Lyricism:** An artist's expression of emotion in an imaginative and beautiful way; the quality of being lyrical.
- **Nostalgia:** A wistful desire to return in thought or in fact to a former time in one's life, to one's home or homeland, or to one's family and friends; a sentimental yearning for the happiness of a former place or time. a nostalgia for his college days.
- **Religious convictions:** Religious conviction includes having or not having a religious conviction, belief, opinion or affiliation, and engaging or not engaging in religious activity.

7.10 Review Questions

1. What role does fiction play in Charles Lamb's essays?
2. Describe the role of family in Charles Lamb's writing.
3. What is the relationship between memory and nostalgia in Charles Lamb's essays?
4. How does Charles Lamb's writing style reflect the wider Romantic movement?
5. Discuss Charles Lamb's views on society, and what we can learn about his own ethics from those views.

7.11 References

- Albert, Edward : History of English Literature , New Delhi, Oup., 1978 Print
- Walker, Hugh : The English Essays and Essayists, London, J.M. Dent & Sons. Print
- Ward AC : English Literature : Chaucer to Bernard Shaw, London, Orient Longman Ltd., 1960. Print
- Ainger, Alfred : Lectures and Essays, London, Macmillon & Co.Ltd.,1905 Print
- Hallward , N.L. & : Essays of Elia, Macmillan & Co. Ltd., 1962.S.C. Hill (Ed) Print
- Goodman, WR : History of English Literature, OUP, New Delhi, Doaba House Book Sellers & Publishers, 2006. Print

UNIT 8: MY RELATIONS AND OTHER ESSAYS

STRUCTURE

- 8.1 Objectives
- 8.2 Introduction
- 8.3 Style of Writing in the Essay
- 8.4 Pathos
- 8.5 Charles Lamb as a critic
- 8.6 Other works of Charles Lamb
- 8.7 Comments on Lamb
- 8.8 Summary
- 8.9 Key Points
- 8.10 Review Questions
- 8.11 References

8.1 Objectives

The learners shall know the following:

- The comparison of works of Charles Lamb.
- The writing style of Charles Lamb.
- Importance of the style of writing in the essay.
- Contribution of Lamb towards prose writing of the age.

8.2 Introduction

It is generally supposed that Montaigne is the first writer who wrote what may technically be called essay. Bacon was the first English writer who transplanted essay into England. Among the intimate and self-revealing essayists of whom Montaigne is the original and Boyle the first exponent in England, Lamb has been rightly called the prince of English essayists. Lamb is constantly autobiographical & his whole life may be reconstructed from *The Essays of Elia*. He leads the reader into confidence and conceals nothing from him. Lamb's place in literature is unique. He was a fine imaginative critic and something of a poet, but he lives, and will live, by virtue of prose essays unsurpassed in their charm, prodigality of fancy and literary artifice, marked by a distinguished common sense, starred with passages of great beauty and profound insight and suffused with a kindly and capricious humour.

8.3 Style of Writing in the Essay

There are many points in which Lamb imitates the Elizabethan writers: e.g., in his love for word-coining, his fondness for alliteration, his use of compound words, his formation of adjectives from proper names, his frequent use of Latinisms. Then again he introduces many words now obsolete, and only to be found in Elizabethan writers, the result being a language which, like that of Spenser, could never have been spoken at any time; but, besides this, he is so well acquainted with the Elizabethan writers that when he follows their veins of thought he seems insensibly to adopt their style and the very cadence of their writing.

When reflective, as in *New Year's Eve* and the *Popular Fallacies*, his style resembles that of Sir Thomas Browne; when fantastic, as in the *Chapter on Ears*, that of Burton; when witty, as in *Poor Relations*, that of Fuller. The result of this is a kind of mannerism, which is not so much an affectation, though he calls it "a self-pleasing quaintness," as the natural effect of his preference for the ancient authors.

His mind was so saturated with what he read that he could not avoid the use of their phraseology any more than a child brought up amongst his elders can avoid using what we call old-fashioned expressions. On rare occasions he used this antique style where the subject was not capable of that deep thought and fine observation with which we are accustomed to associate it. On these occasions even his powerful fancy is unable to make it pleasing. But, generally speaking, he shows great skill in adapting his style to his subject.

In dealing with matters purely modern, as in *Newspapers Thirty-five Years Ago*, his style is purely modern also; in his rural descriptions his tone is almost Wordsworthian. But whatever his style may be, his thoughts are his own, fresh and original, and his honest admiration of what was great in the past has done much, at least in literary circles, to check that conceit of the present, which is so common in a rapidly-advancing civilization.

➤ **Dramatic Characteristics**

Proctor writes: "Some of his phantasms—the people of the Old South-Sea House, Mrs. Battle, the Benchers of the Middle Temple,...might be grouped into Comedies. His sketches are always (to quote his own eulogy of Marvell) 'full of a witty delicacy,' and if properly brought out and marshaled would do honour to the stage." This remark is true of almost all the characters in the Essays; and it is somewhat surprising that, with this power of characterization, his two direct attempts at the drama, *John Woodvil* and *Mr. H—*, should have been such failures. It seems that he could harmonize a scene, but not arrange or work out a plot. But besides this power of characterization, a certain dramatic effect is produced by the flexibility of his descriptive style, as may be seen in its rapid changes as he describes the different clerks in the South-Sea House.

➤ Use of Quotations

As a rule, Landor rightly remarks, the use of quotation only marks the weakness of the writer, and in fact it is only justifiable when the quotation adapts itself to the context, and does not strike the reader with any sense of incongruity. There is no reason why a writer should avoid using an idea, or the form in which a previous writer expressed that idea, if he can make its setting correspond to it. This is the justification of Milton in his adaptation of passages from the Greek and Latin writers, and it is the justification of Lamb, who makes perhaps a more free use of quotation than does any other the modern prose writers. Further, a careful perusal of his works will show that the quotations which he uses occur so repeatedly that they must have been constantly in his mind, and not raked up for the occasion. Amongst others the student should note the following kinds of quotations: pretended quotations, quotations from his own works, random quotations, or half recollections, transformed quotations, condensed quotations, combined quotations, adapted quotations, parodies, and single-word quotations.

➤ Humour:

The terms Wit, Humour, and Fun are often confused, but they are really different in meaning. The first is based on intellect, the second on insight and sympathy, the third on vigour and freshness of mind and body. Lamb's writings show all the three qualities, but what most distinguishes him is Humour, for his sympathy is ever strong and active. In *Poor Relations* the opening is sheer Wit, but we are more inclined to cry than to laugh when we read the story of Favel's flight from the University. "I do not know how," says Lamb, "upon a subject which I began with treating half seriously, I should have fallen upon a recital so eminently painful"; but this is Lamb's way, he cannot even laugh at people without presently putting himself in their place and taking their view of the matter.

Humour might be defined as extreme sensitiveness to the true proportion of things. We are so accustomed to exaggerate one or other side of a fact that the true proportion, when seen, strikes us with a sense of incongruity, and so excites laughter; but the laughter is really at our own previous misconceptions, and therefore borders on the painful. Wit, on the other hand, is an intellectual triumph, bringing things into connection that before appeared totally different. The laughter it causes is that of self-satisfaction, and may even be accompanied by cruel feelings towards others. Fun is, as Ollier says, "the creation of animal spirits and health"; it depends on the possession of sufficient vigor to forget ourselves for the moment and to look upon everything around us as formed for our amusement. We see this Fun in *All Fool's Day*, which is largely composed of mere pleasant nonsense like the idle talk when the wine is going round after dinner; and in *Roast Pig*, which is full of sheer absurdities.

- a) **Punning:** this same love of Fun is seen in Lamb's fondness for punning, which he indulged more freely in his conversation than in his writing. It may be remembered that punning was a characteristic of the Elizabethan writers.
- b) **Absurd Details:** So, also, he frequently inserts absurd details. He has been long striving to learn "God save the King," but without much success, "Yet hath the loyalty

of Elia never been impeached.” He has borrowed from everyone he knows, “It has been calculated that he laid a tythe part of the inhabitants (of England) under contribution.”

- c) **Inventions:** sometimes his details are mere inventions, as the discussion at St. Omer’s, when he was a student there, of the lawfulness of beating pigs to death, and the story of the little chimney-sweep found sleeping on the state bed in Arundel Castle. So also, the thoroughly paced liar in *The Old Margate Hoy* can hardly have been any one but Lamb himself.
- d) **Improving upon Facts:** then, again, he takes the liberty of improving upon fact. In *Amicus Redivus* he tells us that he drew his friend Dyer from the New River, whereas he was away from home at the time and arrived only after Dyer had been rescued and put to bed.
- e) **Perverse Interpretations:** sometimes he indulges in perverse interpretations. When his friend hears some one playing upon the piano and knows it cannot be the maid (because, of course, she would not dare to take such a liberty), he pretends it was because of some subtle superiority in his own strumming, due to the fact that he is an educated man.
- f) **Mystification:** another form taken by his Fun is the constant mystification to which he treats his readers. After speaking of real persons in the *South-Sea House* he pretends they have no existence, “I have fooled the reader to the top of his bent.” In *Christ’s Hospital* he begins in the character of Coleridge, but towards the end he speaks as himself. His *Memoir of Liston*, as has been mentioned before, was an absolute fiction, and he prides himself on the success of his imposition.
- g) **Startling Metaphors:** there is a mixture of Fun and Wit in his metaphors and comparisons. The clerks of the South-Sea House remind him of the animals in Noah’s Ark; the sage who invented a less expensive way of roasting pigs than that which necessitated the burning down of a house he compares to “our Locke”. The cook in *The Old Margate Hoy* reminds him of Ariel.
- h) **Irony:** his Fun passes into Humor when there is an admixture of reflection. He is fond of a kind of reversed irony. He makes a statement or uses a phrase which at first is unpleasing, but becomes pleasing when we consider it more carefully. For instance, he writes of “the rational antipathies of the great English and French nations.” He says of himself and his sister, “We are generally in harmony, with occasional bickering, as it should be among near relations,” and describes the coast-guard men as carrying on “a legitimated civil war in the deplorable absence of a foreign one.”
- i) **Little Hits:** the Essays are full of little hits at himself and others. He tells us that when at Oxford he is often mistaken for one of the Dons, but the mistake is made only by the dim-eyed vergers. Coleridge claims that the title of property in a book is in “exact ratio to the claimant’s power of understanding and appreciating the same. Should he go on acting upon this theory, which of our shelves is safe?” he tells us he must touch gently

upon the foibles of his sister, "Bridget does not like to be told of her faults." He wishes his friend's wife, a Frenchwoman, had carried away from his library not the works of Margaret of Newcastle but "Zimmerman on Solitude!"

- j) **Humorous Touches:** everywhere in the Essays we find scattered little humorous touches. Mrs. Battle loses her rubber because she cannot bring herself to utter the common phrase, "Two for his heels." When Bobo is discovered eating the roast pigs by his father, and finds time to attend to his remonstrances and blows, he seizes a fresh pig and tears it into two parts, but it is the "lesser half" which he thrusts into the "fists" of his father.
- k) **Paradox and Oxymoron:** all most all the reflective writers have been fond of paradox and Lamb not less than others, so we observe many passages, such as, "Awoke into sleep and found the vision true," "Whom single blessedness had soured to the world," "The sophisticating medium of moral uses." Now and then we notice instances of oxymoron, "Fortunate piece of ill-fortune."
-

8.4 Pathos

Humor is very nearly allied to Pathos. Our smiles and our tears are alike limited by our powers of insight and sympathy. Lamb's humor was largely the effect of a sane and healthy protest against the over-whelming melancholy induced by the morbid taint in his mind. He laughed to save himself from weeping, but as has been mentioned above, he could not prevent his mind from passing at times to the sadder aspects of life. In *Rosamond Gray*, the description of his dead brother in *Dream Children*, the flight of Favel from the University in *Poor Relations*, the story of the sick boy who "had no friends," in *The Old Margate Hoy*, and in many other instances we have examples of true pathos. In *New Year's Eve*, in *Witches and Other Night Fears*, and the *Confessions of a Drunkard*, the feeling is so intense as to inspire rather terror than pity.

8.5 Lamb as a Critic

Lamb as Critic (1980) collects his criticism from all sources, including letters. Lamb occasionally wrote as a correspondent, he also wrote some plays, poetry and for children. But it is his prose, which has sustained. He soon comprehended that his inclination was not towards poetry, so he made essays, love of his life. He was a true Londoner. Lamb's criticism often appears in the form of marginalia, reactions, and responses: brief comments, delicately phrased, but hardly ever argued through.

Thus truly E.V. Lucas, his principal biographer, has referred to Lamb as the most lovable figure in English literature.

8.6 Other Works of Charles Lamb

Lamb's first publication was the inclusion of four sonnets in Coleridge's *Poems on Various Subjects*, published in 1796 by Joseph Cottle. The sonnets were significantly influenced by the poems of Burns and the sonnets of William Bowles, a largely forgotten poet of the late 18th century. Lamb's poems garnered little attention and are seldom read today. As he himself came to realise, he was a much more talented prose stylist than poet. Indeed, one of the most celebrated poets of the day—William Wordsworth—wrote to John Scott as early as 1815 that Lamb "writes prose exquisitely"—and this was five years before Lamb began *The Essays of Elia* for which he is now most famous.

Notwithstanding, Lamb's contributions to Coleridge's second edition of the *Poems on Various Subjects* showed significant growth as a poet. These poems included *The Tomb of Douglas* and *A Vision of Repentance*. Because of a temporary falling out with Coleridge, Lamb's poems were to be excluded in the third edition of the *Poems* though as it turned out a third edition never emerged. Instead, Coleridge's next publication was the monumentally influential *Lyrical Ballads* co-published with Wordsworth. Lamb, on the other hand, published a book entitled *Blank Verse* with Charles Lloyd, the mentally unstable son of the founder of Lloyds Bank. Lamb's most famous poem was written at this time and entitled "The Old Familiar Faces". Like most of Lamb's poems, it is unabashedly sentimental, and perhaps for this reason it is still remembered and widely read today, being often included in anthologies of British and Romantic period poetry. Of particular interest to Lambarians is the opening verse of the original version of "The Old Familiar Faces", which is concerned with Lamb's mother, whom Mary Lamb killed. It was a verse that Lamb chose to remove from the edition of his *Collected Work* published in 1818:

I had a mother, but she died, and left me,
Died prematurely in a day of horrors –
All, all are gone, the old familiar faces.

In the final years of the 18th century, Lamb began to work on prose, first in a novella entitled *Rosamund Gray*, which tells the story of a young girl whose character is thought to be based on Ann Simmons, an early love interest. Although the story is not particularly successful as a narrative because of Lamb's poor sense of plot, it was well thought of by Lamb's contemporaries and led Shelley to observe, "what a lovely thing is *Rosamund Gray*! How much knowledge of the sweetest part of our nature in it!" (Quoted in Barnett, page 50)

In the first years of the 19th century, Lamb began a fruitful literary cooperation with his sister Mary. Together they wrote at least three books for William Godwin's *Juvenile Library*. The most successful of these was *Tales From Shakespeare*, which ran through two editions for Godwin and has been published dozens of times in countless editions ever since. The book contains artful prose summaries of some of Shakespeare's most well-loved works. According to Lamb, he worked primarily on Shakespeare's tragedies, while Mary focused mainly on the comedies.

Lamb's essay "On the Tragedies of Shakespeare Considered with Reference to their Fitness for Stage Representation", which was originally published in the *Reflector* in 1811 with the title "On Garrick, and Acting; and the Plays of Shakspeare, considered with reference to their fitness for Stage Representation", has often been taken as the ultimate Romantic dismissal of the theatre.^[15] In the essay, Lamb argues that Shakespeare should be read, rather than performed, in order to protect Shakespeare from butchering by mass commercial performances. While the essay certainly criticises contemporary stage practice, it also develops a more complex reflection on the possibility of representing Shakespearean dramas:

Shakespeare's dramas are for Lamb the object of a complex cognitive process that does not require sensible data, but only imaginative elements that are suggestively elicited by words. In the altered state of consciousness that the dreamlike experience of reading stands for, Lamb can see Shakespeare's own conceptions mentally materialized.^[16]

Besides contributing to Shakespeare's reception with his and his sister's book *Tales From Shakespeare*, Lamb also contributed to the recovery of acquaintance with Shakespeare's contemporaries. Accelerating the increasing interest of the time in the older writers, and building for himself a reputation as an antiquarian, in 1808 Lamb compiled a collection of extracts from the old dramatists, *Specimens of the English Dramatic Poets Who Lived About the Time of Shakespeare*. This also contained critical "characters" of the old writers,^[17] which added to the flow of significant literary criticism, primarily of Shakespeare and his contemporaries, from Lamb's pen. Immersion in seventeenth-century authors, such as Robert Burton and Sir Thomas Browne, also changed the way Lamb wrote, adding a distinct flavour to his writing style.^[18]

Lamb's friend the essayist William Hazlitt thus characterised him: "Mr. Lamb ... does not march boldly along with the crowd He prefers *bye-ways* to *highways*. When the full tide of human life pours along to some festive show, to some pageant of a day, Elia would stand on one side to look over an old book-stall, or stroll down some deserted pathway in search of a pensive description over a tottering doorway, or some quaint device in architecture, illustrative of embryon art and ancient manners. Mr. Lamb has the very soul of an antiquarian "^[19]

Although he did not write his first Elia essay until 1820, Lamb's gradual perfection of the essay form for which he eventually became famous began as early as 1811 in a series of open letters to Leigh Hunt's *Reflector*. The most famous of these early essays is "The Londoner", in which Lamb famously derides the contemporary fascination with nature and the countryside. In another well-known *Reflector* essay of 1811, he deemed William Hogarth's images to be books, filled with "the teeming, fruitful, suggestive meaning of words. Other pictures we look at; his pictures we read."^[20] He would continue to fine-tune his craft, experimenting with different essayistic voices and personae, for the better part of the next quarter century.

Though soon after his mother's death he announced his intention to leave poetry "to my betters," Lamb continued to write verse of various kinds throughout his life: sonnets, lyrics, blank verse, light verse, prologues and epilogues to the plays of friends, satirical verse, verse

translations, verse for children, and finally *Album Verses* (1830), written to please young ladies who kept books of such tributes.

Lamb's prestigious essays did not appear in published form until about 1821. It was then that Lamb began contributing to *The London Magazine* a series of essays by "Elia." The essays ran until 1823. Their popularity led to a second series between 1823 and 1825, also largely published in *The London Magazine*. This second series was published together as a book in 1833, *The Last Essays of Elia*.

From a fairly young age Lamb desired to be a poet but never gained the success that he had hoped. Lamb lived under the poetic shadow of his friend Coleridge. In the final years of the 18th century Lamb began to work on prose with the novella entitled *Rosamund Gray*, a story of a young girl who was thought to be inspired by Ann Simmons, with whom Charles Lamb was thought to be in love. Although the story is not particularly successful as a narrative because of Lamb's poor sense of plot, it was well thought of by Lamb's contemporaries and led Shelley to observe —what a lovely thing is *Rosamund Gray*! How much knowledge of the sweetest part of our nature in it.

In the first years of the 19th century Lamb began his fruitful literary cooperation with his sister Mary. Together they wrote at least three books for William Godwin's Juvenile Library. The most successful of these was of course *Tales From Shakespeare*. Lamb also contributed a footnote to Shakespearean studies at this time with his essay "On the Tragedies of Shakespeare," 'Lamb's first appearances in print were as a poet, with contributions to collections by Coleridge (1796) and by Charles Lloyd (1798).

Check Your Progress

1. Discuss in details the major works of Charles Lamb.

8.7 Comments on Lamb

- His intensity of emotion is never once matched with an intensely personal manner of expression: he does not find the one perfect mould, and hardly ever lights upon the miraculous right word....” – A C Ward
- His poetry,” “makes a pendant to his Essays, and it is a lustrous and significant pendant.” The roles of artist and critic, of course, demand very different abilities: Lamb was, in correspondence, an able critic of the poetry of Coleridge and Wordsworth, who sometimes took his advice. Seymour

- “Mr. Lamb has succeeded, not by conforming to the Spirit of the Age, but in opposition to it. He prefers bye-ways to highways. When the full tide of human life pours along to some festive show, to some pageant of a day, Elia would stand on one side to look over an old book-stall, or stroll down some deserted pathway in search of a pensive description over a tottering doorway, or some quaint device in architecture, illustrative of embryo art and ancient manners. — Mr. Lamb has the very soul of an antiquarian, and this implies a reflecting humanity; He is shy, sensitive, the reverse of every thing coarse, vulgar, obtrusive, and common-place William Hazlitt (Elia, and Geoffrey Crayon.)
- Lamb was “the very noblest of human beings ... [he had] the habit of hoping cheerfully and kindly on behalf of those who were otherwise objects of moral blame [Lamb would come to no] final conclusions [or to] any opinions with regard to any individual which seemed to shut him out from the sympathy or the brotherly feeling of the just and good ... Thomas De Quincey

8.8 Summary

Charles Lamb, the Prince of English Essayist, occupies a distinctive place as an English writer. If Bacon is remembered for his massive wisdom and Browne for his lofty heights of eloquence in his musical prose, Lamb will always be remembered for his charm. Hugh Walker remarked, “A man may be most sagacious and yet fail to win love, as Lamb won and still remains it.” His personal essays were published in the *London Magazine*, known as *Essays of Elia* (1823) and *The Last Essays of Elia* (1833). During the years 1820-1825, Charles Lamb attained undying eminence as a writer because of his essays which had appeal, humor, and sensitivity, observation and peculiarities at the same time. The great French critic Charles-Augustin Sainte-Beuve admired Lamb’s early sonnet “Innocence” so much that he translated it, but most critics then and now agree with Leigh Hunt that Lamb “wanted sufficient heat and music to render his poetry as good as his prose.” William Hazlitt praised Lamb in high terms: “The prose essays, under the signature of Elia form the most delightful section amongst Lamb’s works.” Alaric A. Watts, wrote that Lamb’s *prose* is often admirably poetic, so that “we miss not the rhyme.” See his jingle on Lamb

8.9 Key Points

Main Points of his Prose Style

- Lamb’s essays possess poetic quality.
- His essays have a strain of melancholy and gloom.
- His prose style is a mixture of many styles.

- His style is based on prose masters of 17th century such as Browne, Burton and Fuller.
- There is little doubt about the fact that the charm of Lamb's essays lies mainly in their style, which is unique.
- As a stylist he does walk in the past.
- Allusiveness is another very important feature of Lamb's style.
- Lamb is really an artist with words.
- He uses words very carefully to achieve his desired effect.
- There is conversational ease and flexibility.
- He used short simple and direct sentences.
- Lamb's style has its own originality.

8.10 Review Questions

1. Comment critically on Lamb's essays.
 2. Assess Lamb's contribution to the prose literature of the Eighteenth century.
 3. Evaluate the Essay My Relations by Charles Lamb.
 4. Justify Lamb as a critic.
 5. Elucidate the personal elements present in the Lamb's essays.
-

8.11 References

- *Blank Verse*, by Lamb and Charles Lloyd (London: Printed by T. Bensley for J. & A. Arch, 1798).
- *A Tale of Rosamund Gray and Old Blind Margaret* (Birmingham: Printed by Thomas Pearson, 1798; London: Printed for Lee & Hurst, 1798).
- *John Woodvil: A Tragedy* (London: Printed by T. Plummer for G. & J. Robinson, 1802).
- *The King and Queen of Hearts* (London: Printed for Thos Hodgkins, 1805).
- *Tales from Shakespear. Designed for the Use of Young Persons*, 2 volumes, by Charles Lamb and Mary Lamb, attributed to Charles Lamb (London: Printed for Thomas Hodgkins at the Juvenile Library, 1807; Philadelphia: Published by Bradford & Inskeep, and by Inskeep & Bradford, New York, printed by J. Maxwell, 1813).
- *The Adventures of Ulysses* (London: Printed by T. Davison for the Juvenile Library, 1808; New York: Harper, 1879).

BLOCK-3: MATTHEW ARNOLD

UNIT 9: Victorian Poetry & Biography

UNIT 10: Criticism in Victorian Age

UNIT 11: Arnold's theory and his Works

UNIT 12: Arnold's Preface to Lyrical Ballads

UNIT 9: VICTORIAN POETRY & BIOGRAPHY

STRUCTURE

9.1 Objectives

9.2 Introduction

9.3 Victorian Poetry

9.4 Characteristics of Victorian Poetry

9.5 Characteristics of Victorian Poetry

9.6 Influence of Victorian Literature

9.7 Summery

9.8 Key Terms

9.9 Review Questions

9.10 References

9.1 Objectives

The learners shall be introduced to the following from this unit:

- About Victorian Age.
- Characteristics of Victorian poetry.
- Biography in Victorian Age.
- Major Victorian writers.

9.2 Introduction

When we remember Victorian literature, we might think immediately of the three-volume novels of the Brontë sisters and Charles Dickens, the extravagant comedies of Oscar Wilde and Gilbert and Sullivan, and the unforgettable fictional characters—Arthur Conan Doyle’s Sherlock Holmes, Lewis Carroll’s little Alice, Bram Stoker’s Dracula—who populate world culture to this day. But in 19th-century Britain, poetry was as prestigious as ever: thanks to advances in literacy and publishing, poetry had never been read by a wider audience (from schoolchildren to Queen Victoria herself) or been more profitable commercially. Books by the most popular poets routinely sold out through several editions.

“The sea is calm tonight,” observes the somber speaker of Matthew Arnold’s “Dover Beach” (1867), listening to “the grating roar / Of pebbles” at the shore, “The eternal note of sadness”

over the waters. In Arnold's mid-19th-century Britain, another metaphorical sea, "The Sea of Faith," was ebbing irretrievably: "But now I only hear / Its melancholy, long, withdrawing roar"; once seemingly "So various, so beautiful, so new," Arnold's world had "really neither joy, nor love, nor light, / Nor certitude, nor peace, nor help for pain." More than a century and a half after its publication, "Dover Beach" remains a durable expression of Victorian poetics: its intricate patterning and stagy theatrics, its nostalgia for simpler times, and its uncertainties about an increasingly mechanized modernity. Arnold once wrote that "poetry is at bottom a criticism of life," an enterprise of the utmost artistic and moral stakes. Over the course of Queen Victoria's long reign (1837–1901), Arnold and his contemporary British poets criticized contemporary life amid its epochal changes: the radical ideas of evolution and materialism, shifting understandings of gender and class, and an economic and industrial explosion that helped make the British Empire the largest in history.

9.3 Victorian Poetry

Victorian poetry's most distinctive qualities may stem, paradoxically, from its proximity to other genres and forms: theater, fiction, music, and art, all of them poetry's competitors in a fully stocked cultural marketplace. Asking in the 1833 essay "What Is Poetry?" the philosopher John Stuart Mill responded with terms pilfered from drama: "Poetry is feeling, confessing itself to itself, in moments of solitude. ... All poetry is of the nature of soliloquy." In the era's most heralded poetic innovation, Alfred, Lord Tennyson and Robert Browning hybridized drama, fiction, and lyric into the dramatic monologue form: a poet impersonates a fictional or historical character and addresses a silent audience without any narrative framing or guidance. Visually minded poets—including the poet-painter Dante Gabriel Rossetti and the writer-designer William Morris, both associated with the Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood—pushed poetry toward the picturesque, relishing pictorial detail and painterly embellishments. Tennyson, Algernon Charles Swinburne, and Gerard Manley Hopkins wrote lyrically lush poems that aspired toward music, delighting in mesmerizing meters, (such as Hopkins's invention, sprung rhythm) and virtuosic braids of alliteration and rhyme.

When Victorian poets looked back into literary history, they uncovered roles fit for dramatic reenactment in myth, Arthurian legend, and the plays of William Shakespeare. And they peered up close at the inspired poets of British Romanticism, their immediate predecessors, whose radical fervor and imaginative boundlessness they were too sourly skeptical to re-create. When poets looked forward, they saw a depersonalized future in which (in the words of Tennyson's "Locksley Hall") "the individual withers, and the world is more and more." That expanding, stifling "world" saw innumerable advances in the natural and social sciences. None were more earthshaking than evolution or Charles Darwin's theory of natural selection, introduced in his landmark book *On the Origin of Species* (1859) and applied to human evolution in *The Descent of Man* (1871); his designer-less account of life precipitated a crisis of religious disbelief. If one reaction to that apparently senseless world was the world-weariness of Tennyson and Arnold and later Thomas Hardy, another was the redoubling of a newly urgent religious poetry, ranging from the plain, impassioned, devotional verse of Christina Rossetti to Hopkins's riveting spontaneity. Still another reaction was an embrace of senselessness in the nonsense

poetry of Edward Lear and Lewis Carroll (aka Charles Lutwidge Dodgson): a master draftsman and a mathematician, respectively, who both brought to English poetry not only their learning but also reveries and comic disproportions, gleeful non sequiturs, and bewitching neologisms, such as “runcible spoon” and “frabjous day.”

his period of tumultuous change at home was also the peak of England’s so-called imperial century. Accelerated by the Second Industrial Revolution and the transformative technologies of the steamship and telegraph, the British Empire embarked on a period of unrivaled naval and military expansion, colonization and competition, and global trade. By the end of Victoria’s reign, the Empire encompassed territories on every continent but Antarctica, living up to its hyperbolic epithet: “the empire on which the sun never set.”

Britain’s imperial reach affected Victorian poets of all styles and subjects: their poems responded to headline news explicitly—Tennyson’s “The Charge of the Light Brigade”—or translated it to allegory—Christina Rossetti’s “Goblin Market.” Notoriously, some poems cheered on racist imperialism—Rudyard Kipling’s “The White Man’s Burden.” Others answered mounting desires for exotica and Eastern themes, such as the *Rubáiyát of Omar Khayyám*, Edward FitzGerald’s translations of quatrains by the 11th- and 12th-century Persian astronomer and poet. As white men exercised power over the globe, back in England, women were expected to meet the domestic, self-sacrificing ideal of “the angel in the house” (the title of Coventry Patmore’s once everywhere-read, now everywhere-bemoaned, poem). Yet no previous era in English poetry boasted more models of women poets, from the feminist reinventions of Elizabeth Barrett Browning to the pseudonymous personae of Emily Brontë (published under the pen name Ellis Bell) and the collaborative pair of Katharine Bradley and her niece Edith Cooper, writing together under the name Michael Field.

To early-20th-century modernists who defined their art in opposition, and even to contemporary readers, the adjective *Victorian* can connote prudishness, moralizing, or outmoded conventionality. But late Victorian poetry looks forward to Modernism’s estrangements and extremes, with its fixation on moral and cultural decadence, transgressions of norms around identity and sexuality, and esteem for the artistic values of difficulty and compression. “Art for art’s sake,” an English translation of the French motto “*l’art pour l’art*,” crystallized the late-19th-century doctrine of aestheticism, which swerved away from nihilistic despair over life’s meaninglessness by wagering everything on the meanings made within art. Aestheticism’s most eloquent proponent was the critic Walter Pater: “To burn always with this hard, gemlike flame, to maintain this ecstasy, is success in life,” he concludes in *Studies in the History of the Renaissance* (1873); “we have an interval, and then our place knows us no more,” so “our one chance lies in expanding that interval, in getting as many pulsations as possible into the given time.” With his teaching and rhapsodic prose alone, Pater emerged as an important influence on his former students Oscar Wilde and Gerard Manley Hopkins, who transformed aestheticist principles into verse-lines of overpowering sensation and ardent queer eroticism.

The following poets, poems, guides, articles, and recordings survey the many poetries springing up during the Victorian era. Included are laureates and bestsellers, as well as marginalized poets recovered by 20th- and 21st-century readers. When read and reread, this

already diverse era has become, over time, only more diverse: this introduction offers one snapshot of a vibrant, ever-changing period.

9.4 Historical Background

England was moving steadily in the direction of becoming Europe's most stable and prosperous country. The industrial revolution, the railway age, steam engines were being used in mines, factories and ships. Small towns were beginning to swell into smoky centers of manufacturing industry. Unable to adapt to the new circumstances the peasant farmer had to leave his land and emigrate to the colonies or drift to the industrial towns where there was a growing demand for labour. Economy grew from 1846 because of Free Trade. Salaries were low and therefore, industries became more competitive in terms of exports. The basis for this growth was: coal mining, iron foundry and the cotton industry. Victorian poetry is fundamentally a continuation of the Romantic movement.

In 1832, Parliament passed a law changing the British electoral system. It was known as the Great Reform Act. This was a response to many years of people criticizing the electoral system as unfair. The term 'Oxford Movement' is often used to describe the whole of what might be called the Catholic revival in the Church of England. The main objective of this movement was to reform society and rescue it from the spiritual decay.

9.5 Characteristics of Victorian Poetry

- Victorian poetry employs more humor and whimsy than the prior Romantic Period. Despite the whimsy, in the Victorian Era, poetry and literature take a more harsh and utilitarian view of nature and philosophy.
- Victorian form favored narrative and length over the short, lyric poems that were popular in Romantic poetry. They emphasized imagery less, and instead they focused on meter and rhythm. Themes were much more realistic, identifying emotions such as isolation, despair and general pessimism.
- Several factors that influenced Victorian poetry and literature were the conflicts between scientific discoveries, such as evolution, and faith, the industrialization of nations and a growing social consciousness about reform movements for better working conditions for women and children.
- Even though many Victorian poets struggled with a loss of faith, there was still a sense of high morality that they held close and revered. Victorian poets were interested in classical and medieval literature. They loved the heroic stories and courtly attitudes. Through their writing, they tried to encourage readers toward more noble actions and attitudes.

- The Victorian Poetry was quite realistic in nature and quite less idealized as compared to the Romantic Poets who were idealists and believed in *Art for the Art Sake*. Nature, that was everything for the Romantics lost that idealized status in the Victorian era and became just a source of leisure and inspiration for the poets.
- Romantic Poetry mainly focused on rural and rustic life. It is no way related to city life. On the other hand, Victorian poets used language as well as themes common to city life and thus wrote about the masses and for the masses.
- There was a drastic increase in the city population that gave rise to slums, poverty, unemployment, corruption diseases, deaths etc.

Realism

The Victorian Poetry was quite realistic in nature and quite less idealised as compared to the Romanic Poets who were idealists and believed in *Art for the Art Sake*. Nature, that was everything for the Romantics lost that idealised position in the Victorian era and became just a source of leisure and inspiration for the poets.

Focus on Masses

Romantic Poetry mainly focused on rural and rustic life. It is no way related to city life. On the other hand, Victorian poets used language as well as themes common to city life and thus wrote about the masses and for the masses.

Pessimism

Victorians were quite realistic and thus were more concerned about the reality rather than the ideal world. Due to the industrial revolution and advancement in science and technology, there was a drastic increase in the city population that gave rise to slums, poverty, unemployment, corruption diseases, deaths etc.

Thus, Victorian Poetry which focused on the pains and sufferings of commoners had a note of pessimism.

Science and Technology

The advancement in science and inventions was welcomed by the Victorian poets. It made them believe that a man can find all solutions to his problems and sufferings. They made their readers believe that they should use science for their betterment.

Questioning to God

It was an important feature of Victorian poetry. The development of empirical science, rationalism and radicalism led the people to give up religious thoughts and be more sceptic. Moreover, corruption in the Church, defining the morality of Priests, etc also led the people to question the religious institutions.

Sense of Responsibility

The Romantics believed in “return in nature”. A number of the Romantics did not like the city life and instead of giving voice to the victims of industrialisation, they left the city life. On the other hand, Victoria poets took the responsibility of social reform and gave voice to the commoners by living with them.

Morality

Though morality saw a steep decline in the Victorian Era, a number of poets tried to retain it by encouraging the people to be honest and noble.

Check Your Progress

1. Discuss the sense of Responsibility as a characteristic of Victorian Poetry.

9.6 Influence of Victorian Literature

Writers from the United States and the British colonies of Australia, New Zealand, and Canada were influenced by the literature of Britain and are often classed as a part of Victorian literature, although they were gradually developing their own distinctive voices.^[20] Victorian writers of Canadian literature include Grant Allen, Susanna Moodie and Catherine Parr Traill. Australian literature has the poets Adam Lindsay Gordon and Banjo Paterson, who wrote *Waltzing Matilda*, and New Zealand literature includes Thomas Bracken and Frederick Edward Maning. From the sphere of literature of the United States during this time are some of the country's greats including: Emily Dickinson, Ralph Waldo Emerson, Nathaniel Hawthorne, Oliver Wendell Holmes Sr., Henry James, Herman Melville, Harriet Beecher Stowe, Henry David Thoreau, Mark Twain and Walt Whitman.

The problem with the classification of "Victorian literature" is the great difference between the early works of the period and the later works which had more in common with the writers of the Edwardian period and many writers straddle this divide. People such as Arthur Conan

Doyle, Rudyard Kipling, H. G. Wells, Bram Stoker, H. Rider Haggard, Jerome K. Jerome and Joseph Conrad all wrote some of their important works during Victoria's reign but the sensibility of their writing is frequently regarded as Edwardian.

9.7 Summary

Robert Browning (1812–1889) and Alfred Tennyson (1809–1892) were notable poets in Victorian England. Thomas Hardy wrote poetry throughout his life, but did not publish a collection until 1898.^[13] The poetry of Gerard Manley Hopkins (1844–1889) was published posthumously in 1918. Algernon Charles Swinburne (1837–1909) is also considered an important literary figure of the period, especially his poems and critical writings. Early poetry of W. B. Yeats was also published in Victoria's reign. It was not until the last decades of the 19th century that any significant theatrical works were produced, beginning with Gilbert and Sullivan's comic operas of the 1870s, George Bernard Shaw's (1856–1950) plays of the 1890s, and Oscar Wilde's (1854–1900) *The Importance of Being Earnest*.

Elizabeth Barrett Browning and Robert Browning became acquainted first by reading each other's poetry and both produced poems inspired by their relationship. Both Matthew Arnold and Gerard Manley Hopkins wrote poems that sit somewhere in between the exultation of nature of the romantic Poetry and the Georgian Poetry of the early 20th century. However, Hopkins's poetry was not published until 1918. Arnold's works anticipate some of the themes of these later poets, while Hopkins drew inspiration from verse forms of Old English poetry such as *Beowulf*.

The reclaiming of the past was a major part of Victorian literature with an interest in both classical literature and also medieval literature of England. This movement can be traced back to Letitia Elizabeth Landon, especially her poetry collections, such as *The Troubadour*. And *The Golden Violet* with its *Tales of Romance and Chivalry*.. The Victorians loved the heroic, chivalrous stories of knights of old and they hoped to regain some of that noble, courtly behavior and impress it upon the people both at home and in the wider empire. The best example of this is Alfred Tennyson's *Idylls of the King*, which blended the stories of King Arthur, particularly those by Thomas Malory, with contemporary concerns and ideas. The Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood also drew on myth and folklore for their art, with Dante Gabriel Rossetti contemporaneously regarded as the chief poet amongst them, although his sister Christina is now held by scholars to be a stronger poet.

9.8 Key Terms

Farce: Farce is a comedy that seeks to entertain an audience through situations that are highly exaggerated, extravagant, ridiculous, absurd, and improbable.^[1] Farce is also characterized by heavy use of physical humor; the use of deliberate absurdity or nonsense; satire, parody, and mockery of real-life situations, people, events, and interactions; unlikely and humorous instances of miscommunication; ludicrous, improbable, and exaggerated characters; and broadly stylized performances.

Victorian burlesque: Victorian burlesque, sometimes known as **travesty** or **extravaganza**, is a genre of theatrical entertainment that was popular in Victorian England and in the New York theatre of the mid-19th century. It is a form of parody in which a well-known opera or piece of classical theatre or ballet is adapted into a broad comic play, usually a musical play, usually risqué in style, mocking the theatrical and musical conventions and styles of the original work, and often quoting or pastiching text or music from the original work. Victorian burlesque is one of several forms of burlesque.

Ballad opera: The **ballad opera** is a genre of English stage entertainment that originated in the early 18th century, and continued to develop over the following century and later. Like the earlier *comédie en vaudeville* and the later *Singspiel*, its distinguishing characteristic is the use of tunes in a popular style (either pre-existing or newly composed) with spoken dialogue. These English plays were 'operas' mainly insofar as they satirized the conventions of the imported *opera seria*. Music critic Peter Gammond describes the ballad opera as "an important step in the emancipation of both the musical stage and the popular song."

Extravaganza: An **extravaganza** is a literary or musical work (often musical theatre) usually containing elements of Victorian burlesque, and pantomime, in a spectacular production and characterized by freedom of style and structure. It sometimes also has elements of music hall, cabaret, circus, revue, variety, vaudeville and mime. *Extravaganza* came, in the 20th century, to more broadly refer to an elaborate, spectacular, and expensive theatrical production.

Burlesque: A **burlesque** is a literary, dramatic or musical work intended to cause laughter by caricaturing the manner or spirit of serious works, or by ludicrous treatment of their subjects. The word derives from the Italian *burlesco*, which, in turn, is derived from the Italian *burla* – a joke, ridicule or mockery.

9.9 Review Questions

1. Describe the characteristics of Victorian poetry.
 2. Discuss the major writers of Victorian age.
 3. Assess the development of Victorian poetry.
 4. Trace the contribution of Alfred Lord Tennyson for Victorian poetry.
 5. Elucidate the works of Robert Browning towards Victorian literature.
-

9.10 References

- Balducci, Anthony (28 November 2011). *The Funny Parts: A History of Film Comedy Routines and Gags*. McFarland. ISBN 9780786488933. Retrieved 3 October 2018 – via Google Books.
- Davis, Evan R.; Nace, Nicholas D. (2019). "Introduction". *Teaching Modern British and American Satire*. New York: Modern Language Association of America. pp. 1–34.

- Stevens, Anne H. (2019). "Parody". *Teaching Modern British and American Satire*. Edited by Evan R. Davis and Nicholas D. Nace. New York: Modern Language Association of America. pp. 44–49.
- Griffin, Dustin (1994). *Satire: A Critical Reintroduction*. University Press of Kentucky. ISBN 0813118441.
- Jameson, Fredric (1983). "Postmodernism and Consumer Society". *The Anti-Aesthetic: Essays on Postmodern Culture*. Edited by Hal Foster. Bay Press. pp. 111–125.
- Tilmouth, Michael and Richard Sherr. "Parody (i)" Grove Music Online, Oxford Music Online, accessed 19 February 2012

UNIT 10: CRITICISM IN VICTORIAN AGE

STRUCTURE

- 10.1 Objectives
- 10.2 Introduction
- 10.3 Historical Perspective
- 10.4 Victorian Movements and Ideals
- 10.5 Heterological Thinkers
- 10.6 Major Victorian Critics
- 10.7 Karl Marx and Victorian Period
- 10.8 Summary
- 10.9 Key Takeaways
- 10.10 Review Questions
- 10.11 References

10.1 Objectives

The learners shall know the following:

- Victorian Criticism in the age.
- Victorian critics
- Major Victorian criticisms
- Renowned writers of the age, especially Mathew Arnold.

10.2 Introduction

The 19th century witnessed massive social and political transformations; this was the age of nationalism and of imperialism. Even as nation states like Germany and Italy came into existence in Europe, European powers embarked on an imperialistic exercise which would transform the history of the world. Nonetheless, another important development was also unfolding in Europe, and this was the Industrial Revolution. The Industrial Revolution saw a mass migration of people to urban areas which were becoming centers of manufacturing and commerce. The means of transportation and communication improved rapidly during this time to enable the movement of this rising population and to facilitate faster and more profitable business to take place. Very soon cities and the factory/office replaced the village with its church as the center of life. Thus a new class, the working class came into being.

10.3 Historical Perspective

In the Middle Ages man was viewed as a part of the social whole. His place was predefined under the Chain of Being. Any event that occurred reverberated from the here and the now to all of creation. Therefore human actions were not significant in themselves; rather they were the means of proving predestination and other medieval ideas. This ideological stance significantly reduced the individual's significance and his ability to transform his environment. Bourgeois thought evolved out of a desire to undermine these feudal values. The ability of the individual to experience the world in the here and the now in material terms that were definable, replicable and measurable was the central focus of bourgeois ideology. Therefore Science replaced theology as the arbiter of knowledge for the bourgeois. The bourgeois performed a revolutionary role as long as they challenged feudalism; however in the 19th century they became rather status quoist. The Industrial Revolution saw the rise of the working class, and a clash between the bourgeois and the working class became inevitable. This clash is reflected in the social, political and ideological fields and is a characteristic feature of the 19th century.

Two ideological stances are clearly identifiable in the 19th century; one draws from mainstream bourgeois Enlightenment ideals and is termed "positivism," while the other reflects the challenge that the industrial workforce presented to bourgeois ideology in various forms of Socialism inspired by Marx and Engels. Much of the 19th century can be seen as the site of this clash in the social, political, theological, literary and ideological fronts.

For the bourgeois the here and the now was extremely important. He viewed the 'self' as important, but as important was the ability of the 'self' to experience itself both within and in isolation of the 'world.' He also considered the individual to be of utmost importance; however any experience that this individual underwent gained significance only when looked at through the prism of the larger community. Hegel succeeded in achieving a harmony between these contradictions and successfully articulated a bourgeois vision of reason and historical progress. His thought is based on a rejection of the world as a given and an imperative to refashion it in the image of our own rationality. In other words as long as man was rational human progress was assured. In Hegel's view of the world bourgeois thought is a predominant but essentially a one-sided component in a larger scheme that included the virtues of Romanticism and religion. This balance proved temporary in the face of social changes. The industrialization and urbanization of Europe and the exploitation that was occurring in its wake challenged not only man's ability to create but also his positioning himself as a rationalist creature. It questioned the validity of the world as it existed in the here and the now and encouraged the possibility of the existence of a world that was different. Such thinking was anathema for the bourgeois and therefore he reacted against Hegel's beliefs. This reaction is called "positivism" which is a rejection of the "négative philosophie" of Hegel. Positivism is essentially a conservative reaction to the changes occurring in the world. It emerged from the "positive" thinkers like Emile Durkheim, Auguste Comte and Herbert Spenser who wished to exclude from investigation all hypotheses that were not empirically verifiable. Science was the new 'God' for the positivists. Any experience that could not be observed, replicated and empirically

verified was suspect. It should come as no surprise then that they rejected all notions of the divine and all a priori laws of perception that transcended the realm of observational certitude. Positivism was a conservation reaction because it accepted the propriety of the world as a given. In sociology it is seen in the Durkheim's attempts to isolate a distinctly "social" fact; Freud's obsession with the scientific status of his work show the ascendancy of positivism in the field of psychology; in social thought it is seen in Herbert Spenser's work on evolution. Ideologically positivism took the form of privileging the world as given and being disinclined to any kind of changes. In the field of literary criticism positivism is reflected in realism and naturalism which shall be discussed later.

10.4 Victorian Movements and Ideals

Realism

The 1840s witnessed the rise of realism in Europe and America as a reaction against the perceived idealization and introspection of Romanticism. The term 'realism' gained valency in the 1830s when the Young Germans, reacting against Romantic ideals, rejected the ideal of aesthetic autonomy in favour of a politically interventional realism. In 1855 Gustav Courbet held an exhibition of his paintings after they had been rejected by the Paris World Fair under the title 'realism.' These paintings presented "a slice of life," divorced from all moral, emotional and aesthetic investment. According to Edmond Duranty, realistic works were truthful, sincere and modern. He suggested that novels should reflect the lives of the working-classes and the middle- classes. Similarly, Champfleury, in his essays *Le Realisme*, pointed out another characteristic of realistic writing: scrupulous documentation free from all moral constraints. Realism influenced not just the creation of art but also its criticism. According to Taine every work was a function of the race, milieu and the moment in which it was created. It was the critic's responsibility in discovering these. Since the text, according to realism, scrupulously reflected the reality of the lived world in which it was created, it revealed the psychology of the writer and the age. Realism's attention to detail is seen in the work of the pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood, who, through minute representation of detail, tried to revive moral seriousness and directness in art. The subsequent development of photography and the idea of photographic accuracy further influenced the development of realism in art and literature.

As reflected in the works of George Eliot and Charles Dickens, realism attempted to present a truthful and an accurate representation of the observed external world and of the self as it negotiated with it. To do this, realistic writers paid close attention to direct observation, factuality, experience, and induction (arriving at general truths only on the basis of repeated experience). Realistic writing in the Victorian age is characterized by a preponderance of descriptive and evocative detail, and, an avoidance of all fantastical and mythical elements. Only events that are probable find mention in realistic writing and all impossible and improbable events are excluded. Writers use a simple style marked by colloquialisms and everyday speech, as well as directness and simplicity of expression. This is accompanied by a conscious rejection of the use of elevated language. Since realism focuses on the present, and

the here and the now, therefore characters and incidents from all social strata find mention in realistic writing. The focus of writers is on contemporary issues and incidents; there is no longing for some idealized past.

Since realism (along the lines of photography) focuses attention on the particular, oftentimes the experience is divorced from its immediate surroundings, making it, and the experiencing subject, unidimensional. These are seen only in terms of causality, chronology and definable motive. Thus reality becomes a 'given' and unchangeable. It is in this inability to perceive of alternate 'realities' that realism reveals its conservative strain. Interestingly, though writers present a "slice of life," they are not averse to manipulating so-called facts in order to critique repressive social conditions. This is in line with Flaubert's belief that though the artist needed to take a cold look at life, the raw material of life had to be worked on. This tension in realism is evident in the works of George Eliot. Though she attempts to portray truth through a direct experience of the world; her work reveals her awareness of the inability of language to express actual psychological states. She consistently resists confining the complexity of experience in to preconceived categories. She presents her characters in their actual, imperfect state, and refuses to hold them up to impossible ideals. Thus, though she is realistic in technique, she resists the status quoism of the theory and is able to perceive the beauty in ordinary things and events.

Thackeray, Dickens, George Eliot, Anthony Trollope and Thomas Hardy were all realists. Their work touched the political, social and religious concerns of 19th century England. One of the greatest influences on the development of realism in England was George Henry Lewes, Eliot's partner. He examined the human psychology as intimately related to social conditions. The 19th century, as we have already seen, saw great upheaval. It is therefore inevitable that artists in England and Europe focused on the impact of these changes on the lives of the people, especially the working classes. Moreover, these transformations were so dramatic and far reaching that very often artists found themselves overwhelmed by the changes themselves. This focus on the material, visible aspects is apparent in the paintings, novels and music of the time. A corollary of this representation of the 'real' implied that this world that the artist represented was a given and could not be changed. Since what was photographed 'existed' and was 'real,' what the novelists and painters depicted could be seen around them in their everyday lives; what psychologists researched could be replicated and measured; what scientists discovered could be observed, replicated and measured; the 'real' observable world became something that could be trusted and was believable. In other words, the way things were was perfect and any change was impossible. This conclusion that a pursuit of realism takes us to is extremely problematic. In an age of imperialism when European powers were cutting a swathe around the world destroying ancient civilizations and subjugating peoples and when increasing industrialization was resulting in an exploitation of the working classes in Europe accepting the given world unreservedly meant continuing these exploitative circumstances. Thus realism as it was theorized and as it was practiced, especially by the novelists differs substantially. Therefore, even though Thackeray, Dickens, Eliot, Trollope and Hardy were realists, their work reveals an acknowledgement of the fact that it is a problematic concept and is often impossible to achieve. These novelists use the techniques of symbolism and authorial perspective to

remedy the contradictions between the tenets of realism and their critical perspectives. In fact a salient feature of their works is a scathing criticism of social conditions. Instead of simply recording events and scenarios as they find them, these novelists manipulate facts to question the status quo and make a case for social change and transformation.

It is clear then that even though realism demanded a scrupulously honest amoral rendition of the world the artist sees, this was never really the case. “Art for art’s sake” was never really a possibility. Flaubert was keenly aware of the fact that the raw materials of life or experience needed to be worked on by art. Similarly George Eliot was cognizant of the difficulty of expressing truth and reality. This is especially so since ‘realism’ assumes the existence of ‘one reality’ which is unquestionably acceptable to all. In other words it denies the possibility of the existence of multiplicity of experiences and of realities. Moreover any attempt to question and undermine this overarching reality was seen as an attempt to destabilize society and therefore needed to be suppressed and rejected. It is for this reason that realism is seen as a conservative response to the rise of the working classes and their struggle for achieving their rights.

Naturalism

Naturalism, which implies the study of nature, is often viewed as an extreme form of realism. In literature, naturalism draws on the principles of causality, determinism, explanation, and experimentation. The naturalist writer observes man and his passions; he believes that events and actions arise from specific causes.

Naturalism is a rejection of Romanticism and all types of mysticism. According to Zola, under whose influence naturalism emerged, the writing of his time was marked by an undue emphasis on form and lyric. Going against this he insisted that a naturalistic novel should be rooted in actuality and should be based on an observation of human beings and their passions. Thus, in this fiction, the author altered the conditions and circumstances of the characters created by him, to posit causes for their actions. In other words, the novel becomes a tool to conduct an enquiry on man so as to reveal the “absolute determinism for all human phenomena.” Naturalists draw on Darwin’s theory of the struggle for existence and view the interactions between individuals and their environment in this light. In naturalistic fiction the psychologically and physically determined dimensions of characters are overwhelmed by accidental circumstances. Therefore characters are inherently tragic and cannot act rationally, freely and heroically upon the world. In naturalistic fiction there is a deterministic emphasis on the context of events and actions which arise from specific causes. In addition to this, the focus is on the hereditary psychological makeup of character, and the relationship between human psychology and external environment with a rejection of any spiritual perspective. Naturalistic fiction challenges reason and rejects all authority and certitude. Nevertheless, naturalistic fiction tries to redeem the moral function of literature; it anticipates that science will progress to a degree where humanity will be in control of life and nature, and, will be able to direct it towards a moral purpose. Zola rejects the hypothesis that the naturalistic novel is somehow

fatalistic by suggesting that the novelist's genius is needed to arrange and rearrange the natural order of phenomena, in accordance with the hypothesis, concerning human behavior that he is aiming to test.

Symbolism

Symbolism arose as a reaction to realism, naturalism and Parnassians poetry which attempted to cultivate a precise and definitive language. Baudelaire is the founder of French symbolism. He believed in original sin and was repelled by the commercialization of the modern world. It was his expression of modern life as one of sordidness, sensuality and corruption that influenced the modernist writers Eliot and Pound. The symbolist movement was at its zenith in the 1890s before it declined and came to be viewed as a form of decadence and affectation. Its concerns were similar to those of the Romantics: language, poetic form, human subjectivity and the evocation of mental states and ideal worlds. Like the Romantics the symbolists were antagonistic towards urban life since it wasn't free and was instead controlled by industry and commerce. Drawing on Platonic philosophy, the symbolists viewed the material world as an imperfect reflection of a higher, eternal realm which could be evoked through symbols. It is for this reason that they rejected language as it was used by the realists and naturalists. For the latter language referenced a given reality. However for the symbolists, language was a means of viewing 'reality' or experience from one of many viable perspectives. They viewed words, their arrangement on the physical page and their sound as a means for creating meaning. Instead of using language in a descriptive manner like the realists and naturalists, the symbolists used language in a more suggestive and evocative manner to suggest states of consciousness and experience. They rejected all discursive use of language (in the forms of argument, debate and narration), ideals of logical coherence, and referential accuracy in favour of creating "correspondences" between the senses to create an aesthetic of synesthesia. According to Symons, who introduced the British to symbolism through his book *The Symbolist Movement in Literature* (1899), the relationship between the sound and meaning assigned to words and symbols was arbitrary. Therefore, for symbolists, it was necessary to reject the certitude of reality as it was posited by the realists and naturalists; especially since this reality was predicated upon a language which they viewed, falsely as, stable, static, and status quoist. Symbolist literature therefore rejected the contemporary bourgeois world as a one-sided, reductive material dimension of reality and the reduction of language to a literariness which enshrines the possibility of absolute clarity. Thus symbolism was an attempt to reinvest language with its powers of ambivalence and mystery, to relieve it of the suffocating burden of representing factitious identity and clear-cut categories. It is for this reason that symbolist poets experimented with various verse forms. Mallarme, a major symbolist critic, rejected the French alexandrine and tried to remove the distinction, which he viewed as artificial, between poetry and prose; and also between creative and critical writing. The symbolists also lead stress on the importance of the personality of the artist since all artistic creation was personal.

The symbolists attempted to reclaim the arbitrariness of language that lay beneath its conventional usage. While they rejected all attempts at lateralization by the bourgeois self,

and all attempts at clarity as naive based as it was on a narrow understanding of reality; the symbolists attempted to create a more comprehensive view of reality which saw the here and the now as merely one dimension of reality. In general, the French symbolists, including Baudelaire and Mallarmé, reacted against the explicit rationalism, materialism, and positivism of the bourgeois world and, like the Romantics, exalted the role of poet and artist.

Aestheticism

Aestheticism was an extreme development of this idea of negation. The aesthetes adhered to the doctrine “art for art’s sake,” or for the sake of beauty and rejected all moral, political and didactic reasons for the creation and consumption of art. Like the symbolists, the aesthetes also reacted against the bourgeois world of utility and consumption. Walter Pater is credited with coining the phrase “art for art’s sake” to suggest artistic autonomy as well as the fact that experience is in a constant state of flux. His work belongs to the decadent era which is marked by a withdrawal from social and political concerns, disillusionment with religion and its teachings of salvation, and a rejection of the mainstream bourgeois mechanized, commercial world in favour of exaltation of art and of experience. According to Arnold effective criticism succeeds in discerning the reality of the object in itself. Pater modifies this supposition by stating that since this act of knowing an object (be it a poem or a painting) involves the experiencing individual, it becomes an extremely subjective experience. Since experience is no longer absolute it ceases to be the *sine qua non* of knowledge. Since it is no longer governed by any essential reason and morality, it ceases to be the basis of any scientific enquiry. The world then, is not solid and external, but comprises of the subject’s impressions of it. Since the external world comprises of the subject’s impressions of it and these impressions are in a constant state of flux, therefore it follows that the experiencing subject court new opinions and expressions constantly. In this way Pater’s aestheticism undermined the role of art as a unifying force. Art became something to be experienced for itself and the idea of beauty. It is for this reason that mainstream Victorian writers, for whom art had a moral and civilizing influence, were in conflict with the symbolists and the aesthetes. For these writers if art did not possess any inherent ameliorative qualities then the artist became irrelevant.

In his plays, Oscar Wilde, satirized the morals and the mores of the middle-classes in England. He was a homosexual who was charged with sodomy by the marquis of Queensbury. His sexual tendencies, unsurprisingly, brought him in direct conflict with the social and moral mores of the times. His refusal to accept absolutes aligns him with the heterological thinkers of the time. He categorically rejected any moral foundation to art and went on to state in the preface to *The Picture of Dorian Gray*, that the artist was a “creator of beautiful things.” He divorced art from life by suggesting that it did not imitate life; instead it reflected the viewer. In other words there is no inherent significance to art; signification is given to art in the act of viewing it. For Wilde, like the aesthetes, art was an object of beauty and nothing else.

For Wilde criticism was an important, creative and independent act in itself. He saw the creation of art as more than a simple outpouring of emotion, it was a conscious and deliberate

exercise directed by the critical faculties of the artist. He viewed criticism as the highest form of personal impression since it was extremely self-referential. In other words, in his work Oscar Wilde breaks new ground by demanding, not only, like other symbolists and aesthetes, that art be free of any moral, religious and moral constraints but also the fundamental autonomy of criticism as an act itself. This is a new development in the relationship between art and criticism that is seen in the late 19th century whereby art becomes just an occasion for criticism and does not constitute it. In this way Wilde anticipates the modern rejection of authorial intention and the intrinsically polysemous nature of works of art. According to him once a work of art is 'completed' it moves beyond the artist's control. At this stage it is the critic who sees multiplicities of meanings and significations in it. When it does so, criticism transcends art. However Wilde is at pains to point out that while the critic may give an impression of a work of art, he does not always try to explain it. Higher criticism occurs when the critic realizes the performative potential of art by bringing his own personality to interpret the personality and work of the artist. This further implies that art is neither impersonal nor objective, but rather, extremely subjective. In other words the role of art is simply to create a mood and it stands beyond demands of practicality, utility, morality, and education. Just as art is beauty similar criticism is contemplation. Wilde postulated that this contemplation was essential in bourgeois world where life had become imprisoned in pragmatism, utility and mechanization. A stubborn worship of art as beauty therefore represents a rebellion against the bourgeois strictures of reason. Criticism gains importance since in the bourgeois world it is only this activity that creates an intellectual atmosphere and the culture of the age. It is through criticism, and the resulting acceptance of multiplicities of experience and meaning, that it would be possible for individuals to escape the provincialism and prejudice of their times.

10.5 Heterological Thinkers

The "heterological" or alternate tradition of thinkers reacted against Hegel's philosophy as the embodiment of bourgeois principles. Schopenhauer initiated this tradition which critiques Enlightenment notions of the scientific progress of civilization and of the perfectibility of the individual and the state through reason. These thinkers laid emphasis on the role of emotions, the body, sexuality and pragmatic interests. These thinkers show affiliation with Arnold who was critical of the French Revolution and its effects.

In his work Schopenhauer, was critical of the bourgeois tendency to see the present as the only reality, He rejected the view that the intellect controlled human actions. Instead he posited that it was human will, motivated by the will to survive and perpetrate life that was the impetus for all actions. In his work he accords sexuality a central place as the driving motivating force. The aim of sexuality was to ensure the survival of the species and achieve immortality. If sex signified the will to survive, death represented its opposite, especially in those who had engaged in a terrible struggle for existence. For them death was a return to the womb of nature. Moreover, for him it was in the death of the individual that the species survived. Sex was a

creative impulse precisely because it became a means of cheating death as a species, if not as an individual.

Further he suggested that the conscious mind was just the surface of the human mind. Hence its knowledge was limited and any decisions it took were predicated by a tussle between social mores it had absorbed and instinctive drives and desires. In this, his conception of the mind was very similar to Freud's idea of the unconscious, as the receptacle of all contradictions and randomly placed events. A corollary of this is that while the experiencing self is an object in the world, it is also, simultaneously the subject observing the self's own interaction within this world. It was as the subject that the actions of the self became the objectifications of the human will. Thus, for Schopenhauer, it was clear that it was the will governing the intellect and not vice versa. It was the will's desire to survive in the present that determined the actions of the intellect. For him the will was the profoundest source of motivation and the primordial means of our engagement with the world. From this the philosopher postulated (and in this he anticipated Freud again) that since the will influences the intellect and further action, motivations behind actions always remain unclear. They lie in the unconscious where the will deliberately represses them to prevent any embarrassment and discomfort to the conscious mind.

According to him true knowledge lay in art since its object was not the material world but rather the underlying unity of the Platonic ideal. Therefore art was the only escape from the utilitarian and rational will. He gave importance to poetry and philosophy since they assisted the intellect in freeing itself from the constraints of the utilitarian and rational constraints of the subjective will. For him reality lay in ideas which were timeless and were the essential form of the entire species. According to him aesthetic pleasure was achieved when the self-conscious subject loses its sense of the will and sees the object not as an individual but as an idea. This aesthetic pleasure occurs only when there is a detached and disinterested contemplation of beauty. He acknowledged that poetry was a higher form than history since it went beyond individual and contingent truths. Though the poet conveys abstract and general concepts, he does this through the use of concrete terms which represent them and he achieves this through imagination, rhythm and rhyme.

A central feature of the heterological thinkers is the idea that rational knowledge is insufficient in the perception of ideas and that poetry is the paradigm of disinterested and objective knowledge. The objectivity of the self which industrialization had shattered is internalized as a subjective capacity. The aesthetic is defined as a form of perception of reality: poetry could no longer take for granted the reality it was to express.

Nietzsche is associated with the announcement "the death of God." HE saw the apparatus of the state and church a coercing people in to mediocre conformity and uniformity and called for a new conception of humanity based on self-creation, passion, power, and subjugation of one's circumstances. According to him reality was a construct and was nothing more than a mere projection of human needs and aspirations. Therefore multiple realities were possible.

Also, he posited that independent objectivity was not possible since objects cannot exist without a subjective apparatus. He viewed knowledge as an assertion of will and therefore did not see it as a disinterested love of truth. Thus language constructs truth and does not disseminate any absolute truths.

10.6 Major Victorian Critics

The most important British critics of the 1830s are Thomas Carlyle (1795-1881), a representative of the oracular line of theorizing, which venerates the poet as an involuntary channel of communication with higher powers, and three expressive critics, Arthur Hallam (1811- 33), W. J. Fox (1786-1864), and John Stuart Mill (1806- 73). In an influential theory of poetic empathy, published in 1831 in *The Englishman's Magazine*, Hallam praises poets of sensation such as Percy Bysshe Shelley, John Keats, and Alfred, Lord Tennyson for their remarkable ability to find in the “colors ... sounds, and movements” of external nature the signature of “innumerable shades of fine emotion,” which are too subtle for conceptual language to express (850, 856). In a *Westminster Review* article earlier in 1831 on *Tennyson's Poems, Chiefly Lyrical* (1830), Fox argues that the poet can best concentrate his energies by sketching his relation to a desolate landscape or to some ruined paradise, as in Tennyson's “Mariana” or “Oenone.” Insisting that the sensory correlatives of feeling, like music, can convey complexities of meaning and subtly nuanced moods for which no dictionary words exist, Hallam is the prophet of a symbolist aesthetic later endorsed by W. B. Yeats. Fox, on the other hand, writes as a disciple of James Mill. Just as Joseph Addison is liberated by John Locke's theory of the ideality of the secondary qualities, according to which sounds and colors are truly a poem of the perceiver's creation, so Fox is liberated by the penetrating power conferred on the mind by the empirical psychology of James Mill's treatise *Analysis of the Phenomena of the Human Mind*, published two years earlier, in 1829. Since Fox's poet dramatizes each interior landscape through projection, and since Hallam's poet internalizes each picture, they tend to converge on common ground. Despite their different starting points, both critics anticipate modern psychological theories of introjection and projection, and both are agreed that poets must find in some external object the focus or medium of their truest self-expression.

Like Fox and Hallam, John Stuart Mill also subscribes to an expressive theory of art. But he is always ready to inhibit theory and quicken truth in pursuit of the wider premise, the more inclusive synthesis. His earliest articles on poetry, which he published in 1833, try to vindicate the poet against Jeremy Bentham's charge that because poetry is fictitious and untrue, it is a dangerous enemy of utilitarianism. The failure to see that poets use language in ways beyond the scope of traditional description in order to express and refine emotion and to do things with words is also the failure to which J. L. Austin draws attention when trying to extricate from descriptive statements the kind of utterance he calls “performative”. To distinguish between poetry and rhetoric, Mill also insists that in poetic language there is no direct address: as Oscar Wilde observed of Walter Pater when he lectured, Mill's poet is overheard rather than heard. The oracle speaks in a state of rapt self-communion.

The other most innovative theorist of the 1830s, Thomas Carlyle, holds that a great poet such as Dante Alighieri or William Shakespeare is an autonomous source of power, not reducible to anything in the world that may stimulate him. Since only the unconscious is healthy, Carlyle paradoxically concludes in “The Poet as Hero” that in writing allegory in *The Divine Comedy* Dante, like any sincere poet, did not, in the precise sense of the phrase, know what he was doing. Does Carlyle’s unselfconscious poet create a genuine novelty? Or does he merely manifest some higher antecedent power of which he is unconscious? If truth lies outside of consciousness, perhaps the answer does not matter. Because creative artists are a mystery, even to themselves, why should they not be willing to ascribe their creation of novelty to an equally mysterious higher source?

Carlyle also deserves to be remembered for his contribution to semiotics in his chapter on symbols in *Sartor Resartus*. Anticipating Charles Sanders Peirce’s notion of an icon and of a sign that requires a more developed sign to interpret it, Carlyle argues that only intrinsic symbols exhaust their subject and that they cannot be analyzed. Only extrinsic symbols can be analyzed, and like the ritual naming by the herald at the coronation of George IV, they tend to trivialize their subject. The life of Christ, Carlyle argues, was once authentically symbolic, and intrinsically so, just as the original Last Supper was a symbolic performance of the utmost daring and genius. But if we try too hard or selfconsciously to invent a rite or make our life an allegory, it will become instead a mere piece of theater. Like David Friedrich Strauss’s notion that myth is *unconscious* invention, lives that become allegories are unconsciously symbolic. When we try to invent a symbol, like the festivals in honor of a supreme being in *The French Revolution*, we discover that an authentic intrinsic symbol can never be legislated; it has to be believed into being, by faith and civic love. The harder Carlyle tries to explain intrinsic symbols, the less intelligible they become: all intrinsic symbols require other symbols, or what Peirce calls “interprétants,” to explain them.

One of the most original critical theorists of the late 1830s and the 1840s is John Keble (1792-1866). Though a psychological and expressive critic, Keble continues to honor the classical precept that literature is mimetic, or an imitation of nature, long after that doctrine has ceased to deserve his theoretical respect. Few passages in Victorian criticism are more revealing than the one in which Keble casually equates Aristotelian imitation with his own antithetical expressive doctrines. “It would seem,” Keble says in an 1838 review of John Gibson Lockhart’s *Memoirs of the Life of Sir Walter Scott*, “that the analogical applications of the word ‘poetry’ coincide well enough with Aristotle’s notion of it, as consisting chiefly in Imitation or Expression” (435). Yet in his *Praelectiones Academicæ* (1832-41), better known in its English translation as *Oxford Lectures on Poetry*, as well as in his review of Scott, Keble argues, contrary to Aristotle, that all epic and dramatic genres are displacements of the poet’s lyric impulse. Thus Virgil’s epic the *Aeneid* is said to disguise a pastoral yearning, indulged most directly in the *Georgics*. Fed by unconscious sources, “Virgil’s master passion” for pastoral celebration is so artfully veiled in his epic poem that it is preserved by being disguised, by *not* being named directly. Keble’s originality consists in his taking a familiar theological doctrine, the Tractarian theory of reserve, and transplanting it to the psychology of poetic composition, where it anticipates Freudian theories of displacement.

In other essays, however, Keble asserts that great poetry exists only as a fallout from religion. In tract 89 of *Tracts for the Times*, “On the Mysticism Attributed to the Early Fathers of the Church” (1840), Keble argues as a brilliantly conservative critic, insisting that the unity of Scripture is the expressive evidence of divine power. By “mysticism” Keble means the typological interpretation of Scripture that allows a reader to discern a resemblance between Old Testament types and their New Testament antitypes. As God’s grammar or code, biblical typology is more than a mere set of “poetical associations” chosen at will by individual interpreters. But this is not to say that hermeneutics properly conceived and practiced is a univocal decoding of God’s meaning. Because every figural analogy merely approximates, like any analogy, the unnameable essence of what it tries to name, Keble uses his doctrine of reserve to keep intact the mystery of indefinition.

Benjamin Jowett’s influential essay “On the Interpretation of Scripture” (1860) develops a far more liberal theory of biblical interpretation than Keble’s. Asserting that readers should be able to recover a biblical author’s original intentions and the effects the meaning had on the “hearers or readers who first received it,” Jowett (1817- 93) assails as anachronistic and dangerous the typological methods of biblical interpretation revived by Keble and Newman. But Jowett’s appeal for unprejudiced reading, however plain and straightforward, assumes a zero degree of literacy that is illusory in theory and unattainable in critical practice. The real problem with Jowett’s hermeneutics is its attempt to assess an author’s original intention. As twentieth-century critics of the “intentional fallacy” have argued, an intention that has not already been realized and made accessible to an intelligent reader can never in practice be recovered. In what sense, then, can it qualify as an intention at all? If Jowett wants to call an unrealized intention an intention, he is free to do so. But it seems to be of doubtful authority and of no interpretive use.

Outside Keble’s writings, the most innovative critical theories of the 1840s are to be found in John Ruskin’s *Modern Painters*, especially in his commentaries on the imagination, which contain the most important contribution to their subject since Samuel Taylor Coleridge. Ruskin (1819-1900) identifies three forms in which the imagination operates. Achieving the *integritas* that St. Thomas Aquinas associates with the aesthetic object, the “imagination penetrative” is the faculty most consistently displayed by Ruskin’s first and highest order of poets. In 1846 Ruskin insists upon this faculty “as the highest intellectual power of man” (4:251): he associates it with Dante and Shakespeare, whom ten years later he places in the highest rank of poets, among those who “feel strongly, think strongly, and see truly” (5:209). Their art is the product of educated innocence, an art that is “naturalist, because studied from nature,” but also “ideal, because ... mentally arranged in a certain manner” (5:113).

Once Ruskin’s poet has been initiated into the mysteries of a thing’s existence, using the imagination penetrative to expose the wonder of the thing and to present it as an imaginative whole, the poet may then proceed to combine a number of such wholes into new and harmonious arrangements. Corresponding to the *consonantia*, or harmony, of Aquinas’s aesthetic object, the arrangement of sensory wholes is the function of Ruskin’s “imagination associative.” What is expressed in art by the imagination associative is usually something self-effacing and elusive, something just out of sight, which the artist can merely point toward or

intimate. Though Ruskin is baffled to explain its operation, he takes this uncanny power of intimation (a power E. S. Dallas will later ascribe to its unconscious manner of working) to be the chief hallmark of the imagination associative.

When a poet such as John Milton or Shelley is prophetically inspired and begins to “see in a sort untruly, because what [he] see[s] is inconceivably above [him]” (5:209), he may approximate what Aquinas calls the radiance, or *claritas*, of oracular vision. The poet then exhibits the faculty Ruskin calls the “imagination contemplative.” But because Ruskin, as a Victorian, has more in common with Keble or Pater than with Dante or John Bunyan, he has a keener sense than his medieval and Renaissance predecessors that the mystery of life and its arts does not allow the poet to fix or assign one meaning only to each visible type of the spiritual world. The imagination contemplative of Ruskin’s poet has all the hallmarks of a true allegorical symbolism except one. Its symbols are untranslatable, because unlike the goat or wolf of conventional allegory, they lack an assigned connotation.

The 1850s mark the emergence of Matthew Arnold’s early criticism, which staunchly opposes the dominantly expressive criticism of contemporaries such as David Masson and Sydney Dobell. One twentiethcentury critic, R. G. Cox, argues that Arnold’s neoclassical criticism is simply the best-known example of an anti-Romantic “minority tradition” running through the first half of the Victorian period. More recently, Antony H. Harrison has tried to elucidate the “literary politics” surrounding Arnold’s preface to his *Poems* of 1853, which endorses an overtly Aristotelian theory of poetry that consistently misreads Aristotle by substituting an inward, psychological action for an outward, dramatic one. Arnold (1822-88) is covertly attacking his rival, Alexander Smith, a member of the so-called Spasmodic school of Byronic and Shelleyan imitators, and is trying to purge from his own poetry, partly for political reasons, all traces of Spasmodic influence. Arnold’s conservative aesthetic must be seen as a response to the political radicalism of the Spasmodic poets and, like his essays on the Romantic poets, to his own complex and changing reactions to the cockney Keats.

David Masson (1822-1907), the reviewer whom Arnold misquotes in his 1853 preface and the author of important critical pieces collected in *Essays Biographical and Critical* (1856), draws attention to distinctive Spasmodic features of language that help distinguish poetical ideas from scientific ones. Masson repeats Immanuel Kant’s teaching that whereas scientific understanding translates sensory facts into concepts, the poet’s imagination is effective, not in duplicating nature, but in creating a second and stronger nature. It replaces the open-ended orderliness of nature with an orderliness that is closed, repeatable, and intensive. Masson’s arresting word for this process is the imagination’s capacity to “secrete” fictitious circumstance (431).

The rhapsodic, visionary writing that Masson’s essays are best designed to analyze is also the subject of an important essay, “The Nature of Poetry” (1857), by the Spasmodic poet and critic Sydney Dobell (1824-74). Shrewdly noting that there is often a phenomenal difference between an aesthetic idea or feeling and its metaphoric equivalent, Dobell criticizes the many-breasted Hindu goddess for being too similar to the fertility she is meant to represent. By contrast, Bertel Thorwaldsen’s celebrated statue of night, which makes an observer experience a black and shapeless void, is sculpted out of white marble. To explain the paradox, Dobell develops his theory of substitution. Instead of saying “I love,” a poet will call up in his imagination some

beautiful object, such as a rose, and then find for the object some equivalent in words. The poet's metaphoric equivalents, what Dobell calls his "homotypes," are related to each other, not in the way types are related to their biblical antitypes, and not in the way an algebraic sign is related to an unknown quantity, but in the way atoms are joined together to form the beautiful structure of a crystal.

The most ambitious work of literary theory to appear in the 1860s is E. S. Dallas's monumental two-volume study, *The Gay Science* (1866). Arguing that only the paradox of unconscious thought can explain the difference between the imagination of a Homer and the genius of an Aristotle, Dallas (1822-79) claims that both are automatic but only the former is an involuntary or unconscious process. Dallas believes there are two tests the critic can conduct to determine whether the poet's mind has indeed been operating imaginatively "in the dusk of unconsciousness" (1:265). A poet who has been composing imaginatively (i.e., in an involuntary or unconscious manner) will discern resemblances rather than differences. And that poet will also "assert the resemblance of wholes to wholes" (1:269). Dallas's theory of the unconscious has important antecedents in German criticism, especially in F. W.J. Schelling. But in Victorian Britain the idea of unconscious and automatic mental processes, though applied by Carlyle in his essay "Characteristics" to mental health in general, does not assume a crucial role until Dallas offers what he takes to be a new theory of imagination, that "Proteus of the mind," which has been identified with all the human faculties—memory, passion, reason—and which has proved as a result "the despair of metaphysics" (1:179).

Dallas's earlier and more modest monograph, *Poetics: An Essay on Poetry* (1852), deserves to be known for the ingenious theory of genres it proposes. That theory, which praises the drama as the culminating genre of nineteenth-century literature, may be hard to understand until we grasp its connection with G. W. F. Hegel's theory of an evolution of symbolic, classical, and romantic genres. When Dallas calls the lyric and visionary genres of poetry the dominant mode of Eastern, primitive art, he is alluding, like Hegel in his posthumously published *Philosophy of Fine Art*, to the lyric art of the Psalmist. Having used the genres of lyric poetry to describe the divine poetry of the ancients, Dallas must equate the dominantly religious art of the nineteenth century, which he finds comparably sublime, with a different genre. When he speaks of dramatic art as a religious, Romantic form, embodying hope and the impulse to worship, Dallas is thinking, not of Shakespeare or Greek drama, but of Robert Browning's dramatic monologues and of lyrics of "saving faith" written by devotional poets such as Christina Rossetti.

One of Dallas's most original insights is that the transformation of classical epic into Hebrew lyric and then into modern Romantic and Christian forms of art is accompanied by a corresponding change in the poet's use of pronouns. In classical literature the poet describes persons and things: the third-person pronoun dominates. By contrast, the sublime lyric poetry of the Psalms is a poetry of first-person pronouns. Only in nineteenth century poetry, which is a literature of dramatic intimacy and empathy, does the "you" enter. Anticipating T. S. Eliot's argument in "The Three Voices of Poetry," Dallas distinguishes the first-person voice of lyric and the third-person voice of drama proper from "the familiar you-and-me style" of genres

such as the monologue, which uses first- and second-person pronouns to dramatize a speaker's efforts to empathize with his or her auditor.

The last three decades of the nineteenth century mark the ascendancy of a far-reaching Hegelian legacy in Victorian criticism, one that is already discernible, as we have seen, in Dallas's theory of genres. Among major critics, Walter Pater (1839-94) shows Hegel's influence most clearly. Pater manages to formalize Hegel in subtler but no less radical ways than he manages to formalize Plato in *Plato and Platonism* (1893). In the most Hegelian of his critical writings, the essay on J. J. Winckelmann (1867), Pater draws upon Hegel's theory of a symbolic, a classical, and a romantic cycle of art, each phase aligned with a particular art form. "As the mind itself has had an historical development," Pater observes, "one form of art, by the very limitations of its material, may be more adequate than another for the expression of any one phase of that development" (1:210). Few pronouncements could be more Hegelian. And yet there is nothing in Pater's statement to rule out a relativism quite alien to Hegel's theory of progressive aesthetic change. Unlike Hegel, who sees in the progress of the arts a secure evolution toward an eventual victory of Absolute Spirit, when art will perfect itself by turning into dialectic, Pater sees a progressive attenuation of spirit. He actually reverses Hegel's strategy. Instead of freeing a spiritual *content* from a material *form*, which is the process Hegel analyzes, Pater praises art for freeing a highly refined and attenuated *form* from the bondage of any impure *content* or contaminating *message*. Pater keeps altering the teleological drift of Hegel's aesthetic doctrines by assimilating life to art, subordinating the spiritual content of Romantic art to the subtleties and refinements of the art form itself.

In his essay "The Philosophy of Art" (1883), W. P. Ker (1855-1923), a more scholarly interpreter than Pater, is torn between conflicting reactions to Hegel's theories. Should the critic use poems for their educative value, subordinating art to the claims of some absolute spirit that is asserted to be the ground of art's efficacy? Or must each poem be studied as an end in itself? A chief tenet of Hegel's theory is that art is an education, that it exists for the sake of something higher. Ideally, poetry is absorbed at last into philosophic vision. But Ker, like Pater, always wants to honor the integrity of each work of art. Ker criticizes Hegel for failing to see that though art is educational, it is not necessarily "an education for some end different from art" (166). Is poetry's transformation into science or philosophy a consummation devoutly to be wished? Or does poetry educate by a nonutilitarian but valuable deployment of the cognitive faculties, in abstraction from any practical context?

The second possibility is the one preferred by Oscar Wilde (1856-1900), who allows art to occupy a spiritual territory segregated from the everyday world. The claim of purist art to be holier or more sacred than other activities is not supported by any moral or metaphysical claim. Indeed the artist as such is said to have no "ethical sympathies" (230). Purist art has its priest, rite, church, and congregation but no god. It is endotelic, never merely a means to some external end. The absence of teleology is even celebrated as a virtue: "All art is quite useless," Wilde says in the preface to *The Picture of Dorian Gray* (1890). Its value is its very pointlessness. Like later formalists, Wilde knows at first hand how a despotic moral or theological consciousness can inhibit the creative faculties. To defend the poet against a censorious

superego, Wilde revels in the paradox that the “morality of art” consists wholly “in the perfect use of an imperfect medium.” “An ethical sympathy in an artist is an unpardonable mannerism of style” (230).

Wilde’s celebration of art’s inutility and reduced ambition remains, however, a Victorian aberration. Unlike the pursuit of virtue or a liberal education, the pursuit of literary theory in Victorian Britain is seldom regarded as its own reward. It is not the autonomous study that specialists laboring in a more Alexandrian age have tried to make it. To understand Victorian literary theory, we must study it in the context of nineteenth-century hermeneutics, for example, or philosophies of history, science, and religion. As G. B. Tennyson says in *Victorian Devotional Poetry: The Tractarian Mode* (1981), these disciplines do not “grow in alien soils.” In the Victorian period, “they are branches of the same tree” (61).

Check Your Progress

- 1. Discuss in details the contribution of Carlyle towards Victorian criticism.**

10.7 Karl Marx and Victorian Period

Marxism

The fundamental objection Marx had with capitalist economies was that very few people controlled the means of production and property. Thus the others, namely the working classes, were merely pawns in their hands to be exploited as the capitalists deemed. The labourers, in the capitalist economy could survive only as long as they could work and earn their keep; thus they were commodification of labour in the capitalistic economy. Another corollary of the capitalist economy was that it needed a constant supply not only of raw materials to feed the factories, but also of markets where the finished products could be sold in order to maximize efficiency and profit. For both of these new sources of raw materials and markets were needed. These were provided by the colonies that were overrun by the European imperialistic powers in the late 19th century. Thus, Marxism theorized that colonization is a natural outcome of industrialization and capitalism.

Taking forward the Hegelian dialectic Marxists theorized that the atheism and humanism are the third stage which can happen only in the practical world and cannot be theorized. Marx quoted religion and ownership of private property as expressions of the alienation of the individual. According to Marx religion performs an apologetic function and puts the miseries the individual is experiencing in the here and the now as part of a larger, providential pattern. Thus suffering becomes something that cannot be changed and which may result in benefits beyond the material world.

Marx viewed history not as the working of a divine spirit but rather as the product of human labour. For him history was the unfolding of the impact of material and economic forces in terms of economic production. Therefore, fundamentally, history was the site of a class struggle. The major conflict in the modern world, he projected, would be between the bourgeois and the proletariat. Marx also suggested that the division of labour was a clear indicator of the degree to which the system of production had developed in a civilization. It was this division of labour that led to a separation of the industrial work from the agricultural work done by man. This in turn created separate interests between towns and villages leading to conflicts. This social division of labour leads to an unequal division of labour and its products, and hence private property. Since division of labour creates diverse interests between the individual and the family or larger community; it gives the impression that the community, in the form of the larger 'state' gains legitimacy beyond the individual. This larger community, i.e. the state comprises of different classes which then exploit each other for economic gain and power. Thus an alienation of social activity takes place. According to Marx, since the individual is alienated from his work because of the piecemeal nature of work in the modern economy; but this alienation from their work "forces" cooperation from them and develops independently of their will. He also suggests that it is the values of the dominating class that prevail in society; the ruling class represents its values and interests as the values and interest of the people to continue its hegemony.

Engels, in his work, traced the development of patriarchy and suggested that it rose through increasingly sophisticated economic and social configurations. He suggested that in tribal economies inheritance was through the female line; but as economies developed further and became complicated inheritance shifted to the males in the family. The "overthrow of the mother right," as he calls it in his book the origin of Family, Private Property and State, led to monogamy and father right. Thus marriage became dependent on property rights and economic considerations. In this situation the man became the bourgeois and the woman the proletariat. Thus the exploitation of women, an intrinsic feature of capitalist economics, will also be abolished along with private property and the family as an economic unit.

10.8 Summary

Wordsworth died in 1850, and although the nineteenth century still had half its course to run, the writings of its greatest poet had already penetrated so deeply into the body of British aesthetics that, like Burke's *Enquiry* a century before, their influence would be felt long after their author had passed on. The principal writers who came to bear the legacy of Wordsworth and the early Romantics were not poets, nor were they, strictly speaking, philosophers; one of their number – John Stuart Mill – obviously qualifies for that epithet, but his contribution to the tradition bears little resemblance to the works on ethics, politics, and logic for which he is remembered and read. The body of writings in question is better thought of as "criticism," and the first proponent of the trade, William Hazlitt, holds sufficient credentials to be considered the father of the modern, professional variety with which we are familiar today.

To characterize these writers as “Victorian critics” – the epithet under which I propose to collect them – is not to deny that they developed striking and theoretically sophisticated views, nor is it to suggest – especially in the case of John Ruskin – that they did not hearken back to eighteenth-century themes and thinkers. Their work, however, is focused primarily on understanding and appreciating the form and content of creative work: poetry and literature in the case of Hazlitt and Mill; art and architecture in that of Ruskin; and for Walter Pater, in his idiosyncratic and rebellious assessment of the Renaissance, the entire range of the fine arts from medieval French prose to the Herculean scholarship of the nineteenth-century classicist, Joachim Winckelmann. As we shall see throughout this chapter, the faculty of imagination championed by Wordsworth, Coleridge, Keats, and Shelley remains center stage albeit now manifest as the creative and expressive power of the artist; in Ruskin one finds the full realization of the picturesque, in whose hands it undergoes a startling transformation from the “aesthetic” version familiar from Gilpin through Stewart and into its moral or “Turnerian” alternative.

10.9 Key Takeaways

Parody: A **parody** is a creative work designed to imitate, comment on, and/or mock its subject by means of satirical or ironic imitation. Often its subject is an original work or some aspect of it (theme/content, author, style, etc), but a parody can also be about a real-life person (e.g. a politician), event, or movement (e.g. the French Revolution or 1960s counterculture).

Animation: **Animation** is a filmmaking technique by which still images are manipulated to create moving images. In traditional animation, images are drawn or painted by hand on transparent celluloid sheets (cels) to be photographed and exhibited on film. Animation has been recognized as an artistic medium, specifically within the entertainment industry. Many animations are computer animations made with computer-generated imagery (CGI). Stop motion animation, in particular claymation, has continued to exist alongside these other forms.

Computer animation: **Computer animation** is the process used for digitally generating moving images. The more general term computer-generated imagery (CGI) encompasses both still images and moving images, while computer animation *only* refers to moving images. Modern computer animation usually uses 3D computer graphics.

Pastiche: A **pastiche** is a work of visual art, literature, theatre, music, or architecture that imitates the style or character of the work of one or more other artists. Unlike parody, pastiche pays homage to the work it imitates, rather than mocking it.

10.10 Review Questions

1. Discuss the contribution of major critics of Victorian age.
 2. Asses the major works of Victorian critics.
 3. Elucidate the contribution of Victorian critics towards literature.
 4. How Karl Marx's theory contributed to Victorian literature.
 5. Discuss the major Victorian movements.
-

10.11References

Dentith, Simon (2000). *Parody (The New Critical Idiom)*. Routledge. ISBN 0-415-18221-2.

Elices Agudo, Juan Francisco (2004) *Historical and theoretical approaches to English satire*

Hutcheon, Linda (1985). "3. The Pragmatic Range of Parody". *A Theory of Parody: The Teachings of Twentieth-Century Art Forms*. New York: Methuen. ISBN 0-252-06938-2.

Mary Louise Pratt (1991). "Arts of the Contact Zone". *Profession*. **91**. New York: MLA: 33–40. Archived from the original (PDF) on 2008-10-26. archived at University of Idaho, English 506, *Rhetoric and Composition: History, Theory, and Research*. From *Ways of Reading*, 5th edition, ed. David Bartholomae and Anthony Petrofsky (New York: Bedford/St. Martin's, 1999

Sheinberg, Esti (2000) *Irony, Satire, Parody and the Grotesque in the Music of Shostakovich*

Stavans, Ilan and Jesse H. Lytle, Jennifer A. Mattson (1997) *Antiheroes: Mexico and its detective novel*

Ore, Johnathan (2014) Youtuber Shane Dawsons fans revolt after Sony pulls his Taylor Swift parody video

UNIT 11: ARNOLD'S THEORY AND HIS WORKS

STRUCTURE

- 11.1 Objectives
- 11.2 Introduction
- 11.3 Arnold – Early Life
- 11.4 Arnold and Church
- 11.5 The social role of poetry and criticism
- 11.6 Arnold – A Moralist
 - 11.6.1 Returns to Classical Values
- 11.7 Arnold and Other Works
- 11.8 Summary
- 11.9 Key Terms
- 11.10 Review Questions
- 11.11 References

11.1 Objectives

The learners shall know about the following:

- About Matthew Arnold and his life history.
- About Arnold's theory and contribution towards Victorian criticism.
- Some major works of Matthew Arnold.
- Analysis of Arnold's writing style

11.2 Introduction

Victorian literary theory, sometimes dismissed as a hinterland, is a remarkably diverse and productive field. Of the four lines of theorizing identified by the philosopher of art Francis Sparshott in *Theory of the Arts* (1982)— the classical, expressive, oracular, and purist lines— Victorian theory has original contributions to make to all but the first. Its theological and Hegelian alignments, as well as its later doctrine of art for art's sake, also anticipate important developments in twentieth-century hermeneutics and formalism.

11.3 Arnold – Early Life

Matthew Arnold (1822-1888) was a British poet and critic during the Victorian era. Born in Laleham, a village in the valley to the Thames, Arnold spent his childhood near a river, which would act as a great influence later on in his life. In 1837, Arnold first attended the Rugby School where his father, Thomas Arnold, was the headmaster. Following the Rugby School, Arnold attended Oxford beginning in 1841 and while a student, focused less on his studies and was regarded as a “dandy.” The youthful frivolity displayed did not last long, as Arnold took the post of private secretary to Lord Lansdowne in 1847. Lord Lansdowne helped Arnold secure his job as Inspector of Schools in 1851 and for 35 years, he assumed this position. During the 1860s, Arnold acquired his reputation as a critic and shortly after became a public figure. His major works during this time period include *Essays in Criticism*, *Culture and Anarchy*, and *Literature and Dogma*. Following his time spent in the public spotlight, Arnold retired from school inspecting in 1886 and died of a heart failure on April 15, 1888. Arnold is remembered for his abilities as a poet and critic alike, as he stimulated change and inspiration in the world.

11.4 Arnold and Church

Matthew Arnold had a very interesting relationship with religion, especially for living during the Victorian era. He was raised in a very liberal Anglican household, yet was heavily influenced by John Henry Newman, who was a very important figure in the church at the time. Arnold highly respected Newman, a conservative Catholic, for his spirituality, Arnold became an agnostic later in life. Although he had his own religious doubts, a source of great anxiety for him, he sought to capture the true essence of Christianity in many of his essays. His arguments for a renewed religious faith and an adoption of classical and aesthetic morals were representative of the main stream ideas of the Victorian era. At this point in time, Oxford movements of evangelicals worked to re-establish the morals of Christianity in everyday life. Arnold supported a movement for spirituality, yet he had difficulty believing it for himself and much of this is reflected in his works such as “Last Essays On Church and Religion”.

11.5 The social role of poetry and criticism

Arnold’s prose work could be dissected into several sections. The most common divisions that are suggested are Literary, Social & Theological Theory & Criticism. It is said that when the poet in Arnold died, the critic was born; and it is true that from this time onward he turned almost entirely to prose.

To Arnold a critic is a social benefactor. In his view the creative artist, no matter how much of a genius, would cut a sorry figure without the critic to come to his aid. Before Arnold a literary critic cared only for the beauties and defects of works of art, but Arnold the critic chose to be the educator and guardian of public opinion and propagator of the best ideas.

Cultural and critical values seem to be synonymous for Arnold. Scott James, comparing him to Aristotle, says that where Aristotle analyses the work of art, Arnold analyses the role of the critic. The one gives us the principles which govern the making of a poem, the other the principles by which the best poems should be selected and made known. Aristotle's critic owes allegiance to the artist, but Arnold's critic has a duty to society.

To Arnold poetry itself was the criticism of life: 'The criticism of life under the conditions fixed for such criticism by the laws of poetic truth and poetic beauty', and in his seminal essay *The Study of Poetry* (1888) he says that poetry alone can be our sustenance and stay in an era where religious beliefs are fast losing their hold. He claims that poetry is superior to philosophy, science, and religion. Religion attaches its emotion to supposed facts, and the supposed facts are failing it, but poetry attaches its emotion to ideas and ideas are infallible. And science, in his view is incomplete without poetry. He endorses Wordsworth's view that 'poetry is the impassioned expression which is in the countenance of all Science', adding 'What is a countenance without its expression?' and calls poetry 'the breath and finer spirit of knowledge'.

The views Arnold developed in his prose works on social, educational, and religious issues have been absorbed into the general consciousness, even if what they are as far as ever from being realized. The prospect of glacially slow growth never discouraged Arnold. While he harshly satirized the religious cant and hypocrisy of his era, he believed that the possibility of a better society for all depended not only on critique but also a vision of human perfection. That vision is soberly expressed in the late essay "A French Critic on Milton": "Human progress consists in a continual increase in the number of those, who, ceasing to live by the animal life alone and to feel the pleasures of sense only, come to participate in the intellectual life also, and to find enjoyment in the things of the mind."

When Arnold's poetry is considered, a different meaning must be applied to the term *modern* than that applied to the ideas of the critic, reformer, and prophet who dedicated most of his life to broadening the intellectual horizons of his countrymen—of, indeed, the whole English-speaking world. In many of his poems can be seen the psychological and emotional conflicts, the uncertainty of purpose, above all the feeling of disunity within oneself or of the individual's estrangement from society which is today called alienation and is thought of as a modern phenomenon. As Kenneth Allott said in 1954: "If a poet can ever teach us to understand what we feel, and how to live with our feelings, then Arnold is a contemporary."

11.6 Arnold – A Moralist

As a critic Arnold is essentially a moralist, and has very definite ideas about what poetry should and should not be. A poetry of revolt against moral ideas, he says, is a poetry of revolt against life, and a poetry of indifference to moral ideas is a poetry of indifference to life.

Arnold even censored his own collection on moral grounds. He omitted the poem *Empedocles on Etna* from his volume of 1853, whereas he had included it in his collection of 1852. The

reason he advances, in the Preface to his Poems of 1853 is not that the poem is too subjective, with its Hamlet-like introspection, or that it was a deviation from his classical ideals, but that the poem is too depressing in its subject matter, and would leave the reader hopeless and crushed. There is nothing in it in the way of hope or optimism, and such a poem could prove to be neither instructive nor of any delight to the reader.

Aristotle says that poetry is superior to History since it bears the stamp of high seriousness and truth. If truth and seriousness are wanting in the subject matter of a poem, so will the true poetic stamp of diction and movement be found wanting in its style and manner. Hence the two, the nobility of subject matter, and the superiority of style and manner, are proportional and cannot occur independently.

Arnold took up Aristotle's view, asserting that true greatness in poetry is given by the truth and seriousness of its subject matter, and by the high diction and movement in its style and manner, and although indebted to Joshua Reynolds for the expression 'grand style', Arnold gave it a new meaning when he used it in his lecture On Translating Homer (1861):

I think it will be found that that the grand style arises in poetry when a noble nature, poetically gifted, treats with simplicity or with a severity a serious subject.

According to Arnold, Homer is the best model of a simple grand style, while Milton is the best model of severe grand style. Dante, however, is an example of both.

Even Chaucer, in Arnold's view, in spite of his virtues such as benignity, largeness, and spontaneity, lacks seriousness. Burns too lacks sufficient seriousness, because he was hypocritical in that while he adopted a moral stance in some of his poems, in his private life he flouted morality.

➤ 11.6.1 Returns to Classical Values

Arnold believed that a modern writer should be aware that contemporary literature is built on the foundations of the past, and should contribute to the future by continuing a firm tradition. Quoting Goethe and Niebuhr in support of his view, he asserts that his age suffers from spiritual weakness because it thrives on self-interest and scientific materialism, and therefore cannot provide noble characters such as those found in Classical literature.

He urged modern poets to look to the ancients and their great characters and themes for guidance and inspiration. Classical literature, in his view, possess pathos, moral profundity and noble simplicity, while modern themes, arising from an age of spiritual weakness, are suitable for only comic and lighter kinds of poetry, and don't possess the loftiness to support epic or heroic poetry.

Arnold turns his back on the prevailing Romantic view of poetry and seeks to revive the Classical values of objectivity, urbanity, and architectonics. He denounces the Romantics for

ignoring the Classical writers for the sake of novelty, and for their allusive (Arnold uses the word 'suggestive') writing which defies easy comprehension.

11.7 Arnold and Other Works

The Study of Poetry

In *The Study of Poetry*, (1888) which opens his *Essays in Criticism: Second series*, in support of his plea for nobility in poetry, Arnold recalls Sainte-Beuve's reply to Napoleon, when latter said that charlatanism is found in everything. Sainte-Beuve replied that charlatanism might be found everywhere else, but not in the field of poetry, because in poetry the distinction between sound and unsound, or only half-sound, truth and untruth, or only half-truth, between the excellent and the inferior, is of paramount importance.

For Arnold there is no place for charlatanism in poetry. To him poetry is the criticism of life, governed by the laws of poetic truth and poetic beauty. It is in the criticism of life that the spirit of our race will find its stay and consolation. The extent to which the spirit of mankind finds its stay and consolation is proportional to the power of a poem's criticism of life, and the power of the criticism of life is in direct proportion to the extent to which the poem is genuine and free from charlatanism.

In *The Study of Poetry* he also cautions the critic that in forming a genuine and disinterested estimate of the poet under consideration he should not be influenced by historical or personal judgements, historical judgements being fallacious because we regard ancient poets with excessive veneration, and personal judgements being fallacious when we are biased towards a contemporary poet. If a poet is a 'dubious classic, let us sift him; if he is a false classic, let us explode him. But if he is a real classic, if his work belongs to the class of the very best enjoy his work'.

As examples of erroneous judgements he says that the 17th century court tragedies of the French were spoken of with exaggerated praise, until Pellisson reproached them for want of the true poetic stamp, and another critic, Charles d' Héricault, said that 17th century French poetry had received undue and undeserving veneration. Arnold says the critics seem to substitute 'a halo for physiognomy and a statue in the place where there was once a man. They give us a human personage no larger than God seated amidst his perfect work, like Jupiter on Olympus.'

He also condemns the French critic Vitet, who had eloquent words of praise for the epic poem *Chanson de Roland* by Turolthus, (which was sung by a jester, Taillefer, in William the Conqueror's army), saying that it was superior to Homer's *Iliad*. Arnold's view is that this poem can never be compared to Homer's work, and that we only have to compare the description of dying Roland to Helen's words about her wounded brothers Pollux and Castor and its inferiority will be clearly revealed.

The Study of Poetry: a shift in position - the touchstone method

Arnold's criticism of Vitet above illustrates his 'touchstone method'; his theory that in order to judge a poet's work properly, a critic should compare it to passages taken from works of great masters of poetry, and that these passages should be applied as touchstones to other poetry. Even a single line or selected quotation will serve the purpose.

From this we see that he has shifted his position from that expressed in the preface to his Poems of 1853. In *The Study of Poetry* he no longer uses the acid test of action and architectonics. He became an advocate of 'touchstones'. 'Short passages even single lines,' he said, 'will serve our turn quite sufficiently'.

Some of Arnold's touchstone passages are: Helen's words about her wounded brother, Zeus addressing the horses of Peleus, suppliant Achilles' words to Priam, and from Dante; Ugolino's brave words, and Beatrice's loving words to Virgil.

From non-Classical writers he selects from Henry IV Part II (III, i), Henry's expostulation with sleep - 'Wilt thou upon the high and giddy mast . . .'. From Hamlet (V, ii) 'Absent thee from felicity awhile . . .'. From Milton's *Paradise Lost* Book 1, 'Care sat on his faded cheek . . .', and 'What is else not to be overcome . . .'

The Study of Poetry: on Chaucer

The French Romance poetry of the 13th century *langue d'oc* and *langue d'oïl* was extremely popular in Europe and Italy, but soon lost its popularity and now it is important only in terms of historical study. But Chaucer, who was nourished by the romance poetry of the French, and influenced by the Italian Royal rhyme stanza, still holds enduring fascination. There is an excellence of style and subject in his poetry, which is the quality the French poetry lacks. Dryden says of Chaucer's Prologue 'Here is God's plenty!' and that 'he is a perpetual fountain of good sense'. There is largeness, benignity, freedom and spontaneity in Chaucer's writings. 'He is the well of English undefiled'. He has divine fluidity of movement, divine liquidness of diction. He has created an epoch and founded a tradition.

Some say that the fluidity of Chaucer's verse is due to licence in the use of the language, a liberty which Burns enjoyed much later. But Arnold says that the excellence of Chaucer's poetry is due to his sheer poetic talent. This liberty in the use of language was enjoyed by many poets, but we do not find the same kind of fluidity in others. Only in Shakespeare and Keats do we find the same kind of fluidity, though they wrote without the same liberty in the use of language.

Arnold praises Chaucer's excellent style and manner, but says that Chaucer cannot be called a classic since, unlike Homer, Virgil and Shakespeare, his poetry does not have the high poetic seriousness which Aristotle regards as a mark of its superiority over the other arts.

The Study of Poetry: on the age of Dryden and Pope

The age of Dryden is regarded as superior to that of the others for 'sweetness of poetry'. Arnold asks whether Dryden and Pope, poets of great merit, are truly the poetical classics of the 18th century. He says Dryden's post-script to the readers in his translation of *The Aeneid* reveals the fact that in prose writing he is even better than Milton and Chapman.

Just as the laxity in religious matters during the Restoration period was a direct outcome of the strict discipline of the Puritans, in the same way in order to control the dangerous sway of imagination found in the poetry of the Metaphysicals, to counteract 'the dangerous prevalence of imagination', the poets of the 18th century introduced certain regulations. The restrictions that were imposed on the poets were uniformity, regularity, precision, and balance. These restrictions curbed the growth of poetry, and encouraged the growth of prose.

Hence we can regard Dryden as the glorious founder, and Pope as the splendid high priest, of the age of prose and reason, our indispensable 18th century. Their poetry was that of the builders of an age of prose and reason. Arnold says that Pope and Dryden are not poet classics, but the 'prose classics' of the 18th century.

As for poetry, he considers Gray to be the only classic of the 18th century. Gray constantly studied and enjoyed Greek poetry and thus inherited their poetic point of view and their application of poetry to life. But he is the 'scantiest, frailest classic' since his output was small.

The Study of Poetry: on Burns

Although Burns lived close to the 19th century his poetry breathes the spirit of 18th Century life. Burns is most at home in his native language. His poems deal with Scottish dress, Scottish manner, and Scottish religion. This Scottish world is not a beautiful one, and it is an advantage if a poet deals with a beautiful world. But Burns shines whenever he triumphs over his sordid, repulsive and dull world with his poetry.

Perhaps we find the true Burns only in his bacchanalian poetry, though occasionally his bacchanalian attitude was affected. For example in his *Holy Fair*, the lines 'Leeze me on drink! it gies us mair/ Than either school or college', may represent the bacchanalian attitude, but they are not truly bacchanalian in spirit. There is something insincere about it, smacking of bravado.

When Burns moralises in some of his poems it also sounds insincere, coming from a man who disregarded morality in actual life. And sometimes his pathos is intolerable, as in *Auld Lang Syne*.

We see the real Burns (wherein he is unsurpassable) in lines such as, 'To make a happy fire-side clime/ to weans and wife/ That's the true pathos and sublime/ Of human life' (*Ae Fond Kiss*). Here we see the genius of Burns.

But, like Chaucer, Burns lacks high poetic seriousness, though his poems have poetic truth in

diction and movement. Sometimes his poems are profound and heart-rending, such as in the lines, 'Had we never loved sae kindly/ had we never loved sae blindly/ never met or never parted/ we had ne'er been broken-hearted'.

Also like Chaucer, Burns possesses largeness, benignity, freedom and spontaneity. But instead of Chaucer's fluidity, we find in Burns a springing bounding energy. Chaucer's benignity deepens in Burns into a sense of sympathy for both human as well as non-human things, but Chaucer's world is richer and fairer than that of Burns.

Sometimes Burns's poetic genius is unmatched by anyone. He is even better than Goethe at times and he is unrivalled by anyone except Shakespeare. He has written excellent poems such as Tam O'Shanter, Whistle and I'll come to you my Lad, and Auld Lang Syne.

When we compare Shelley's 'Pinnacled dim in the of intense inane' (Prometheus Unbound III, iv) with Burns's, 'They flatter, she says, to deceive me' (Tam Glen), the latter is salutary.

Check your Progress

1. Analyse the Study of Poetry as one of the testimonials for the other writers.

11.8 Summary

Matthew Arnold (1822-1888), the Victorian poet and critic, was 'the first modern critic' [1], and could be called 'the critic's critic', being a champion not only of great poetry, but of literary criticism itself. The purpose of literary criticism, in his view, was 'to know the best that is known and thought in the world, and by in its turn making this known, to create a current of true and fresh ideas', and he has influenced a whole school of critics including new critics such as T. S. Eliot, F. R. Leavis, and Allen Tate. He was the founder of the sociological school of criticism, and through his touchstone method introduced scientific objectivity to critical evaluation by providing comparison and analysis as the two primary tools of criticism.

Arnold's evaluations of the Romantic poets such as Wordsworth, Byron, Shelley, and Keats are landmarks in descriptive criticism, and as a poet-critic he occupies an eminent position in the rich galaxy of poet-critics of English literature.

11.9 Key Terms

Touchstone Method: Arnold's touchstone method is a comparative method of criticism. According to this method, in order to judge a poet's work properly, a critic should compare it to passages taken from works of great masters of poetry, and that these passages should be applied as touchstones to other poetry. Even a single line or selected quotation will serve the purpose. If the other work moves us in the same way as these lines and expressions do, then it is really a great work, otherwise not.

Nonconformist: Nonconformists were Protestant Christians who did not "conform" to the governance and usages of the state church in England, and in Wales until 1914, the Church of England (and in Ireland until 1869, the Church of Ireland).

Balder Dead: Balder Dead is a narrative poem with powerful tragic themes, first published in 1855 by Matthew Arnold. This poem draws upon Norse mythology: retelling the story of the murder of Odin's son, Balder, as brought about by the wicked machinations of Loki, blood brother to Odin.

11.10 Review Questions

1. Discuss Arnold as a critic.
2. Trace out the early life of Matthew Arnold.
3. Assess the works of Arnold in Victorian age.
4. How is Arnold different from his contemporaries. Discuss.
5. Discuss Scholar Gypsy as one of Arnold's important work.

11.11 References

- Landow, George. *Elegant Jeremiahs: The Sage from Carlyle to Mailer*. Ithaca, New York: Cornell University Press, 1986.
- *Oxford illustrated encyclopedia*. Judge, Harry George., Toyne, Anthony. Oxford [England]: Oxford University Press. 1985–1993. p. 22. ISBN 0-19-869129-7. OCLC 11814265.
- Jump up to:^a ^b Collini, Stefan. "Arnold, Matthew". *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* (online ed.). Oxford University Press. doi:10.1093/ref:odnb/679. (Subscription or UK public library membership required.)
- Foster, Joseph (1888–1892). "Arnold, Matthew (2)". *Alumni Oxonienses: the Members of the University of Oxford, 1715–1886*. Oxford: Parker and Co – via Wikisource.
- *Cromwell: A Prize Poem, Recited in the Theatre, Oxford; June 28, 1843* at Google Books
- "Obituary – Mrs. Matthew Arnold". *The Times*. No. 36495. London. 1 July 1901. p. 11.

UNIT 12: ARNOLD'S PREFACE TO LYRICAL BALLADS

STRUCTURE

- 12.1 Objectives
- 12.2 Introduction
- 12.3 The Function of Criticism
- 12.4 Arnold on Shakespeare
- 12.5 Preface to Poems - The Text
- 12.6 Outline of the Preface
- 12.7 Preface to Poems of 1853
- 12.8 Arnold's limitations
- 12.9 Arnold's Legacy
- 12.10 Summary
- 12.11 Key Terms
- 12.12 Review Questions
- 12.13 References

12.1 Objectives

The learners shall know the following:

- The Function of criticism.
- The text of the preface to poems.
- Analysis of the text.
- Arnold's Limitation and legacy.

12.2 Introduction

Although remembered now for his elegantly argued critical essays, Matthew Arnold (1822-1888) began his career as a poet, winning early recognition as a student at the Rugby School where his father, Thomas Arnold, had earned national acclaim as a strict and innovative headmaster. Arnold also studied at Balliol College, Oxford University. In 1844, after completing his undergraduate degree at Oxford, he returned to Rugby as a teacher of classics. After marrying in 1851, Arnold began work as a government school inspector, a grueling position which nonetheless afforded him the opportunity to travel throughout England and the Continent. Throughout his thirty-five years in this position Arnold developed

an interest in education, an interest which fed into both his critical works and his poetry. *Empedocles on Etna* (1852) and *Poems* (1853) established Arnold's reputation as a poet and in 1857 he was offered a position, which he accepted and held until 1867, as Professor of Poetry at Oxford. Arnold became the first professor to lecture in English rather than Latin. During this time Arnold wrote the bulk of his most famous critical works, *Essays in Criticism* (1865) and *Culture and Anarchy* (1869), in which he sets forth ideas that greatly reflect the predominant values of the Victorian era.

Meditative and rhetorical, Arnold's poetry often wrestles with problems of psychological isolation. In "To Marguerite—Continued," for example, Arnold revises Donne's assertion that "No man is an island," suggesting that we "mortals" are indeed "in thesea of life enisled." Other well-known poems, such as "Dover Beach," link the problem of isolation with what Arnold saw as the dwindling faith of his time. Despite his own religious doubts, a source of great anxiety for him, in several essays Arnold sought to establish the essential truth of Christianity. His most influential essays, however, were those on literary topics. In "The Function of Criticism" (1865) and "The Study of Poetry" (1880) Arnold called for a new epic poetry: a poetry that would address the moral needs of his readers, "to animate and ennoble them." Arnold's arguments, for a renewed religious faith and an adoption of classical aesthetics and morals, are particularly representative of mainstream Victorian intellectual concerns. His approach—his gentlemanly and subtle style—to these issues, however, established criticism as an art form, and has influenced almost every major English critic since, including T. S. Eliot, Lionel Trilling, and Harold Bloom. Though perhaps less obvious, the tremendous influence of his poetry, which addresses the poet's most innermost feelings with complete transparency, can easily be seen in writers as different from each other as W. B. Yeats, James Wright, Sylvia Plath, and Sharon Olds. Late in life, in 1883 and 1886, Arnold made two lecturing tours of the United States. Matthew Arnold died in Liverpool in 1888.

12.3 The Function of Criticism

It is in his *The Function of Criticism at the Present Time* (1864) that Arnold says that criticism should be a 'dissemination of ideas, a disinterested endeavour to learn and propagate the best that is known and thought in the world'. He says that when evaluating a work the aim is 'to see the object as in itself it really is'. Psychological, historical and sociological background are irrelevant, and to dwell on such aspects is mere dilettantism. This stance was very influential with later critics.

Arnold also believed that in his quest for the best a critic should not confine himself to the literature of his own country, but should draw substantially on foreign literature and ideas, because the propagation of ideas should be an objective endeavour.

12.4 Arnold on Shakespeare

Praising Shakespeare, Arnold says 'In England there needs a miracle of genius like Shakespeare's to produce a balance of mind'. This is not bardolatory, but praise tempered by a critical sense. In a letter he writes. 'I keep saying Shakespeare, you are as obscure as life is'.

In his sonnet On Shakespeare he says; 'Others abide our question. Thou are free./ We ask and ask - Thou smilest and art still,/ Out-topping knowledge'.

12.5 Preface to Poems - The Text

IN two small volumes of Poems, published anonymously, one in 1849, the other in 1852, many of the Poems which compose the present volume have already appeared. The rest are now published for the first time.

I have, in the present collection, omitted the Poem from which the volume published in 1852 took its title. I have done so, not because the subject of it was a Sicilian Greek born between two and three thousand years ago, although many persons would think this a sufficient reason. Neither have I done so because I had, in my own opinion, failed in the delineation which I intended to effect. I intended to delineate the feelings of one of the last of the Greek religious philosophers, one of the family of Orpheus and Musaeus, having survived his fellows, living on into a time when the habits of Greek thought and feeling had begun fast to change, character to dwindle, the influence of the Sophists to prevail. Into the feelings of a man so situated there entered much that we are accustomed to consider as exclusively modern; how much, the fragments of Empedocles himself which remain to us are sufficient at least to indicate. What those who are familiar only with the great monuments of early Greek genius suppose to be its exclusive characteristics, have disappeared; the calm, the cheerfulness, the disinterested objectivity have disappeared: the dialogue of the mind with itself has commenced; modern problems have presented themselves; we hear already the doubts, we witness the discouragement, of Hamlet and of Faust.

The representation of such a man's feelings must be interesting, if consistently drawn. We all naturally take pleasure, says Aristotle, in any imitation or representation whatever: this is the basis of our love of Poetry: and we take pleasure in them, he adds, because all knowledge is naturally agreeable to us; not to the philosopher only, but to mankind at large. Every representation therefore which is consistently drawn may be supposed to be interesting, inasmuch as it gratifies this natural interest in knowledge of all kinds. What is not interesting, is that which does not add to our knowledge of any kind; that which is vaguely conceived and loosely drawn; a representation which is general, indeterminate, and faint, instead of being particular, precise, and firm.

Any accurate representation may therefore be expected to be interesting; but, if the representation be a poetical one, more than this is demanded. It is demanded, not only that it shall interest, but also that it shall inspire and rejoice the reader: that it shall convey a charm, and infuse delight. For the Muses, as Hesiod says, were born that they might be 'a forgetfulness of evils, and a truce from cares': and it is not enough that the Poet should add to the knowledge of men, it is required of him also that he should add to their happiness. 'All Art,' says Schiller, 'is dedicated to Joy, and there is no higher and no more serious problem, than how to make men happy. The right Art is that alone, which creates the highest enjoyment.'

A poetical work, therefore, is not yet justified when it has been shown to be an accurate, and therefore interesting representation; it has to be shown also that it is a representation from which men can derive enjoyment. In presence of the most tragic circumstances, represented in a work of Art, the feeling of enjoyment, as is well known, may still subsist: the representation of the most utter calamity, of the liveliest anguish, is not sufficient to destroy it: the more tragic the situation, the deeper becomes the enjoyment; and the situation is more tragic in proportion as it becomes more terrible.

What then are the situations, from the representation of which, though accurate, no poetical enjoyment can be derived? They are those in which the suffering finds no vent in action; in which a continuous state of mental distress is prolonged, unrelieved by incident, hope, or resistance; in which there is everything to be endured, nothing to be done. In such situations there is inevitably something morbid, in the description of them something monotonous. When they occur in actual life, they are painful, not tragic; the representation of them in poetry is painful also.

To this class of situations, poetically faulty as it appears to me, that of Empedocles, as I have endeavoured to represent him, belongs; and I have therefore excluded the Poem from the present collection.

And why, it may be asked, have I entered into this explanation respecting a matter so unimportant as the admission or exclusion of the Poem in question? I have done so, because I was anxious to avow that the sole reason for its exclusion was that which has been stated above; and that it has not been excluded in deference to the opinion which many critics of the present day appear to entertain against subjects chosen from distant times and countries: against the choice, in short, of any subjects but modern ones.

'The Poet,' it is said, and by an intelligent critic, 'the Poet who would really fix the public attention must leave the exhausted past, and draw his subjects from matters of present import, and therefore both of interest and novelty.'

Now this view I believe to be completely false. It is worth examining, inasmuch as it is a fair sample of a class of critical dicta everywhere current at the present day, having a

philosophical form and air, but no real basis in fact; and which are calculated to vitiate the judgement of readers of poetry, while they exert, so far as they are adopted, amisleading influence on the practice of those who write it.

What are the eternal objects of Poetry, among all nations and at all times? They are actions; human actions; possessing an inherent interest in themselves, and which are to be communicated in an interesting manner by the art of the Poet. Vainly will the latter imagine that he has everything in his own power; that he can make an intrinsically inferior action equally delightful with a more excellent one by his treatment of it; he may indeed compel us to admire his skill, but his work will possess, within itself, an incurable defect.

The Poet, then, has in the first place to select an excellent action; and what actions are the most excellent? Those, certainly, which most powerfully appeal to the great primary human affections: to those elementary feelings which subsist permanently in the race, and which are independent of time. These feelings are permanent and the same; that which interests them is permanent and the same also. The modernness or antiquity of an action, therefore, has nothing to do with its fitness for poetical representation; this depends upon its inherent qualities. To the elementary part of our nature, to our passions, that which is great and passionate is eternally interesting; and interesting solely in proportion to its greatness and to its passion. A great human action of a thousand years ago is more interesting to it than a smaller human action of to-day, even though upon the representation of this last the most consummate skill may have been expended, and though it has the advantage of appealing by its modern language, familiar manners, and contemporary allusions, to all our transient feelings and interests. These, however, have no right to demand of a poetical work that it shall satisfy them; their claims are to be directed elsewhere. Poetical works belong to the domain of our permanent passions: let them interest these, and the voice of all subordinate claims upon them is at once silenced.

Achilles, Prometheus, Clytemnestra, Dido—what modern poem presents personages as interesting, even to us moderns, as these personages of an ‘exhausted past’? We have the domestic epic dealing with the details of modern life which pass daily under our eyes; we have poems representing modern personages in contact with the problems of modern life, moral, intellectual, and social; these works have been produced by poets the most distinguished of their nation and time; yet I fearlessly assert that Hermann and Dorothea, Childe Harold, Jocelyn, The Excursion, leave the reader cold in comparison with the effect produced upon him by the latter books of the Iliad, by the Oresteia, or by the episode of Dido. And why is this? Simply because in the three latter cases the action is greater, the personages nobler, the situations more intense: and this is the true basis of the interest in a poetical work, and this alone.

It may be urged, however, that past actions may be interesting in themselves, but that they are not to be adopted by the modern Poet, because it is impossible for him to have them clearly present to his own mind, and he cannot therefore feel them deeply, nor represent them forcibly. But this is not necessarily the case. The externals of a past action, indeed, he

cannot know with the precision of a contemporary; but his business is with its essentials. The outward man of Oedipus or of Macbeth, the houses in which they lived, the ceremonies of their courts, he cannot accurately figure to himself; but neither do they essentially concern him. His business is with their inward man; with their feelings and behaviour in certain tragic situations, which engage their passions as men; these have in them nothing local and casual; they are as accessible to the modern Poet as to a contemporary.

The date of an action, then, signifies nothing: the action itself, its selection and construction, this is what is all-important. This the Greeks understood far more clearly than we do. The radical difference between their poetical theory and ours consists, as it appears to me, in this: that, with them, the poetical character of the action in itself, and the conduct of it, was the first consideration; with us, attention is fixed mainly on the value of the separate thoughts and images which occur in the treatment of an action. They regarded the whole; we regard the parts. With them, the action predominated over the expression of it; with us, the expression predominates over the action. Not that they failed in expression, or were inattentive to it; on the contrary, they are the highest models of expression, the unapproached masters of the grand style: but their expression is so excellent because it is so admirably kept in its right degree of prominence; because it is so simple and so well subordinated; because it draws its force directly from the pregnancy of the matter which it conveys. For what reason was the Greek tragic poet confined to so limited a range of subjects? Because there are so few actions which unite in themselves, in the highest degree, the conditions of excellence: and it was not thought that on any but an excellent subject could an excellent Poem be constructed. A few actions, therefore, eminently adapted for tragedy, maintained almost exclusive possession of the Greek tragic stage; their significance appeared inexhaustible; they were as permanent problems, perpetually offered to the genius of every fresh poet. This too is the reason of what appears to us moderns a certain baldness of expression in Greek tragedy; of the triviality with which we often reproach the remarks of the chorus, where it takes part in the dialogue: that the action itself, the situation of Orestes, or Merope, or Alcmaeon, was to stand the central point of interest, unforgotten, absorbing, principal; that no accessories were for a moment to distract the spectator's attention from this; that the tone of the parts was to be perpetually kept down, in order not to impair the grandiose effect of the whole. The terrible old mythic story on which the drama was founded stood, before he entered the theatre, traced in its bare outlines upon the spectator's mind; it stood in his memory, as a group of statuary, faintly seen, at the end of a long and dark vista: then came the Poet, embodying outlines, developing situations, not a word wasted, not a sentiment capriciously thrown in: stroke upon stroke, the drama proceeded: the light deepened upon the group; more and more it revealed itself to the rivetted gaze of the spectator: until at last, when the final words were spoken, it stood before him in broad sunlight, a model of immortal beauty.

This was what a Greek critic demanded; this was what a Greek poet endeavoured to effect. It signified nothing to what time an action belonged; we do not find that the Persae occupied a particularly high rank among the dramas of Aeschylus, because it represented a matter of contemporary interest: this was not what a cultivated Athenian required; he required that the

permanent elements of his nature should be moved; and dramas of which the action, though taken from a long-distant mythic time, yet was calculated to accomplish this in a higher degree than that of the Persae, stood higher in his estimation accordingly. The Greeks felt, no doubt, with their exquisite sagacity of taste, that an action of present times was too near them, too much mixed up with what was accidental and passing, to form a sufficiently grand, detached, and self-subsistent object for a tragic poem: such objects belonged to the domain of the comic poet, and of the lighter kinds of poetry. For the more serious kinds, for pragmatic poetry, to use an excellent expression of Polybius, they were more difficult and severe in the range of subjects which they permitted. Their theory and practice alike, the admirable treatise of Aristotle, and the unrivalled works of their poets, exclaim with a thousand tongues—‘All depends upon the subject; choose a fitting action, penetrate yourself with the feeling of its situations; this done, everything else will follow.’

But for all kinds of poetry alike there was one point on which they were rigidly exacting; the adaptability of the subject to the kind of poetry selected, and the careful construction of the poem.

How different a way of thinking from this is ours! We can hardly at the present day understand what Menander meant, when he told a man who inquired as to the progress of his comedy that he had finished it, not having yet written a single line, because he had constructed the action of it in his mind. A modern critic would have assured him that the merit of his piece depended on the brilliant things which arose under his pen as he went along. We have poems which seem to exist merely for the sake of single lines and passages; not for the sake of producing any total-impression. We have critics who seem to direct their attention merely to detached expressions, to the language about the action, not to the action itself. I verily think that the majority of them do not in their hearts believe that there is such a thing as a total-impression to be derived from a poem at all, or to be demanded from a poet; they think the term a common-place of metaphysical criticism. They will permit the Poet to select any action he pleases, and to suffer that action to go as it will, provided he gratifies them with occasional bursts of fine writing, and with a shower of isolated thoughts and images. That is, they permit him to leave their poetical sense ungratified, provided that he gratifies their rhetorical sense and their curiosity. Of his neglecting to gratify these, there is little danger; he needs rather to be warned against the danger of attempting to gratify these alone; he needs rather to be perpetually reminded to prefer his action to everything else; so to treat this, as to permit its inherent excellences to develop themselves, without interruption from the intrusion of his personal peculiarities: most fortunate, when he most entirely succeeds in effacing himself, and in enabling a noble action to subsist as it did in nature.

But the modern critic not only permits a false practice; he absolutely prescribes false aims.—‘A true allegory of the state of one’s own mind in a representative history,’ the Poet is told, ‘is perhaps the highest thing that one can attempt in the way of poetry.’—And accordingly he attempts it. An allegory of the state of one’s own mind, the highest problem of an art which imitates actions! No assuredly, it is not, it never can be so: no great poetical work has

ever been produced with such an aim. Faust itself, in which something of the kind is attempted, wonderful passages as it contains, and in spite of the unsurpassed beauty of the scenes which relate to Margaret, Faust itself, judged as a whole, and judged strictly as a poetical work, is defective: its illustrious author, the greatest poet of modern times, the greatest critic of all times, would have been the first to acknowledge it; he only defended his work, indeed, by asserting it to be 'something incommensurable.'

The confusion of the present times is great, the multitude of voices counselling different things bewildering, the number of existing works capable of attracting a young writer's attention and of becoming his models, immense: what we want is a hand to guide him through the confusion, a voice to prescribe to him the aim which he should keep in view, and to explain to him that the value of the literary works which offer themselves to his attention is relative to their power of helping him forward on his road towards this aim. Such a guide the English writer at the present day will nowhere find. Failing this, all that can be looked for, all indeed that can be desired, is, that his attention should be fixed on excellent models; that he may reproduce, at any rate, something of their excellence, by penetrating himself with their works and by catching their spirit, if he cannot be taught to produce what is excellent independently.

Foremost among these models for the English writer stands Shakespeare: a name the greatest perhaps of all poetical names; a name never to be mentioned without reverence. I will venture, however, to express a doubt, whether the influence of his works, excellent and fruitful for the readers of poetry, for the great majority, has been of unmixed advantage to the writers of it. Shakespeare indeed chose excellent subjects; the world could afford no better than Macbeth, or Romeo and Juliet, or Othello: he had no theory respecting the necessity of choosing subjects of present import, or the paramount interest attaching to allegories of the state of one's own mind; like all great poets, he knew well what constituted a poetical action; like them, wherever he found such an action, he took it; like them, too, he found his best in past times. But to these general characteristics of all great poets he added a special one of his own; a gift, namely, of happy, abundant, and ingenious expression, eminent and unrivalled: so eminent as irresistibly to strike the attention first in him, and even to throw into comparative shade his other excellences as a poet. Here has been the mischief. These other excellences were his fundamental excellences as a poet; what distinguishes the artist from the mere amateur, says Goethe, is *Architectonic* in the highest sense; that power of execution, which creates, forms, and constitutes: not the profoundness of single thoughts, not the richness of imagery, not the abundance of illustration. But these attractive accessories of a poetical work being more easily seized than the spirit of the whole, and these accessories being possessed by Shakespeare in an unequalled degree, a young writer having recourse to Shakespeare as his model runs great risk of being vanquished and absorbed by them, and, in consequence, of reproducing, according to the measure of his power, these, and these alone. Of this preponderating quality of Shakespeare's genius, accordingly, almost the whole of modern English poetry has, it appears to me, felt the influence. To the exclusive attention on the part of his imitators to this it is in a great degree owing, that of the majority of modern poetical works the details

alone are valuable, the composition worthless. In reading them one is perpetually reminded of that terrible sentence on a modern French poet—il dit tout ce qu'il veut, mais malheureusement il n'a rien à dire.

Let me give an instance of what I mean. I will take it from the works of the very chief among those who seem to have been formed in the school of Shakespeare: of one whose exquisite genius and pathetic death render him for ever interesting. I will take the poem of *Isabella*, or the *Pot of Basil*, by Keats. I choose this rather than the *Endymion*, because the latter work (which a modern critic has classed with the *Fairy Queen*!), although undoubtedly there blows through it the breath of genius, is yet as a whole so utterly incoherent, as not strictly to merit the name of a poem at all. The poem of *Isabella*, then, is a perfect treasure-house of graceful and felicitous words and images: almost in every stanza there occurs one of those vivid and picturesque turns of expression, by which the object is made to flash upon the eye of the mind, and which thrill the reader with a sudden delight. This one short poem contains, perhaps, a greater number of happy single expressions which one could quote than all the extant tragedies of Sophocles. But the action, the story? The action in itself is an excellent one; but so feebly is it conceived by the Poet, so loosely constructed, that the effect produced by it, in and for itself, is absolutely null. Let the reader, after he has finished the poem of Keats, turn to the same story in the *Decameron*: he will then feel how pregnant and interesting the same action has become in the hands of a great artist, who above all things delineates his object; who subordinates expression to that which it is designed to express.

I have said that the imitators of Shakespeare, fixing their attention on his wonderful gift of expression, have directed their imitation to this, neglecting his other excellences. These excellences, the fundamental excellences of poetical art, Shakespeare no doubt possessed them—possessed many of them in a splendid degree; but it may perhaps be doubted whether even he himself did not sometimes give scope to his faculty of expression to the prejudice of a higher poetical duty. For we must never forget that Shakespeare is the great poet he is from his skill in discerning and firmly conceiving an excellent action, from his power of intensely feeling a situation, of intimately associating himself with a character; not from his gift of expression, which rather even leads him astray, degenerating sometimes into a fondness for curiosity of expression, into an irritability of fancy, which seems to make it impossible for him to say a thing plainly, even when the press of the action demands the very directest language, or its level character the very simplest. Mr. Hallam, than whom it is impossible to find a saner and more judicious critic, has had the courage (for at the present day it needs courage) to remark, how extremely and faultily difficult Shakespeare's language often is. It is so: you may find main scenes in some of his greatest tragedies, *King Lear* for instance, where the language is so artificial, so curiously tortured, and so difficult, that every speech has to be read two or three times before its meaning can be comprehended. This over-curiosity of expression is indeed but the excessive employment of a wonderful gift—of the power of saying a thing in a happier way than any other man; nevertheless, it is carried so far that one understands what M. Guizot meant, when he said that Shakespeare appears in his language to have tried all styles except that of simplicity. He has not the severe

and scrupulous self-restraint of the ancients, partly no doubt, because he had a far less cultivated and exacting audience: he has indeed a far wider range than they had, a far richer fertility of thought; in this respect he rises above them: in his strong conception of his subject, in the genuine way in which he is penetrated with it, he resembles them, and is unlike the moderns: but in the accurate limitation of it, the conscientious rejection of superfluities, the simple and rigorous development of it from the first line of his work to the last, he falls below them, and comes nearer to the moderns. In his chief works, besides what he has of his own, he has the elementary soundness of the ancients; he has their important action and their large and broad manner: but he has not their purity of method. He is therefore a less safe model; for what he has of his own is personal, and inseparable from his own rich nature; it may be imitated and exaggerated, it cannot be learned or applied as an art; he is above all suggestive; more valuable, therefore, to youngwriters as men than as artists. But clearness of arrangement, rigour of development, simplicity of style—these may to a certain extent be learned: and these may, I am convinced, be learned best from the ancients, who although infinitely less suggestive thanShakespeare, are thus, to the artist, more instructive.

What, then, it will be asked, are the ancients to be our sole models? the ancients with their comparatively narrow range of experience, and their widely different circumstances? Not, certainly, that which is narrow in the ancients, nor that in which we can no longer sympathize. An action like the action of the Antigone of Sophocles, which turns upon the conflict between the heroine's duty to her brother's corpse and that to the laws of her country, is no longer one in which it is possible that we should feel a deep interest. I am speaking too, it will be remembered, not of the best sources of intellectual stimulus for the general reader, but of the best models of instruction for the individual writer. This last may certainly learn of the ancients, better than anywhere else, three things which it is vitally important for him to know:—the all-importance of the choice of a subject; the necessity of accurate construction; and the subordinate character of expression. He will learn from them how unspeakably superior is the effect of the one moral impression left by a great action treated as a whole, to the effect produced by the most striking single thought or by the happiest image. As he penetrates into the spirit of the great classical works, as he becomes gradually aware of their intense significance, their noble simplicity, and their calm pathos, he will be convinced that it is this effect, unity and profoundness of moral impression, at which the ancient Poets aimed; that it is this which constitutes the grandeur of their works, and which makes them immortal. He will desire to direct his own efforts towards producing the same effect. Above all, he will deliver himself from the jargon of modern criticism, and escape the danger of producing poetical works conceived in the spirit of the passing time, and which partake of its transitoriness.

The present age makes great claims upon us: we owe it service, it will not be satisfied without our admiration. I know not how it is, but their commerce with the ancients appears to me to produce, in those who constantly practise it, a steady and composing effect upon their judgement, not of literary works only, but of men and events in general. They are like

persons who have had a very weighty and impressive experience: they are more truly than others under the empire of facts, and more independent of the language current among those with whom they live. They wish neither to applaud nor to revile their age: they wish to know what it is, what it can give them, and whether this is what they want. What they want, they know very well; they want to educate and cultivate what is best and noblest in themselves: they know, too, that this is no easy task—[Greek], as Pittacus said, [Greek]—and they ask themselves sincerely whether their age and its literature can assist them in the attempt. If they are endeavouring to practise any art, they remember the plain and simple proceedings of the old artists, who attained their grand results by penetrating themselves with some noble and significant action, not by inflating themselves with a belief in the pre-eminent importance and greatness of their own times. They do not talk of their mission, nor of interpreting their age, nor of the coming Poet; all this, they know, is the mere delirium of vanity; their business is not to praise their age, but to afford to the men who live in it the highest pleasure which they are capable of feeling. If asked to afford this by means of subjects drawn from the age itself, they ask what special fitness the present age has for supplying them: they are told that it is an era of progress, an age commissioned to carry out the great ideas of industrial development and social amelioration. They reply that with all this they can do nothing; that the elements they need for the exercise of their art are great actions, calculated powerfully and delightfully to affect what is permanent in the human soul; that so far as the present age can supply such actions, they will gladly make use of them; but that an age wanting in moral grandeur can with difficulty supply such, and an age of spiritual discomfort with difficulty be powerfully and delightfully affected by them.

A host of voices will indignantly rejoin that the present age is inferior to the past neither in moral grandeur nor in spiritual health. He who possesses the discipline I speak of will content himself with remembering the judgements passed upon the present age, in this respect, by the two men, the one of strongest head, the other of widest culture, 9 whom it has produced; by Goethe and by Niebuhr. It will be sufficient for him that he knows the opinions held by these two great men respecting the present age and its literature; and that he feels assured in his own mind that their aims and demands upon life were such as he would wish, at any rate, his own to be; and their judgement as to what is impeding and disabling such as he may safely follow. He will not, however, maintain a hostile attitude towards the false pretensions of his age; he will content himself with not being overwhelmed by them. He will esteem himself fortunate if he can succeed in banishing from his mind all feelings of contradiction, and irritation, and impatience; in order to delight himself with the contemplation of some noble action of a heroic time, and to enable others, through his representation of it, to delight in it also.

I am far indeed from making any claim, for myself, that I possess this discipline; or for the following Poems, that they breathe its spirit. But I say, that in the sincere endeavour to learn and practise, amid the bewildering confusion of our times, what is sound and true in poetical art, I seemed to myself to find the only sure guidance, the only solid footing, among the ancients. They, at any rate, knew what they wanted in Art, and we do not. It is this

uncertainty which is disheartening, and not hostile criticism. How often have I felt this when reading words of disparagement or of cavil: that it is the uncertainty as to what is really to be aimed at which makes our difficulty, not the dissatisfaction of the critic, who himself suffers from the same uncertainty. Non me tua fervida terrent Dicta: Dii me terrent, et Jupiter hostis.

Two kinds of dilettanti, says Goethe, there are in poetry: he who neglects the indispensable mechanical part, and thinks he has done enough if he shows spirituality and feeling; and he who seeks to arrive at poetry merely by mechanism, in which he can acquire an artisan's readiness, and is without soul and matter. And he adds, that the first does most harm to Art, and the last to himself. If we must be dilettanti: if it is impossible for us, under the circumstances amidst which we live, to think clearly, to feel nobly, and to delineate firmly: if we cannot attain to the mastery of the great artists—let us, at least, have so much respect for our Art as to prefer it to ourselves: let us not bewilder our successors: let us transmit to them the practice of Poetry, with its boundaries and wholesome regulative laws, under which excellent works may again, perhaps, at some future time, be produced, not yet fallen into oblivion through our neglect, not yet condemned and cancelled by the influence of their eternal enemy, Caprice.

12.6 Outline of the preface

Here are some observations in outline form:

1. Withdrawal from romantic cultural project.
2. **ANTI-EXPRESSIVE:** Arnold wants to be an anti-expressive poet--self-expression is not the way to make an increasingly Prufrockian Europe better. Hence the polemics against his own "Empedocles" poem and Wordsworth. Arnold's idea is the opposite of Wordsworth's--action, not feeling, should predominate in poetry.
3. **SELF:** If Arnold doesn't like the romantics' engrossment in selfhood, what might be his own model of the self to be developed by poetry? Arnold looks back to the Greek ideal--as reconstructed by C19 German classics scholars--of full development of all man's powers, both intellectual and emotional. He believes that the romantics spent too much time brooding about the problem of their own alienated subjectivity. Arnold, by contrast, thinks that the standard of humanity is somewhat closer (though stripped of the neoclassicist's insistent emphasis on morality) to the realist ideal of Pope or Johnson: universal, objectified human nature. The individual, with the assistance of "healthy" poetry, is to develop himself or herself along the lines of an external, universal pattern of human nature.

4. **THERAPY = STEADYING EFFECT, ALOOFNESS:** Poems that represent universal action, poems that comprise an intelligible whole, are the best form of therapy for mid-Victorian Britain. The point is not to stir up the reader and make him run out into the street with his passions or politics; the point is rather to give the reader joy and help him "see the object--universal passions like those of Dido--as in itself it really is." Remember that Arnold says such study produces "a steadying and composing effect upon [the reader's] . . . judgment, not of literary works only, but of men and events in general." Disinterestedness, aloofness, is the watchword.
 5. **UNCERTAIN ABOUT "TOUCHSTONES":** The study of poetry should consist in discerning "the best that is known and thought in the world," but Arnold finds it rather difficult to provide objective grounds for these best ideas--all he can do is point to them with his cultivated finger. Arnold is a Victorian who wants to be a philosophical realist with absolute certainty about some universal truth--but you can see that he isn't quite sure of himself--the Victorian age, with its Darwinists, ravaging biblical scholars, ruthless industrialists, and so forth, was not one that encouraged thoughtful people to believe in absolute certainties.
-

12.7 Preface to *Poems* of 1853

In the Preface to his *Poems* (1853) Arnold asserts the importance of architectonics; ('that power of execution, which creates, forms, and constitutes') in poetry - the necessity of achieving unity by subordinating the parts to the whole, and the expression of ideas to the depiction of human action, and condemns poems which exist for the sake of single lines or passages, stray metaphors, images, and fancy expressions. Scattered images and happy turns of phrase, in his view, can only provide partial effects, and not contribute to unity. He also, continuing his anti-Romantic theme, urges, modern poets to shun allusiveness and not fall into the temptation of subjectivity.

He says that even the imitation of Shakespeare is risky for a young writer, who should imitate only his excellences, and avoid his attractive accessories, tricks of style, such as quibble, conceit, circumlocution and allusiveness, which will lead him astray.

Arnold commends Shakespeare's use of great plots from the past. He had what Goethe called the architectonic quality that is his expression was matched to the action (or the subject). But at the same time Arnold quotes Hallam to show that Shakespeare's style was complex even where the press of action demanded simplicity and directness, and hence his style could not be taken as a model by young writers. Elsewhere he says that Shakespeare's 'expression tends to become a little sensuous and simple, too much intellectualised'.

Shakespeare's excellences are:

1. The architectonic quality of his style; the harmony between action and expression.
2. His reliance on the ancients for his themes.
3. Accurate construction of action.
4. His strong conception of action and accurate portrayal of his subject matter.
5. His intense feeling for the subjects he dramatizes

His attractive accessories (or tricks of style) which a young writer should handle carefully are:

1. His fondness for quibble, fancy, conceit.
2. His excessive use of imagery.
3. Circumlocution, even where the press of action demands directness.
4. His lack of simplicity (according to Hallam and Guizot).
5. His allusiveness.

As an example of the danger of imitating Shakespeare he gives Keats's imitation of Shakespeare in his *Isabella or the Pot of Basil*. Keats uses felicitous phrases and single happy turns of phrase, yet the action is handled vaguely and so the poem does not have unity. By way of contrast, he says the Italian writer Boccaccio handled the same theme successfully in his *Decameron*, because he rightly subordinated expression to action. Hence Boccaccio's poem is a poetic success where Keats's is a failure.

Arnold also wants the modern writer to take models from the past because they depict human actions which touch on 'the great primary human affections: to those elementary feelings which subsist permanently in the race, and which are independent of time'. Characters such as Agamemnon, Dido, Aeneas, Orestes, Merope, Alcmeon, and Clytemnestra, leave a permanent impression on our minds. Compare *The Iliad* or *The Aeneid* with *The Child Harold* or *The Excursion* and you see the difference. A modern writer might complain that ancient subjects pose problems with regard to ancient culture, customs, manners, dress and so on which are not familiar to contemporary readers. But Arnold is of the view that a writer should not concern himself with the externals, but with the 'inward man'. The inward man is the same irrespective of clime or time.

12.8 Arnold's limitations

For all his championing of disinterestedness, Arnold was unable to practise disinterestedness in all his essays. In his essay on Shelley particularly he displayed a lamentable lack of disinterestedness. Shelley's moral views were too much for the Victorian Arnold. In his essay on Keats too Arnold failed to be disinterested. The sentimental letters of Keats to Fanny Brawne were too much for him.

Arnold sometimes became a satirist, and as a satirical critic saw things too quickly, too summarily. In spite of their charm, the essays are characterised by egotism and, as Tilotson says, 'the attention is directed, not on his object but on himself and his objects together'.

Arnold makes clear his disapproval of the vagaries of some of the Romantic poets. Perhaps he would have agreed with Goethe, who saw Romanticism as disease and Classicism as health. But Arnold occasionally looked at things with jaundiced eyes, and he overlooked the positive features of Romanticism which posterity will not willingly let die, such as its humanitarianism, love of nature, love of childhood, a sense of mysticism, faith in man with all his imperfections, and faith in man's unconquerable mind.

Arnold's inordinate love of classicism made him blind to the beauty of lyricism. He ignored the importance of lyrical poems, which are subjective and which express the sentiments and the personality of the poet. Judged by Arnold's standards, a large number of poets both ancient and modern are dismissed because they sang with 'Profuse strains of unpremeditated art'.

It was also unfair of Arnold to compare the classical works in which figure the classical quartet, namely Achilles, Prometheus, Clytemnestra and Dido with Heamann and Dorothea, Childe Harold, Jocelyn, and 'The Excursion'. Even the strongest advocates of Arnold would agree that it is not always profitable for poets to draw upon the past. Literature expresses the zeitgeist, the spirit of the contemporary age. Writers must choose subjects from the world of their own experience. What is ancient Greece to many of us? Historians and archaeologists are familiar with it, but the common readers delight justifiably in modern themes. To be in the company of Achilles, Prometheus, Clytemnestra and Dido is not always a pleasant experience. What a reader wants is variety, which classical mythology with all its tradition and richness cannot provide. An excessive fondness for Greek and Latin classics produces a literary diet without variety, while modern poetry and drama have branched out in innumerable directions.

As we have seen, as a classicist Arnold upheld the supreme importance of the architectonic faculty, then later shifted his ground. In the lectures On Translating Homer, On the Study of Celtic Literature, and The Study of Poetry, he himself tested the greatness of poetry by single lines. Arnold the classicist presumably realised towards the end of his life that classicism was not the last word in literature.

Arnold's lack of historic sense was another major failing. While he spoke authoritatively on his own century, he was sometimes groping in the dark in his assessment of earlier centuries. He used to speak at times as if ex cathedra, and this pontifical solemnity vitiated his criticism.

As we have seen, later critics praise Arnold, but it is only a qualified praise. Oliver Elton calls him a 'bad great critic'. T. S. Eliot said that Arnold is a 'Propagandist and not a creator of ideas'. According to Walter Raleigh, Arnold's method is like that of a man who took a brick to the market to give the buyers an impression of the building.

Check Your Progress

1. Discuss the limitations of Arnold.

12.9 Arnold's Legacy

In spite of his faults, Arnold's position as an eminent critic is secure. Douglas Bush says that the breadth and depth of Arnold's influence cannot be measured or even guessed at because, from his own time onward, so much of his thought and outlook became part of the general educated consciousness. He was one of those critics who, as Eliot said, arrive from time to time to set the literary house in order. Eliot named Dryden, Johnson and Arnold as some of the greatest critics of the English language.

Arnold united active independent insight with the authority of the humanistic tradition. He carried on, in his more sophisticated way, the Renaissance humanistic faith in good letters as the teachers of wisdom, and in the virtue of great literature, and above all, great poetry. He saw poetry as a supremely illuminating, animating, and fortifying aid in the difficult endeavour to become or remain fully human.

Arnold's method of criticism is comparative. Steeped in classical poetry, and thoroughly acquainted with continental literature, he compares English literature to French and German literature, adopting the disinterested approach he had learned from Sainte-Beuve.

Arnold's objective approach to criticism and his view that historical and biographical study are unnecessary was very influential on the new criticism. His emphasis on the importance of tradition also influenced F. R. Leavis, and T. S. Eliot.

Eliot is also indebted to Arnold for his classicism, and for his objective approach which paved the way for Eliot to say that poetry is not an expression of personality but an escape from personality, because it is not an expression of emotions but an escape from emotions.

Although Arnold disapproved of the Romantics' approach to poetry, their propensity for allusiveness and symbolism, he also shows his appreciation the Romantics in his Essays in Criticism. He praises Wordsworth thus: 'Nature herself took the pen out of his hand and wrote with a bare, sheer penetrating power'. Arnold also valued poetry for its strong ideas, which he found to be the chief merit of Wordsworth's poetry. About Shelley he says that Shelley is 'A beautiful but ineffectual angel beating in a void his luminous wings in vain'.

12.10 Summary

In an age when cheap literature caters to the taste of the common man, one might fear that the classics will fade into insignificance. But Arnold is sure that the currency and the supremacy of the classics will be preserved in the modern age, not because of conscious effort on the part of the readers, but because of the human instinct of self-preservation.

In the present day with the literary tradition over-burdened with imagery, myth, symbol and abstract jargon, it is refreshing to come back to Arnold and his like to encounter central questions about literature and life as they are perceived by a mature and civilised mind.

12.11 Key Terms

Restoration: A return of something to a former, original, normal, or unimpaired condition. restitution of something taken away or lost. something that is restored, as by renovating. a reconstruction or reproduction of an ancient building, extinct animal, or the like, showing it in its original state.

Criticism: The act of saying that something or someone is bad or a comment that says what is bad about it: criticism of There has been a lot of criticism of the decision. criticism about He resigned amid criticism about his handling of the affair.

Dogma: Dogma means the doctrine of belief in a religion or a political system. The literal meaning of dogma in ancient Greek was "something that seems true." These days, in English, dogma is more absolute. If you believe in a certain religion or philosophy, you believe in its dogma, or core assumptions.

Prophecies: The foretelling or prediction of what is to come. something that is declared by a prophet, especially a divinely inspired prediction, instruction, or exhortation.

12.12 Review Questions

1. Why may every "representation . . . consistently drawn . . . be supposed to be interesting"? When is a representation not interesting?
2. What must be true of a "poetical work" for it to be "justified"? What does Schiller say about the purpose of art?
3. What are the "external objects of poetry"? How does a poet recognize an "excellent action"?
4. What, according to Arnold, is the "radical difference" between the poetical theory of the Greeks and the poetical theory of the modern age?

5. What is the false aim for poetry that the "modern critic," according to Arnold, "absolutely prescribes"?

12.13 References

- Annan, Noel, in *Matthew Arnold: Selected Essays*. London: OUP 1964
- Arnold, Matthew. *Essays in Criticism*. Ed. S. R. Littlewood. London: Macmillan. 1958
- Arnold, Matthew. 'Preface to the First Edition of poems: 1853'. *The Poems of Matthew Arnold*. Ed. Miriam Allot, London, 1979. 654-671
- Arnold, Matthew. *Selected Poems and Prose*. Ed. Denys Thompson. London: Heinemann, 1971.
- "The Critical Reception of Arnold's Religious Writings" in Mazzeno, 1999.
- *The New Dictionary of Cultural Literacy*, Third Edition. Sweetness and light. Houghton Mifflin Company.

BLOCK-4: INDIAN NATIONALISM & AUTO - BIOGRAPHY

UNIT 13: Tagore and His Writings

UNIT 14: Nationalism in the West – An Analysis

UNIT 15: Theory of Auto - Biography

UNIT 16: Russell's Auto - Biography

UNIT 13: TAGORE AND HIS WRITINGS

STRUCTURE

- 13.1 Objectives
- 13.2 Introduction
- 13.3 Tagore – Early Life
- 13.4 Literary and Artistic Work of Rabindranath Tagore
- 13.5 Achievements of Rabindranath Tagore
- 13.6 Tagore: Shelaidaha- 1878-1901
- 13.7 Tagore and Politics
- 13.8 Summary
- 13.9 Key Terms
- 13.10 Review Questions
- 13.11 References

13.1 Objectives

The learners shall know the following:

- Tagore and Indian writings.
- Tagore and his other works.
- Rabindranath Tagore and his philosophy.
- Rabindranath Tagore and his contemporaries.

13.2 Introduction

Rabindranath Tagore (1861-1941) was the youngest son of Debendranath Tagore, a leader of the Brahmo Samaj, which was a new religious sect in nineteenth-century Bengal and which attempted a revival of the ultimate monistic basis of Hinduism as laid down in the *Upanishads*. He was educated at home; and although at seventeen he was sent to England for formal schooling, he did not finish his studies there. In his mature years, in addition to his many-sided literary activities, he managed the family estates, a project which brought him into close touch with common humanity and increased his interest in social reforms. He also started an experimental school at Shantiniketan where he tried his Upanishadic ideals of education. From time to time he participated in the Indian nationalist movement, though in his own non-sentimental and visionary way; and Gandhi, the political father of modern India, was his

devoted friend. Tagore was knighted by the ruling British Government in 1915, but within a few years he resigned the honour as a protest against British policies in India.

Tagore had early success as a writer in his native Bengal. With his translations of some of his poems he became rapidly known in the West. In fact his fame attained a luminous height, taking him across continents on lecture tours and tours of friendship. For the world he became the voice of India's spiritual heritage; and for India, especially for Bengal, he became a great living institution.

Although Tagore wrote successfully in all literary genres, he was first of all a poet. Among his fifty and odd volumes of poetry are *Manasi* (1890) [The Ideal One], *Sonar Tari* (1894) [The Golden Boat], *Gitanjali* (1910) [Song Offerings], *Gitimalya* (1914) [Wreath of Songs], and *Balaka* (1916) [The Flight of Cranes]. The English renderings of his poetry, which include *The Gardener* (1913), *Fruit-Gathering* (1916), and *The Fugitive* (1921), do not generally correspond to particular volumes in the original Bengali; and in spite of its title, *Gitanjali: Song Offerings* (1912), the most acclaimed of them, contains poems from other works besides its namesake. Tagore's major plays are *Raja* (1910) [*The King of the Dark Chamber*], *Dakghar* (1912) [*The Post Office*], *Achalayatan* (1912) [*The Immovable*], *Muktadhara* (1922) [*The Waterfall*], and *Raktakaravi* (1926) [*Red Oleanders*]. He is the author of several volumes of short stories and a number of novels, among them *Gora* (1910), *Ghare-Baire* (1916) [*The Home and the World*], and *Yogayog* (1929) [*Crosscurrents*]. Besides these, he wrote musical dramas, dance dramas, essays of all types, travel diaries, and two autobiographies, one in his middle years and the other shortly before his death in 1941. Tagore also left numerous drawings and paintings, and songs for which he wrote the music himself.

13.3 Tagore – Early Life

The youngest of thirteen surviving children, Tagore was born in the Jorasanko mansion in Calcutta, India to parents Debendranath Tagore (1817–1905) and Sarada Devi (1830–1875). The Tagore family came into prominence during the Bengal Renaissance that started during the age of Hussein Shah (1493–1519). The original name of the Tagore family was Banerjee. Being Brahmins, their ancestors were referred to as 'Thakurmashai' or 'Holy Sir'. During the British rule, this name stuck and they began to be recognised as Thakur and eventually the family name got anglicised to Tagore. Tagore family patriarchs were the Brahmo founders of the Adi Dharm faith. The loyalist "Prince" Dwarkanath Tagore, who employed European estate managers and visited with Victoria and other royalty, was his paternal grandfather. Debendranath had formulated the Brahmoist philosophies espoused by his friend Ram Mohan Roy, and became focal in Brahmo society after Roy's death.

"Rabi" was raised mostly by servants; his mother had died in his early childhood and his father travelled widely. His home hosted the publication of literary magazines; theatre and recitals of both Bengali and Western classical music featured there regularly, as the Jorasanko Tagores were the center of a large and art-loving social group. Tagore's oldest

brother Dwijendranath was a respected philosopher and poet. Another brother, Satyendranath, was the first Indian appointed to the elite and formerly all-European Indian Civil Service. Yet another brother, Jyotirindranath, was a musician, composer, and playwright. His sister Swarnakumari became a novelist. Jyotirindranath's wife Kadambari, slightly older than Tagore, was a dear friend and powerful influence. Her abrupt suicide in 1884, soon after he married, left him for years profoundly distraught.

Tagore largely avoided classroom schooling and preferred to roam the manor or nearby Bolpur and Panihati, idylls which the family visited. His brother Hemendranath tutored and physically conditioned him—by having him swim the Ganges or trek through hills, by gymnastics, and by practising judo and wrestling. He learned drawing, anatomy, geography and history, literature, mathematics, Sanskrit, and English—his least favourite subject. Tagore loathed formal education—his scholarly travails at the local Presidency College spanned a single day.

After he underwent an *upanayan* initiation at age eleven, he and his father left Calcutta in February 1873 for a months-long tour of the Raj. They visited his father's Santiniketan estate and rested in Amritsar en route to the Himalayan Dhauladhars, their destination being the remote hill station at Dalhousie. Along the way, Tagore read biographies; his father tutored him in history, astronomy, and Sanskrit declensions. He read biographies of Benjamin Franklin among other figures; they discussed Edward Gibbon's *The History of the Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire*; and they examined the poetry of Kālidāsa. In mid-April they reached the station, and at 2,300 metres (7,546 ft) they settled into a house that sat atop Bakrota Hill. Tagore was taken aback by the region's deep green gorges, alpine forests, and mossy streams and waterfalls. They stayed there for several months and adopted a regime of study and privation that included daily twilight baths taken in icy water.

He returned to Jorasanko and completed a set of major works by 1877, one of them a long poem in the Maithili style of Vidyapati; they were published pseudonymously. Regional experts accepted them as the lost works of Bhānusiṃha, a newly discovered 17th-century Vaishnava poet. He debuted the short-story genre in Bengali with "Bhikharini" ("The Beggar Woman"), and his *Sandhya Sangit* (1882) includes the famous poem "Nirjharer Swapnabhanga" ("The Rousing of the Waterfall"). Servants subjected him to an almost ludicrous regimentation in a phase he dryly reviled as the "servocracy". His head was water-dunked—to quiet him. He irked his servants by refusing food; he was confined to chalk circles in parody of Sita's forest trial in the Ramayana; and he was regaled with the heroic criminal exploits of Bengal's outlaw-dacoits. Because the Jorasanko manor was in an area of north Calcutta rife with poverty and prostitution, he was forbidden to leave it for any purpose other than travelling to school. He thus became preoccupied with the world outside and with nature. Of his 1873 visit to Santiniketan, he wrote:

What I could not see did not take me long to get over—what I did see was quite enough. There was no servant rule, and the only ring which encircled me was the blue of the horizon, drawn around these solitudes by their presiding goddess. Within this I was free to move about as I chose.

Tagore belonged to an affluent Brahmin family called the 'Thakur family'. Yes, that's true. He was initially a Thakur, but it's interesting to know that Britishers mispronounced his name, and since then, he has been popularly recognised as 'Tagore'.

- On 07th May 1861, he was born in Calcutta to Debendranath Tagore, a spiritual and religious reformer and Sarada Devi. His father was a leading light in the Brahmo Samaj. His grandfather, Dwarkanath Tagore, was a very prominent industrialist. All his brothers and sisters were highly intellectual and talented.
- Tagore largely avoided classroom schooling and kept changing schools, including Calcutta Academy, Oriental Seminary, and St. Xavier's. Consequently, he dropped out of school, and his elder brother tutored him at home and physically conditioned him.
- At the early age of 12, Tagore's father led his path towards self-discovery in Shantiniketan, Golden Temple Amritsar, the Himalayas, etc. His father also acquainted Rabindranath with spiritual texts like the Upanishads, Ramayana, etc.
- Because Debendranath desired his son to be a barrister, he admitted Tagore to Brighton, England. However, Tagore wasn't interested in the field of law, so he again dropped out of college and returned to Bengal.

13.4 Literary and Artistic Work of Rabindranath Tagore

During his time in London, Tagore, under the guidance of Prof. Henry Morley, was drastically influenced by English Literature. He had started writing at a very young age.

- His very first poem was published in Amrita Bazar Patrika at the age of 14 years.
- In 1880, he wrote two verse plays in Bengali, namely 'Valmiki Pratibha' and 'Kaal Mryigaya'.
- In 1891, he started a Bengali monthly magazine called 'Sadhana'.
- He wrote his famous works 'Chokher Bali' and 'Gora' in 1903 and 1906.
- 'Tagore's major plays are 'Raja' [The King of the Dark Chamber], 'Dakghar' [The Post Office], 'Achalayatan' [The Immovable], 'Muktadhara' [The Waterfall], and 'Raktakaravi' [Red Oleanders].
- His best work includes "Balaka," "Purobi," "Sonar Tori," and "Gitanjali," among others.
- His poems usually emphasise Independence, Freedom and Patriotism. His most famous poem is 'Let My Country Awake'.
- 'Gitanjali', a collection of one hundred and three poems written by Rabindranath Tagore, was the first English translation of his works, considered his best literary work by Westerners.
- Some popular books by Rabindranath Tagore are – Gitanjali, The Home and the World, The Religion of Man, The Gardener, An Anthology, The Essential Tagore, Fireflies, etc.
- Later on, Rabindranath also started writing and composing songs. And do you know who was truly mesmerised by his songs? It was Swami Vivekanand who showed keen interest in the songs composed by Rabindranath Tagore.

- Tagore used to mix the music of various cultures and then synthesise his music of genres such as Gurbani, Hindustani Music, Carnatic, etc.
- To prevent the 1905 Bengal Partition, he composed his most famous and widely recognised song, 'Ekla Cholo Re'.

13.5 Achievements of Rabindranath Tagore

- One of the most significant achievements of Rabindranath Tagore dates back to 1913, when he became the first non-European to win a Nobel Prize in the field of Literature.
- In 1915, owing to his respectful position in the eyes of the British government, he was conferred a 'knighthood' on him. However, four years later, in 1919, Britishers caused the 'Jallianwala Bagh Massacre', and to protest against such revolt, he renounced his knighthood title.
- Establishment of Shantiniketan - Debendranath Tagore had previously purchased land, which was later relocated in the year 1902 by Rabindranath for the cause of the establishment of an 'ashram' to open an experimental school on his father's property.
- He was a fine poet with an extensive collection of poems. He has composed more than 2200 songs.
- He was also proficient in painting, and there are more than 2300 artworks to his name. Additionally, he was an enthusiastic traveller. In his era, he had travelled to approximately 34 countries.
- In India, Calcutta University honoured him by giving him the degree of Doctor of Literature at a special convocation on 20th December 1915.
- On 07th August 1940, Sir Maurice Gwyer, the then Chief Justice of India, had the proud privilege as the representative of the University of Oxford to visit Shantiniketan and confer on him an 'Oxford Doctorate.'

13.6 Tagore: Shelaidaha- 1878-1901

Because Debendranath wanted his son to become a barrister, Tagore enrolled at a public school in Brighton, East Sussex, England in 1878. He stayed for several months at a house that the Tagore family owned near Brighton and Hove, in Medina Villas; in 1877 his nephew and niece—Suren and Indira Devi, the children of Tagore's brother Satyendranath—were sent together with their mother, Tagore's sister-in-law, to live with him. He briefly read law at University College London, but again left school. He opted instead for independent study of Shakespeare, *Religio Medici*, *Coriolanus*, and *Antony and Cleopatra*. Lively English, Irish, and Scottish folk tunes impressed Tagore, whose own tradition of Nidhubabu-authored kirtans and tappas and Brahmo hymnody was subdued. In 1880 he returned to Bengal degree-less, resolving to reconcile European novelty with Brahmo traditions, taking the best from each. In 1883 he married Mrinalini Devi, born Bhabatarini, 1873–1902; they had five children, two of whom died in childhood.

In 1890 Tagore began managing his vast ancestral estates in Shelaidaha (today a region of Bangladesh); he was joined by his wife and children in 1898. Tagore released his *Manasi* poems (1890), among his best-known work. As Zamindar Babu, Tagore criss-crossed the riverine holdings in command of the *Padma*, the luxurious family barge. He collected mostly token rents and blessed villagers who in turn honoured him with banquets—occasionally of dried rice and sour milk. He met Gagan Harkara, through whom he became familiar with Baul Lalon Shah, whose folk songs greatly influenced Tagore. Tagore worked to popularise Lalon's songs. The period 1891–1895, Tagore's *Sadhana* period, named after one of Tagore's magazines, was his most productive; in these years he wrote more than half the stories of the three-volume, 84-story *Galpaguchchha*. Its ironic and grave tales examined the voluptuous poverty of an idealised rural Bengal.

13.7 Tagore and Politics

Tagore opposed imperialism and supported Indian nationalists, and these views were first revealed in *Manast*, which was mostly composed in his twenties. Evidence produced during the Hindu–German Conspiracy Trial and latter accounts affirm his awareness of the Ghadarites, and stated that he sought the support of Japanese Prime Minister Terauchi Masatake and former Premier Ōkuma Shigenobu. Yet he lampooned the Swadeshi movement; he rebuked it in "The Cult of the Charka", an acrid 1925 essay. He urged the masses to avoid victimology and instead seek self-help and education, and he saw the presence of British administration as a "political symptom of our social disease". He maintained that, even for those at the extremes of poverty, "there can be no question of blind revolution"; preferable to it was a "steady and purposeful education".

Such views enraged many. He escaped assassination—and only narrowly—by Indian expatriates during his stay in a San Francisco hotel in late 1916; the plot failed when his would-be assassins fell into argument. Tagore wrote songs lionising the Indian independence movement. Two of Tagore's more politically charged compositions, "Chitto Jetha Bhayshunyo" ("Where the Mind is Without Fear") and "Ekla Chalo Re" ("If They Answer Not to Thy Call, Walk Alone"), gained mass appeal, with the latter favoured by Gandhi. Though somewhat critical of Gandhian activism, Tagore was key in resolving a Gandhi–Ambedkar dispute involving separate electorates for untouchables, thereby mooting at least one of Gandhi's fasts "unto death".

Check Your Progress

1. How is Tagore associated with politics? Elucidate.

13.8 Summary

Rabindranath studied law at the University of London but dropped out because of his lack of interest in law. It is worth noting that despite dropping out of college, there is a 'Tagore lecture series' taught in the college till day in Comparative Literature every year. In 1908, Rabindranath Tagore was elected President of the Provincial Political Conference held in Patna, wherein he emphasised Hindu-Muslim unity, rural upliftment and hygiene. At a young age, Rabindranath Tagore taught Swami Vivekananda three songs, and he was a great fan of his song-composing talent. Our National Anthem, 'Jana Gana Mana,' was sung at the 26th Annual Session of the Indian National Congress. Rabindranath Tagore's music inspired the famous Bollywood song 'Chu Kar Mere Man Ko'. With the proceeds from his Nobel Prize, Rabindranath Tagore built the "Visva-Bharati" school at Shantiniketan. Amartya Sen, Satyajit Ray, and Indira Gandhi are just a few notable individuals who attended the school that followed the Shantiniketan Education System.

His contribution towards the Indian literature is very vast and unforgettable. Two of the songs from his Rabindrasangeet are more famous as they have been national anthem of two countries such as "Amar Shonar Bangla" (national anthem of Bangladesh) and "Jana Gana Mana" (national anthem of India). His creative writings, whether in the form of poem or stories, unchallenged even today. Perhaps he was the first who bridge the gap between west and east through his effective writings.

Another composition of him was Puravi in which he mentioned Evening Songs and Morning Songs under many subjects like social, moral, cultural, religious, political, etc. Manasi written by him in 1890 in which he collected some social and poetical poems. Most of his writings were based on the life of people of Bengal. Another writing named Galpaguccha was a collection of stories based on the poverty, backwardness, and illiteracy of the Indian people. Other poetry collections are like Sonar Tari, Kalpana, Chitra, Naivedya, etc and novels are like Gora, Chitrangda and Malini, Binodini and Nauka Dubai, Raja and Rani, etc. Rabindranath Tagore was very religious and spiritual man which helped him a lot in the days of crisis. He was a great educationist thus founded an abode of peace, a unique university named Santiniketan. He died on 7th of August in 1941 in Kolkata before seeing the India's independence.

13.9 Key Terms

Bengali literature: Bengali literature (Bengali: বাংলা সাহিত্য, romanized: *Bangla Sahityô*) denotes the body of writings in the Bengali language and which covers Old Bengali, Middle- Bengali and Modern Bengali with the changes through the passage of time and dynastic patronization or non-patronization.^[1] Bengali has developed over the course of roughly 1,300 years. If the emergence of the Bengali literature supposes to date back to roughly 650 AD, the development of Bengali literature claims to be 1600 years old.

Bengal Renaissance: The Bengal Renaissance (Bengali: বাংলার নবজাগরণ, romanized: *Bāṅlār Nôbôjāgôrôṇ*), also known as the **Bengali Renaissance**, was a cultural, social, intellectual, and artistic movement that took place in the Bengal region of the British Raj, from the late 18th century to the early 20th century.

Bengali Brahmin: **Bengali Brahmins** are the community of Hindu Brahmins, who traditionally reside in the Bengal region of the Indian subcontinent, currently comprising the Indian state of West Bengal and the country of Bangladesh.

Sobriquet: A **sobriquet** is a nickname, sometimes assumed, but often given by another, that is descriptive. A sobriquet is distinct from a pseudonym in that it is typically a familiar name used in place of a real name without the need for explanation; it may become more familiar than the original name.

13.10 Review Questions

1. Apart from India's National Anthem song, Rabindranath composed the National Anthem of which country?
 2. What was Rabindranath's Contribution towards education?
 3. Discuss the early life of Rabindranath Tagore.
 4. What is unique about Rabindranath Tagore?
 5. How does Rabindranath Tagore inspire us?
-

13.11References

- Tagore, Rabindranath (1952), *Collected Poems and Plays of Rabindranath Tagore*, Macmillan Publishing (published January 1952), ISBN 978-0-02-615920-3
- Tagore, Rabindranath (1984), *Some Songs and Poems from Rabindranath Tagore*, East-West Publications, ISBN 978-0-85692-055-4
- Tagore, Rabindranath (1961), Chakravarty, A. (ed.), *A Tagore Reader*, Beacon Press (published 1 June 1961), ISBN 978-0-8070-5971-5
- Tagore, Rabindranath (1997a), Dutta, K.; Robinson, A. (eds.), *Selected Letters of Rabindranath Tagore*, Cambridge University Press (published 28 June 1997), ISBN 978-0-521-59018-1
- Tagore, Rabindranath (1997b), Dutta, K.; Robinson, A. (eds.), *Rabindranath Tagore: An Anthology*, Saint Martin's Press (published November 1997), ISBN 978-0-312-16973-2
- Tagore, Rabindranath (2007), Ray, M. K. (ed.), *The English Writings of Rabindranath Tagore, vol. 1*, Atlantic Publishing (published 10 June 2007), ISBN 978-81-269-0664-2

UNIT 14: NATIONALISM IN THE WEST – AN ANALYSIS

STRUCTURE

- 14.1 Objectives
- 14.2 Introduction
- 14.3 Tagore: Santiniketan- 1901-1932
- 14.4 Tagore Twilight Years – 1932 - 1941
- 14.5 Nationalism in the West – The Text
- 14.6 Nationalism and Tagore
- 14.7 Summary
- 14.8 Key Terms
- 14.9 Review Questions
- 14.10 References

14.1 Objectives

The learners shall know the following from this unit;

- About Nationalism
- Emergence of Nationalism in the west
- Analysis of the text- Nationalism in the west
- Role of major writers and thinkers including Rabindranath Tagore

14.2 Introduction

Rabindranath Tagore (7 May 1861 – 7 August 1941), sobriquet Gurudev, was a Bengali polymath who reshaped Bengali literature and music in the late 19th and early 20th centuries. Author of *Gitanjali* and its "profoundly sensitive, fresh and beautiful verse", he became the first non-European to win the Nobel Prize in Literature in 1913. In translation his poetry was viewed as spiritual and mercurial; however, his "elegant prose and magical poetry" remain largely unknown outside Bengal. Tagore introduced new prose and verse forms and the use of colloquial language into Bengali literature, thereby freeing it from traditional models based on classical Sanskrit. He was highly influential in introducing the best of Indian culture to the West and vice versa, and he is generally regarded as the outstanding creative artist of the modern Indian subcontinent, being highly commemorated in India and Bangladesh, as well as in Sri Lanka, Nepal and Pakistan.

His father Maharishi Devendranath Tagore was a rich man and an aristocrat and his mother was Sarada Devi. He was the eighth son and fourteenth child of his parents. Rabindranath Tagore was not sent to any school. He was educated at home by a tutor. Rabindranath was not happy, getting educated within the four walls. He was a curious and creative child. Even as a boy he felt that nature is a mystery and he should unravel the secrets of nature, through education.

Though he was educated at home, he studied many subjects and there was a method in his studies. He would get up early. After physical education he would study Mathematics, History, Geography, Bengali and Sanskrit. In the afternoon, he learnt drawing, English and play games. On Sundays he would learn music and conduct experiments in science. Reading plays was of special interest to him. He was happy to read plays of Kalidasa and Shakespeare. He had a special interest in Bengali, which was his mother-tongue.

For further studies, he was sent to a public school at London, where he became a student of Prof. Henry Morley whose lectures influenced Rabindranath to take interest in English literature. He developed interest in English culture, traditions and literature. While studying in England, he wrote a poem "Broken Heart" (Bhagna Hriday). After 18 months in England, he returned to India without taking any degree.

Rabindranath started writing poetry in Bengali. His poem "Sandhya Geet" (Song of Dusk) was appreciated by many, including Sri Bankimchandra Chatterji, who wrote the National song "Vandemataram". He later wrote in Bengali a number of devotional songs "Nivgarer", "Prabhat Sangeet" etc.

"Gitanjali" is a well-known collection of his poems. Gitanjali contains his various noble thoughts common to the vast humanity, viz. pessimism, love, satisfaction, dignity of labour etc. for this book "Gitanjali" Rabindranath Tagore was awarded the Nobel Prize for literature in 1913. Rabindranath Tagore was awarded the Nobel Prize for literature in 1913. Rabindranath Tagore was the first Indian to get a Nobel Prize and the British Government conferred on him knighthood and gave the title of "Sir".

He had great interest in village reconstruction, India culture, music and dance. He was himself a good singer and he composed a new form of music called "Rabindra Sangeet". He had special interest in Kathak and Bali dances. He wrote a number of plays.

Some of them are (1) Valmiki Pratibha (2) Post Office (3) Nature's Revenge (4) Katha Devayam (5) Saradotsav (6) Mukta-dara (7) Nater Puja etc., and (8) Gora. Gora deals with the theme of friendship between persons belonging to two different religions.

Rabindranath started a school at Bolpur, a village 112km. north of Kolkata. This school developed into Shantiniketan. Students come to Shantiniketan from many countries. It specializes in arts, crafts, music and dance besides rural reconstruction.

Rabindranath Tagore was also a good artist. He started to learn painting at the age of 60. He drew more than 2000 pictures, which were exhibited in many countries. He also travelled extensively throughout the world.

A Pirali Brahmin from Calcutta with ancestral gentry roots in Jessore, Tagore wrote poetry as an eight-year-old. At age sixteen, he released his first substantial poems under the pseudonym Bhānusiṃha ("Sun Lion"), which were seized upon by literary authorities as long-lost classics. He graduated to his first short stories and dramas—and the aegis of his birth

name—by 1877. As a humanist, universalist internationalist, and strident nationalist he denounced the Raj and advocated independence from Britain. As an exponent of the Bengal Renaissance, he advanced a vast canon that comprised paintings, sketches and doodles, hundreds of texts, and some two thousand songs; his legacy endures also in the institution he founded, Visva-Bharati University.

Tagore modernized Bengali art by spurning rigid classical forms and resisting linguistic strictures. His novels, stories, songs, dance-dramas, and essays spoke to topics political and personal. *Gitanjali* (*Song Offerings*), *Gora* (*Fair-Faced*) and *Ghare-Baire* (*The Home and the World*) are his best-known works, and his verse, short stories, and novels were acclaimed—or panned—for their lyricism, colloquialism, naturalism, and unnatural contemplation. His compositions were chosen by two nations as national anthems: India's *Jana Gana Mana* and Bangladesh's *Amar Shonar Bangla*. The original song of Sri Lanka's National Anthem was also written and tuned by Tagore.

14.3 Tagore: Santiniketan- 1901-1932

In 1901 Tagore moved to Santiniketan to found an ashram with a marble-floored prayer hall—The Mandir—an experimental school, groves of trees, gardens, a library. There his wife and two of his children died. His father died in 1905. He received monthly payments as part of his inheritance and income from the Maharaja of Tripura, sales of his family's jewellery, his seaside bungalow in Puri, and a derisory 2,000 rupees in book royalties. He gained Bengali and foreign readers alike; he published *Naivedya* (1901) and *Kheya* (1906) and translated poems into free verse.

In November 1913, Tagore learned he had won that year's Nobel Prize in Literature: the Swedish Academy appreciated the idealistic—and for Westerners— accessible nature of a small body of his translated material focussed on the 1912 *Gitanjali: Song Offerings*. In 1915, the British Crown granted Tagore a knighthood. He renounced it after the 1919 Jallianwala Bagh massacre.

In 1921, Tagore and agricultural economist Leonard Elmhirst set up the "Institute for Rural Reconstruction", later renamed Shriniketan or "Abode of Welfare", in Surul, a village near the ashram. With it, Tagore sought to moderate Gandhi's Swaraj protests, which he occasionally blamed for British India's perceived mental—and thus ultimately colonial—decline. He sought aid from donors, officials, and scholars worldwide to "free village[s] from the shackles of helplessness and ignorance" by "vitalis[ing] knowledge". In the early 1930s he targeted ambient "abnormal caste consciousness" and untouchability. He lectured against these, he penned Dalit heroes for his poems and his dramas, and he campaigned—successfully—to open Guruvayoor Temple to Dalits.

14.4 Tagore Twilight Years – 1932 - 1941

Tagore's life as a "peripatetic litterateur" affirmed his opinion that human divisions were shallow. During a May 1932 visit to a Bedouin encampment in the Iraqi desert, the tribal chief told him that "Our prophet has said that a true Muslim is he by whose words and deeds not the least of his brother-men may ever come to any harm ..." Tagore confided in his diary: "I was startled into recognizing in his words the voice of essential humanity." To the end Tagore scrutinised orthodoxy—and in 1934, he struck. That year, an earthquake hit Bihar and killed thousands. Gandhi hailed it as seismic karma, as divine retribution avenging the oppression of Dalits. Tagore rebuked him for his seemingly ignominious inferences. He mourned the perennial poverty of Calcutta and the socioeconomic decline of Bengal. He detailed these newly plebeian aesthetics in an unrhymed hundred-line poem whose technique of searing double-vision foreshadowed Satyajit Ray's film *Apur Sansar*. Fifteen new volumes appeared, among them prose-poem works *Punashcha* (1932), *Shes Saptak* (1935), and *Patraput* (1936). Experimentation continued in his prose-songs and dance-dramas: *Chitra* (1914), *Shyama* (1939), and *Chandalika* (1938); and in his novels: *Dui Bon* (1933), *Malancha* (1934), and *Char Adhyay* (1934).

Tagore's remit expanded to science in his last years, as hinted in *Visva-Parichay*, 1937 collection of essays. His respect for scientific laws and his exploration of biology, physics, and astronomy informed his poetry, which exhibited extensive naturalism and verisimilitude. He wove the process of science, the narratives of scientists, into stories in *Se* (1937), *Tin Sangi* (1940), and *Galpasalpa* (1941). His last five years were marked by chronic pain and two long periods of illness. These began when Tagore lost consciousness in late 1937; he remained comatose and near death for a time. This was followed in late 1940 by a similar spell. He never recovered. Poetry from these valetudinary years is among his finest. A period of prolonged agony ended with Tagore's death on 7 August 1941, aged eighty; he was in an upstairs room of the Jorasanko mansion he was raised in. The date is still mourned. A. K. Sen, brother of the first chief election commissioner, received dictation from Tagore on 30 July 1941, a day prior to a scheduled operation: his last poem.

I'm lost in the middle of my birthday. I want my friends, their touch, with the earth's last love. I will take life's final offering, I will take the human's last blessing. Today my sack is empty. I have given completely whatever I had to give. In return if I receive anything—some love, some forgiveness—then I will take it with me when I step on the boat that crosses to the festival of the wordless end.

14.5 Nationalism in the West – The Text

MAN'S HISTORY is being shaped according to the difficulties it encounters. These have offered us problems and claimed their solutions from us, the penalty of non-fulfilment being death or degradation.

These difficulties have been different in different peoples of the earth, and in the manner of our overcoming them lies our distinction.

The Scythians of the earlier period of Asiatic history had to struggle with the scarcity of their natural resources. The easiest solution that they could think of was to organize their whole population, men, women, and children, into bands of robbers. And they were irresistible to those who were chiefly engaged in the constructive work of social cooperation.

But fortunately for man the easiest path is not his truest path. If his nature were not as complex as it is, if it were as simple as that of a pack of hungry wolves, then, by this time, those hordes of marauders would have overrun the whole earth. But man, when confronted with difficulties, has to acknowledge that he is man, that he has his responsibilities to the higher faculties of his nature, by ignoring which he may achieve success that is immediate, perhaps, but that will become a death trap to him. For what are obstacles to the lower creatures are opportunities to the higher life of man.

To India has been given her problem from the beginning of history - it is the race problem. Races ethnologically different have come in this country in close contact. This fact has been and still continues to be the most important one in our history. It is our mission to face it and prove our humanity in dealing with it in the fullest truth. Until we fulfil our mission all other benefits will be denied us.

There are other peoples in the world who have obstacles in their physical surroundings to overcome, or the menace of their powerful neighbours. They have organized their power till they are not only reasonably free from the tyranny of Nature and human neighbours, but have a surplus of it left in their hands to employ against others. But in India, our difficulties being internal, our history has been the history of continual social adjustment and not that of organized power for defence and aggression.

Neither the colourless vagueness of cosmopolitanism, nor the fierce self-idolatry of nation-worship is the goal of human history. And India has been trying to accomplish her task through social regulation of differences, on the one hand, and the spiritual recognition of unity, on the other. She has made grave errors in setting up the boundary walls too rigidly between races, in perpetuating the results of inferiority in her classifications; often she has crippled her children's minds and narrowed their lives in order to fit them into her social forms; but for centuries new experiments have been made and adjustments carried out.

Neither the colourless vagueness of cosmopolitanism, nor the fierce self-idolatry of nation-

worship is the goal of human history. And India has been trying to accomplish her task through social regulation of differences, on the one hand, and the spiritual recognition of unity, on the other. She has made grave errors in setting up the boundary walls too rigidly between races, in perpetuating the results of inferiority in her classifications; often she has crippled her children's minds and narrowed their lives in order to fit them into her social forms; but for centuries new experiments have been made and adjustments carried out.

Her mission has been like that of a hostess to provide proper accommodation to her numerous guests whose habits and requirements are different from one another. It is giving rise to infinite complexities whose solution depends not merely upon tactfulness but sympathy and true realization of the unity of man. Towards this realization have worked from the early time of the Upanishads up to the present moment, a series of great spiritual teachers, whose one object has been to set at naught all differences of man by the overflow of our consciousness of God. In fact, our history has not been of the rise and fall of kingdoms, of fights for political supremacy. In our country records of these days have been despised and forgotten. For they in no way represent the true history of our people. Our history is that of our social life and attainment of spiritual ideals.

But we feel that our task is not yet done. The world-flood has swept over our country, new elements have been introduced, and wider adjustments are waiting to be made.

We feel this all the more, because the teaching and example of the West have entirely run counter to what we think was given to India to accomplish. In the West the national machinery of commerce and politics turns out neatly compressed bales of humanity which have their use and high market value; but they are bound in iron hoops, labelled and separated off with scientific care and precision. Obviously God made man to be human; but this modern product has such marvellous square-cut finish of spirit and a creature made in his own divine image.

But I am anticipating. What I was about to say is this, take it in whatever spirit you like, here is India, of about fifty centuries at least, who tried to live peacefully and think deeply, the India devoid of all politics, the India of no nations, whose one ambition has been to know this world as of soul, to live here every moment of her life in the meek spirit of adoration, in the glad consciousness of an eternal and personal relationship with it. This is the remote portion of humanity, childlike in its manner, with the wisdom of the old, upon which burst the Nation of the West.

Through all the fights and intrigues and deceptions of her earlier history India had remained aloof. Because her homes, her fields, her temples of worship, her schools, where her teachers and students lived together in the atmosphere of simplicity and devotion and learning, her village self-government with its simple laws and peaceful administration - all these truly belonged to her. But her thrones were not her concern. They passed over her head like clouds, now tinged with purple gorgeousness, now black with the threat of thunder. Often they brought devastations in their wake, but they were like catastrophes of nature whose traces are soon forgotten.

But this time it was different. It was not a mere drift over her surface of life, - drift of cavalry and foot soldiers, richly caparisoned elephants, white tents and canopies, strings of patient camels bearing the loads of royalty, bands of kettledrums and flutes, marble domes of mosques, palaces and tombs, like the bubbles of the foaming wine of extravagance; stories of treachery and loyal devotion, of changes of fortune, of dramatic surprises of fate. This time it was the Nation of the West driving its tentacles of machinery deep down into the soil.

Therefore, I say to you, it is we who are called as witnesses to give evidence as to what the Nation has been to humanity. We had known the hordes of Moghals and Pathans who invaded India, but we had known them as human races, with their own religions and customs, likes and dislikes, - we had never known them as a nation. We loved and hated them as occasions arose; we fought for them and against them, talked with them in a language which was theirs as well as our own, and guided the destiny of the Empire in which we had our active share. But this time we had to deal, not with kings, not with human races, but with a nation, - we, who are no nation ourselves.

Now let us from our own experience answer the question. What is this Nation?

A nation, in the sense of the political and economic union of a people, is that aspect which a whole population assumes when organized for a mechanical purpose. Society as such has no ulterior purpose. It is an end in itself. It is a spontaneous self-expression of man as a social being. It is a natural regulation of human relationships, so that men can develop ideals of life in cooperation with one another. It has also a political side, but this is only for a special purpose. It is for self-preservation. It is merely the side of power, not of human ideals. And in the early days it had its separate place in society, restricted to the professionals. But when with the help of science and the perfecting of organization this power begins to grow and brings in harvests of wealth, then it crosses its boundaries with amazing rapidity. For then it goads all its neighbouring societies with greed of material prosperity, and consequent mutual jealousy, and by the fear of each other's growth into powerfulness. The time comes when it can stop no longer, for the competition grows keener, organization grows vaster, and selfishness attains supremacy. Trading upon the greed and fear of man, it occupies more and more space in society, and at last becomes its ruling force.

It is just possible that you have lost through habit consciousness that the living bonds of society are breaking up, and giving place to merely mechanical organization. But you see signs of it everywhere. It is owing to this that war has been declared between man and woman, because the natural thread is snapping which holds them together in harmony; because man is driven to professionalism, producing wealth for himself and others, continually turning the wheel of power for his own sake or for the sake of the universal officialdom, leaving woman alone to wither and to die or to fight her own battle unaided. And thus there where cooperation is natural has intruded competition. The very psychology of men and women about their mutual relation is changing and becoming the psychology of the primitive fighting elements rather than of humanity seeking its completeness through the union based upon mutual self-surrender. For the elements which have lost their living bond of reality have lost the meaning

of their existence. They, like gaseous particles, forced into a too narrow space, come in continual conflict with each other till they burst the very arrangement which holds them in bondage.

Then look at those who call themselves anarchists, who resent the imposition of power, in any form whatever, upon the individual. The only reason for this is that power has become too abstract - it is a scientific product made in the political laboratory of the Nation, through the dissolution of the personal humanity.

And what is the meaning of these strikes in the economic world, which like the prickly shrubs in a barren soil shoot up with renewed vigour each time they are cut down? What, but that the wealth-producing mechanism is incessantly growing into vast stature, out of proportion to all other needs of society, - and the full reality of man is more and more crushed under its weight. This state of things inevitably gives rise to eternal feuds among the elements freed from the wholeness and wholesomeness of human ideals, and interminable economic war is waged between capital and labour. For greed of wealth and power can never have a limit, and compromise of self-interest can never attain the final spirit of reconciliation. They must go on breeding jealousy and suspicion to the end

- the end which only comes through some sudden catastrophe or a spiritual rebirth.

When this organization of politics and commerce, whose other name is the Nation, becomes all powerful at the cost of the harmony of the higher social life, then it is an evil day for humanity. When a father becomes a gambler and his obligations to his family take the secondary place in his mind, then he is no longer a man, but an automaton led by the power of greed. Then he can do things which, in his normal state of mind, he would be ashamed to do. It is the same thing with society. When it allows itself to be turned into a perfect organization of power, then there are few crimes which it is unable to perpetrate. Because success is the object and justification of a machine, while goodness only is the end and purpose of man. When this engine of organization begins to attain a vast size, and those who are mechanics are made into parts of the machine, then the personal man is eliminated to a phantom, everything becomes a revolution of policy carried out by the human parts of the machine, requiring no twinge of pity or moral responsibility. It is not unusual that even through this apparatus the moral nature of man tries to assert itself, but the whole series of ropes and pulleys creak and cry, the forces of the human heart become entangled among the forces of the human automaton, and only with difficulty can the moral purpose transmit itself into some tortured shape of result.

This abstract being, the Nation, is ruling India. We have seen in our country some brand of tinned food advertised as entirely made and packed without being touched by hand. This description applies to the governing of India, which is as little touched by the human hand as possible. The governors need not know our language, need not come into personal touch with us except as officials; they can aid or hinder our aspirations from a disdainful distance, they can lead us on a certain path of policy and then pull us back again with the manipulation of office red tape; the newspapers of England, in whose columns London street accidents are

recorded with some decency of pathos, need but take the scantiest notice of calamities happening in India over areas of land sometimes larger than the British Isles.

But we, who are governed, are not a mere abstraction. We, on our side, are individuals with living sensibilities. What comes to us in the shape of a mere bloodless policy may pierce into the very core of our life, may threaten the whole future of our people with a perpetual helplessness of emasculation, and yet may never touch the chord of humanity on the other side, or touch it in the most inadequately feeble manner. Such wholesale and universal acts of fearful responsibility man can never perform, with such a degree of systematic unawareness, where he is an individual human being. These only become possible where the man is represented by an octopus of abstractions, sending out its wriggling arms in all directions of space, and fixing its innumerable suckers even into the far-away future. In this reign of the nation, the governed are pursued by suspicions; and these are the suspicions of a tremendous mass of organized brain and muscle. Punishments are meted out, leaving a trail of miseries across a large bleeding tract of the human heart; but these punishments are dealt by a mere abstract force, in which a whole population of a distant country has lost its human personality.

I have not come here, however, to discuss the question as it affects my own country, but as it affects the future of all humanity. It is not about the British Government, but the government by the Nation - the Nation which is the organized self-interest of a whole people, where it is the least human and the least spiritual. Our only intimate experience of the Nation is with the British Nation, and as far as the government by the Nation goes there are reasons to believe that it is one of the best. Then again we have to consider that the West is necessary to the East. We are complementary to each other because of our different outlooks upon life which have given us different aspects of truth. Therefore if it be true that the spirit of the West has come upon our fields in the guise of a storm it is all the same scattering living seeds that are immortal. And when in India we shall be able to assimilate in our life what is permanent in Western civilization we shall be in the position to bring about a reconciliation of these two great worlds. Then will come to an end the one-sided dominance which is galling. What is more, we have to recognize that the history of India does not belong to one particular race but is of a process of creation to which various races of the world contributed - the Dravidians and the Aryans, the ancient Greeks and the Persians, the Mohamedans of the West and those of central Asia. At last now has come the turn of the English to become true to this history and bring to it the tribute of their life, and we neither have the right nor the power to exclude this people from the building of the destiny of India. Therefore what I say about the Nation has more to do with the history of Man than specially with that of India.

This history has come to a stage when the moral man, the complete man, is more and more giving way, almost without knowing it, to make room for the political and the commercial man, the man of the limited purpose. This, aided by the wonderful progress in science, is assuming gigantic proportion and power, causing the upset of man's moral balance, obscuring his human side under the shadow of soul-less organization. Its iron grip we have felt at the root of our life, and for the sake of humanity we must stand up and give warning to all, that this nationalism is a cruel epidemic of evil that is sweeping over the human world of the

present age, eating into its moral vitality. I have a deep love and a great respect for the British race as human beings. It has produced great-hearted men, thinkers of great thoughts, doers of great deeds. It has given rise to a great literature. I know that these people love justice and freedom, and hate lies. They are clean in their minds, frank in their manners, true in their friendships; in their behaviour they are honest and reliable. The personal experience which I have had of their literary men has roused my admiration not merely for their power of thought or expression but for their chivalrous humanity. We have felt the greatness of this people as we feel the sun; but as for the Nation, it is for us a thick mist of a stifling nature covering the sun itself.

This government by the Nation is neither British nor anything else; it is an applied science and therefore more or less similar in its principles wherever it is used. It is like a hydraulic press, whose pressure is impersonal and, on that account, completely effective. The amount of its power may vary in different engines. Some may even be driven by hand, thus leaving a margin of comfortable looseness in their tension, but in spirit and in method their differences are small. Our government might have been Dutch, or French, or Portuguese, and its essential features would have remained much the same as they are now. Only perhaps, in some cases, the organization might not have been so densely perfect, and, therefore, some shreds of the human might still have been clinging to the wreck, allowing us to deal with something which resembles our own throbbing heart.

Before the Nation came to rule over us we had other governments which were foreign, and these, like all governments, had some element of the machine in them. But the difference between them and the government by the Nation is like the difference between the hand loom and the power loom. In the products of the hand loom the magic of man's living fingers finds its expression, and its hum harmonizes with the music of life. But the power loom is relentlessly lifeless and accurate and monotonous in its production. We must admit that during the personal government of the former days there have been instances of tyranny, injustice and extortion. They caused sufferings and unrest from which we are glad to be rescued. The protection of law is not only a boon, but it is a valuable lesson to us. It is teaching us the discipline which is necessary for the stability of civilization and continuity of progress. We are realizing through it that there is a universal standard of justice to which all men irrespective of their caste and colour have their equal claim.

This reign of law in our present Government in India has established order in this vast land inhabited by peoples different in their races and customs. It has made it possible for these peoples to come in closer touch with one another and cultivate a communion of aspiration.

But this desire for a common bond of comradeship among the different races of India has been the work of the spirit of the West, not that of the Nation of the West. Wherever in Asia the people have received the true lesson of the West it is in spite of the Western Nation. Only because Japan had been able to resist the dominance of this Western Nation could she acquire the benefit of the Western Civilization in fullest measure. Though China has been poisoned at

the very spring of her moral and physical life by this Nation, her struggle to receive the best lessons of the West may yet be successful if not hindered by the Nation. It was only the other day that Persia woke up from her age-long sleep at the call of the West to be instantly trampled into stillness by the Nation. The same phenomenon prevails in this country also, where the people are hospitable but the nation has proved itself to be otherwise, making an Eastern guest feel humiliated to stand before you as a member of the humanity of his own motherland.

In India we are suffering from this conflict between the spirit of the West and the Nation of the West. The benefit of the Western civilization is doled out to us in a miserly measure by the Nation trying to regulate the degree of nutrition as near the zero point of vitality as possible. The portion of education allotted to us is so raggedly insufficient that it ought to outrage the sense of decency of a Western humanity. We have seen in these countries how the people are encouraged and trained and given every facility to fit themselves for the great movements of commerce and industry spreading over the world, while in India the only assistance we get is merely to be jeered at by the Nation for lagging behind. While depriving us of our opportunities and reducing our education to a minimum required for conducting a foreign government, this Nation pacifies its conscience by calling us names, by sedulously giving currency to the arrogant cynicism that the East is east and the West is west and never the twain shall meet. If we must believe our schoolmaster in his taunt that after nearly two centuries of his tutelage, India not only remains unfit for self-government but unable to display originality in her intellectual attainments, must we ascribe it to something in the nature of Western culture and our inherent incapacity to receive it or to the judicious niggardliness of the Nation that has taken upon itself the white man's burden of civilizing the East? That Japanese people have some qualities which we lack we may admit, but that our intellect is naturally unproductive compared to theirs we cannot accept even from them whom it is dangerous for us to contradict.

The truth is that the spirit of conflict and conquest is at the origin and in the centre of the Western nationalism; its basis is not social cooperation. It has evolved a perfect organization of power but not spiritual idealism. It is like the pack of predatory creatures that must have its victims. With all its heart it cannot bear to see its hunting grounds converted into cultivated fields. In fact, these nations are fighting among themselves for the extension of their victims and their reserve forests. Therefore the Western Nation acts like a dam to check the free flow of the Western civilization into the country of the No- Nation. Because this civilization is the civilization of power, therefore it is exclusive, it is naturally unwilling to open its sources of power to those whom it has selected for its purposes of exploitation.

But all the same moral law is the law of humanity, and the exclusive civilization which thrives upon others who are barred from its benefit carries its own death sentence in its moral limitations. The slavery that it gives rise to unconsciously drains its own love of freedom dry. The helplessness with which it weighs down its world of victims exerts its force of gravitation every moment upon the power that creates it. And the greater part of the world

which is being denuded of its self-sustaining life by the Nation will one day become the most terrible of all its burdens ready to drag it down into the bottom of destruction. Whenever Power removes all checks from its path to make its career easy, it triumphantly rides into its ultimate crash of death. Its moral brake becomes slacker every day without its knowing it, and its slippery path of ease becomes its path of doom.

Of all things in Western civilization, those which this Western Nation has given us in a most generous measure are law and order. While the small feeding bottle of our education is nearly dry, and sanitation sucks its own thumb in despair, the military organization, the magisterial offices, the police, the Criminal Investigation Department, the secret spy system, attain to an abnormal girth in their waists, occupying every inch of our country. This is to maintain order. But is not this order merely a negative good? Is it not for giving people's life greater opportunities for the freedom of development? Its perfection is the perfection of an egg-shell whose true value lies in the security it affords to the chick and its nourishment and not in the convenience it offers to the person at the breakfast table. Mere administration is unproductive, it is not creative, not being a living thing. It is a steam-roller, formidable in its weight and power, having its uses, but it does not help the soil to become fertile. When after its enormous toil it comes to offer us its boon of peace we can but murmur under our breath that 'peace is good but not more so than life which is God's own great boon.' On the other hand, our former governments were woefully lacking in many of the advantages of the modern government. But because those were not the governments by the Nation, their texture was loosely woven, leaving big gaps through which our own life sent its threads and imposed its designs. I am quite sure in those days we had things that were extremely distasteful to us. But we know that when we walk barefooted upon a ground strewn with gravel, gradually our feet come to adjust themselves to the caprices of the inhospitable earth; while if the tiniest particle of gravel finds its lodgment inside our shoes we can never forget and forgive its intrusion. And these shoes are the government by the Nation, - it is tight, it regulates our steps with a closed up system, within which our feet have only the slightest liberty to make their own adjustments. Therefore, when you produce your statistics to compare the number of gravels which our feet had to encounter in former days with the paucity in the present regime, they hardly touch the real points. It is not the numerousness of the outside obstacles but the comparative powerlessness of the individual to cope with them. This narrowness of freedom is an evil which is more radical not because of its quantity but because of its nature.

And we cannot but acknowledge this paradox, that while the spirit of the West marches under its banner of freedom, the Nation of the West forges its iron chains of organization which are the most relentless and unbreakable that have ever been manufactured in the whole history of man.

When the humanity of India was not under the government of the Organization, the elasticity of change was great enough to encourage men of power and spirit to feel that they had their destinies in their own hands. The hope of the unexpected was never absent, and a freer play of imagination, both on the part of the governor and the governed, had its effect in the making

of history. We were not confronted with a future which was a dead white wall of granite blocks eternally guarding against the expression and extension of our own powers, the hopelessness of which lies in the reason that these powers are becoming atrophied at their very roots by the scientific process of paralysis. For every single individual in the country of the no-nation is completely in the grip of a whole nation, - whose tireless vigilance, being the vigilance of a machine, has not the human power to overlook or to discriminate. At the least pressing of its button the monster organization becomes all eyes, whose ugly stare of inquisitiveness cannot be avoided by a single person amongst the immense multitude of the ruled. At the least turn of its screw, by the fraction of an inch, the grip is tightened to the point of suffocation around every man, woman and child of a vast population, for whom no escape is imaginable in their own country, or even in any country outside their own. It is the continual and stupendous dead pressure of this unhuman upon the living human under which the modern world is groaning. Not merely the subject races, but you who live under the delusion that you are free, are every day sacrificing your freedom and humanity to this fetish of nationalism, living in the dense poisonous atmosphere of world-wide suspicion and greed and panic.

I have seen in Japan the voluntary submission of the whole people to the trimming of their minds and clipping of their freedom by their government, which through various educational agencies regulates their thoughts, manufactures their feelings, becomes suspiciously watchful when they show signs of inclining toward the spiritual, leading them through a narrow path not toward what is true but what is necessary for the complete welding of them into one uniform mass according to its own recipe. The people accept this all-pervading mental slavery with cheerfulness and pride because of their nervous desire to turn themselves into a machine of power, called the Nation, and emulate other machines in their collective worldliness.

When questioned as to the wisdom of its course the newly converted fanatic of nationalism answers that 'so long as nations are rampant in this world we have not the option freely to develop our higher humanity. We must utilize every faculty that we possess to resist the evil by assuming it ourselves in the fullest degree. For the only brotherhood possible in the modern world is the brotherhood of hooliganism.' The recognition of the fraternal bond of love between Japan and Russia, which has lately been celebrated with an immense display of rejoicing in Japan, was not owing to any sudden recrudescence of the spirit of Christianity or of Buddhism, - but it was a bond established according to the modern faith in a surer relationship of mutual menace of bloodshedding. Yes, one cannot but acknowledge that these facts are the facts of the world of the Nation, and the only moral of it is that all the peoples of the earth should strain their physical, moral and intellectual resources to the utmost to defeat one another in the wrestling match of powerfulness. In the ancient days Sparta paid all her attention to becoming powerful - and she did become so by crippling her humanity, and she died of the amputation.

But it is no consolation to us to know that the weakening of humanity from which the present age is suffering is not limited to the subject races, and that its ravages are even more radical

because insidious and voluntary in peoples who are hypnotized into believing that they are free. This bartering of your higher aspirations of life for profit and power has been your own free choice, and I leave you there, at the wreckage of your soul, contemplating your protuberant prosperity. But will you never be called to answer for organizing the instincts of self-aggrandizement of whole peoples into perfection, and calling it good? I ask you what disaster has there ever been in the history of man, in its darkest period, like this terrible disaster of the Nation fixing its fangs deep into the naked flesh of the world, taking permanent precautions against its natural relaxation?

You, the people of the West, who have manufactured this abnormality, can you imagine the desolating despair of this haunted world of suffering man possessed by the ghastly abstraction of the organizing man? Can you put yourself into the position of the peoples, who seem to have been doomed to an eternal damnation of their own humanity, who not only must suffer continual curtailment of their manhood, but even raise their voices in paeans of praise for the benignity of a mechanical apparatus in its interminable parody of providence?

Have you not seen, since the commencement of the existence of the Nation, that the dread of it has been the one goblin-dread with which the whole world has been trembling? Wherever there is a dark corner, there is the suspicion of its secret malevolence; and people live in a perpetual distrust of its back where it has no eyes. Every sound of footstep, every rustle of movement in the neighbourhood, sends a thrill of terror all around. And this terror is the parent of all that is base in man's nature. It makes one almost openly unashamed of inhumanity. Clever lies become matters of self-congratulation.

Solemn pledges become a farce, - laughable for their very solemnity. The Nation, with all its paraphernalia of power and prosperity, its flags and pious hymns, its blasphemous prayers in the churches, and the literary mock thunders of its patriotic bragging, cannot hide the fact that the Nation is the greatest evil for the Nation, that all its precautions are against it, and any new birth of its fellow in the world is always followed in its mind by the dread of a new peril. Its one wish is to trade on the feebleness of the rest of the world, like some insects that are bred in the paralyzed flesh of victims kept just enough alive to make them toothsome and nutritious. Therefore it is ready to send its poisonous fluid into the vitals of the other living peoples, who, not being nations, are harmless. For this the Nation has had and still has its richest pasture in Asia. Great China, rich with her ancient wisdom and social ethics, her discipline of industry and self-control, is like a whale awakening the lust of spoil in the heart of the Nation. She is already carrying in her quivering flesh harpoons sent by the unerring aim of the Nation, the creature of science and selfishness. Her pitiful attempt to shake off her traditions of humanity, her social ideals, and spend her last exhausted resources to drill herself into modern efficiency, is thwarted at every step by the Nation. It is tightening its financial ropes round her, trying to drag her up on the shore and cut her into pieces, and then go and offer public thanksgiving to God for supporting the one existing evil and shattering the possibility of a new one. And for all this the Nation has been claiming the gratitude of history, and all eternity for its exploitation; ordering its band of praise to be struck up from end to end of the world, declaring itself to be the salt of the earth, the flower of humanity, the

blessing of God hurled with all his force upon the naked skulls of the world of no nations.

I know what your advice will be. You will say, form yourselves into a nation, and resist this encroachment of the Nation. But is this the true advice? that of a man to a man? Why should this be a necessity? I could well believe you, if you had said, Be more good, more just, more true in your relation to man, control your greed, make your life wholesome in its simplicity and let your consciousness of the divine in humanity be more perfect in its expression. But must you say that it is not the soul, but the machine, which is of the utmost value to ourselves, and that man's salvation depends upon his disciplining himself into a perfection of the dead rhythm of wheels and counterwheels? that machine must be pitted against machine, and nation against nation, in an endless bull-fight of politics?

You say, these machines will come into an agreement, for their mutual protection, based upon a conspiracy of fear. But will this federation of steam-boilers supply you with a soul, a soul which has her conscience and her God? What is to happen to that larger part of the world, where fear will have no hand in restraining you? Whatever safety they now enjoy, those countries of no nation, from the unbridled license of forge and hammer and turn-screw, results from the mutual jealousy of the powers. But when, instead of being numerous separate machines, they become riveted into one organized gregariousness of gluttony, commercial and political, what remotest chance of hope will remain for those others, who have lived and suffered, have loved and worshipped, have thought deeply and worked with meekness, but whose only crime has been that they have not organized?

But, you say, 'That does not matter, the unfit must go to the wall - they shall die, and this is science,'

No, for the sake of your own salvation, I say, they shall live, and this is truth. It is extremely bold of me to say so, but I assert that man's world is a moral world, not because we blindly agree to believe it, but because it is so in truth which would be dangerous for us to ignore. And this moral nature of man cannot be divided into convenient compartments for its preservation. You cannot secure it for your home consumption with protective tariff walls, while in foreign parts making it enormously accommodating in its free trade of license. Has not this truth already come home to you now, when this cruel war has driven its claws into the vitals of Europe? when her hoard of wealth is bursting into smoke and her humanity is shattered into bits on her battlefields? You ask in amazement what she has done to deserve this? The answer is, that the West has been systematically petrifying her moral nature in order to lay a solid foundation for her gigantic abstractions of efficiency. She has all along been starving the life of the personal man into that of the professional.

In your medieval age in Europe, the simple and the natural man, with all his violent passions and desires, was engaged in trying to find out a reconciliation in the conflict between the flesh and the spirit. All through the turbulent career of her vigorous youth the temporal and the

spiritual forces both acted strongly upon her nature, and were moulding it into completeness of moral personality. Europe owes all her greatness in humanity to that period of discipline, - the discipline of the man in his human integrity.

Then came the age of intellect, of science. We all know that intellect is impersonal. Our life is one with us, also our heart, but our mind can be detached from the personal man and then only can it freely move in its world of thoughts. Our intellect is an ascetic who wears no clothes, takes no food, knows no sleep, has no wishes, feels no love or hatred or pity for human limitations, who only reasons, unmoved through the vicissitudes of life. It burrows to the roots of things, because it has no personal concern with the thing itself. The grammarian walks straight through all poetry and goes to the root of words without obstruction. Because he is not seeking reality, but law. When he finds the law, he is able to teach people how to master words. This is a power, - the power which fulfils some special usefulness, some particular need of man.

Reality is the harmony which gives to the component parts of a thing the equilibrium of the whole. You break it, and have in your hands the nomadic atoms fighting against one another, therefore unmeaning. Those who covet power try to get mastery of these aboriginal fighting elements and through some narrow channels force them into some violent service for some particular need of man.

This satisfaction of man's needs is a great thing. It gives him freedom in the material world. It confers on him the benefit of a greater range of time and space. He can do things in a shorter time and occupies a larger space with more thoroughness of advantage. Therefore he can easily outstrip those who live in a world of a slower time and of space less fully occupied.

This progress of power attains more and more rapidity of pace. And, for the reason that it is a detached part of man, it soon outruns the complete humanity. The moral man remains behind, because it has to deal with the whole reality, not merely with the law of things, which is impersonal and therefore abstract.

Thus, man with his mental and material power far outgrowing his moral strength, is like an exaggerated giraffe whose head has suddenly shot up miles away from the rest of him, making normal communication difficult to establish. This greedy head, with its huge dental organization, has been munching all the topmost foliage of the world, but the nourishment is too late in reaching his digestive organs, and his heart is suffering from want of blood. Of this present disharmony in man's nature the West seems to have been blissfully unconscious. The enormity of its material success has diverted all its attention toward self-congratulation on its bulk. The optimism of its logic goes on basing the calculations of its good fortune upon the indefinite prolongation of its railway lines toward eternity. It is superficial enough to think that all to-morrows are merely to-days with the repeated additions of twenty-four hours. It

has no fear of the chasm, which is opening wider every day, between man's ever-growing storehouses and the emptiness of his hungry humanity. Logic does not know that, under the lowest bed of endless strata of wealth and comforts, earthquakes are being hatched to restore the balance of the moral world, and one day the gaping gulf of spiritual vacuity will draw into its bottom the store of things that have their eternal love for the dust.

Man in his fulness is not powerful, but perfect. Therefore, to turn him into mere power, you have to curtail his soul as much as possible. When we are fully human, we cannot fly at one another's throats; our instincts of social life, our traditions of moral ideals stand in the way. If you want me to take to butchering human beings, you must break up that wholeness of my humanity through some discipline which makes my will dead, my thoughts numb, my movements automatic, and then from the dissolution of the complex personal man will come out that abstraction, that destructive force, which has no relation to human truth, and therefore can be easily brutal or mechanical.

Take away man from his natural surroundings, from the fulness of his communal life, with all its living associations of beauty and love and social obligations, and you will be able to turn him into so many fragments of a machine for the production of wealth on a gigantic scale. Turn a tree into a log and it will burn for you, but it will never bear living flowers and fruit. This process of dehumanizing has been going on in commerce and politics. And out of the long birth-throes of mechanical energy has been born this fully developed apparatus of magnificent power and surprising appetite, which has been christened in the West as the Nation. As I have hinted before, because of its quality of abstraction it has, with the greatest ease, gone far ahead of the complete moral man. And having the conscience of a ghost and the callous perfection of an automaton, it is causing disasters of which the volcanic dissipations of the youthful moon would be ashamed to be brought into comparison. As a result, the suspicion of man for man stings all the limbs of this civilization like the hairs of the nettle. Each country is casting its net of espionage into the slimy bottom of the others, fishing for their secrets, the treacherous secrets brewing in the oozy depths of diplomacy. And what is their secret service but the nation's underground trade in kidnapping, murder and treachery and all the ugly crimes bred in the depth of rottenness? Because each nation has its own history of thieving and lies and broken faith, therefore there can only flourish international suspicion and jealousy, and international moral shame becomes anaemic to a degree of ludicrousness. The nation's bagpipe of righteous indignation has so often changed its tune according to the variation of time and to the altered groupings of the alliances of diplomacy, that it can be enjoyed with amusement as the variety performance of the political music hall.

I am just coming from my visit to Japan, where I exhorted this young nation to take its stand upon the higher ideals of humanity and never to follow the West in its acceptance of the organized selfishness of Nationalism as its religion, never to gloat upon the feebleness of its neighbours, never to be unscrupulous in its behaviour to the weak, where it can be gloriously mean with impunity, while turning its right cheek of brighter humanity for the kiss of admiration to those who have the power to deal it a blow. Some of the newspapers praised

my utterances for their poetical qualities while adding with a leer that it was the poetry of a defeated people. I felt they were right. Japan had been taught in a modern school the lesson how to become powerful. The schooling is done and she must enjoy the fruits of her lessons. The West in the voice of her thundering cannon had said at the door of Japan, Let there be a Nation - and there was a Nation. And now that it has come into existence, why do you not feel in your heart of hearts a pure feeling of gladness and say that it is good? Why is it that I saw in an English paper an expression of bitterness at Japan's boasting of her superiority of civilization - the thing that the British, along with other nations, has been carrying on for ages without blushing? Because the idealism of selfishness must keep itself drunk with a continual dose of self-laudation. But the same vices which seem so natural and innocuous in its own life make it surprised and angry at their unpleasantness when seen in other nations. Therefore when you see the Japanese nation, created in your own image, launched in its career of national boastfulness you shake your head and say it is not good. Has it not been one of the causes that raise the cry on these shores for preparedness to meet one more power of evil with a greater power of injury? Japan protests that she has her bushido, that she can never be treacherous to America to whom she owes her gratitude. But you find it difficult to believe her, - for the wisdom of the Nation is not in its faith in humanity but in its complete distrust. You say to yourself that it is not with Japan of the bushido, the Japan of the moral ideals, that you have to deal - it is with the abstraction of the popular selfishness, it is with the Nation; and Nation can only trust Nation where their interests coalesce, or at least do not conflict. In fact your instinct tells you that the advent of another people into the arena of nationality makes another addition to the evil which contradicts all that is highest in Man and proves by its success that unscrupulousness is the way to prosperity, - and goodness is good for the weak and God is the only remaining consolation of the defeated.

Yes, this is the logic of the Nation. And it will never heed the voice of truth and goodness. It will go on in its ring-dance of moral corruption, linking steel unto steel, and machine unto machine; trampling under its tread all the sweet flowers of simple faith and the living ideals of man.

But we delude ourselves into thinking that humanity in the modern days is more to the front than ever before. The reason of this self-delusion is because man is served with the necessities of life in greater profusion and his physical ills are being alleviated with more efficacy. But the chief part of this is done, not by moral sacrifice, but by intellectual power. In quantity it is great, but it springs from the surface and spreads over the surface. Knowledge and efficiency are powerful in their outward effect, but they are the servants of man, not the man himself. Their service is like the service in a hotel, where it is elaborate, but the host is absent; it is more convenient than hospitable.

Therefore we must not forget that the scientific organizations vastly spreading in all directions are strengthening our power, but not our humanity. With the growth of power the cult of the self-worship of the Nation grows in ascendancy; and the individual willingly allows the nation to take donkey rides upon his back; and there happens the anomaly which must have its disastrous effects, that the individual worships with all sacrifices a god which is morally much

inferior to himself. This could never have been possible if the god had been as real as the individual.

Let me give an illustration of this in point. In some parts of India it has been enjoined as an act of great piety for a widow to go without food and water on a particular day every fortnight. This often leads to cruelty, unmeaning and inhuman. And yet men are not by nature cruel to such a degree. But this piety being a mere unreal abstraction completely deadens the moral sense of the individual, just as the man who would not hurt an animal unnecessarily, would cause horrible suffering to a large number of innocent creatures when he drugs his feelings with the abstract idea of 'sport.' Because these ideas are the creations of our intellect, because they are logical classifications, therefore they can so easily hide in their mist the personal man.

And the idea of the Nation is one of the most powerful anesthetics that man has invented. Under the influence of its fumes the whole people can carry out its systematic programme of the most virulent self-seeking without being in the least aware of its moral perversion, - in fact feeling dangerously resentful if it is pointed out.

But can this go on indefinitely? continually producing barrenness of moral insensibility upon a large tract of our living nature? Can it escape its nemesis forever? Has this giant power of mechanical organization no limit in this world against which it may shatter itself all the more completely because of its terrible strength and velocity? Do you believe that evil can be permanently kept in check by competition with evil, and that conference of prudence can keep the devil chained in its makeshift cage of mutual agreement?

This European war of Nations is the war of retribution. Man, the person, must protest for his very life against the heaping up of things where there should be the heart, and systems and policies where there should flow living human relationship. The time has come when, for the sake of the whole outraged world, Europe should fully know in her own person the terrible absurdity of the thing called the Nation.

The Nation has thriven long upon mutilated humanity. Men, the fairest creations of God, came out of the National manufactory in huge numbers as war-making and money-making puppets, ludicrously vain of their pitiful perfection of mechanism. Human society grew more and more into a marionette show of politicians, soldiers, manufacturers and bureaucrats, pulled by wire arrangements of wonderful efficiency.

But the apotheosis of selfishness can never make its interminable breed of hatred and greed, fear and hypocrisy, suspicion and tyranny, an end in themselves. These monsters grow into huge shapes but never into harmony. And this Nation may grow on to an unimaginable

corpulence, not of a living body, but of steel and steam and office buildings, till its deformity can contain no longer its ugly voluminousness, - till it begins to crack and gape, breathe gas and fire in gasps, and its death-rattles sound in cannon roars. In this war, the death-throes of the Nation have commenced. Suddenly, all its mechanism going mad, it has begun the dance of the furies, shattering its own limbs, scattering them into the dust. It is the fifth act of the tragedy of the unreal.

Those who have any faith in Man cannot but fervently hope that the tyranny of the Nation will not be restored to all its former teeth and claws, to its far-reaching iron arms and its immense inner cavity, all stomach and no heart; that man will have his new birth, in the freedom of his individuality, from the enveloping vagueness of abstraction.

The veil has been raised, and in this frightful war the West has stood face to face with her own creation, to which she had offered her soul. She must know what it truly is.

She had never let herself suspect what slow decay and decomposition were secretly going on in her moral nature, which often broke out in doctrines of scepticism, but still oftener and in still more dangerously subtle manner showed itself in her unconsciousness of the mutilation and insult that she had been inflicting upon a vast part of the world. Now she must know the truth nearer home.

And then there will come from her own children those who will break themselves free from the slavery of this illusion, this perversion of brotherhood founded upon self-seeking, those who will own themselves as God's children and as no bondslaves of machinery, which turns souls into commodities and life into compartments, which, with its iron claws, scratches out the heart of the world and knows not what it has done.

And we of no nations of the world, whose heads have been bowed to the dust, will know that his dust is more sacred than the bricks which build the pride of power. For this dust is fertile of life, and of beauty and worship. We shall thank God that we were made to wait in silence through the night of despair, had to bear the insult of the proud and the strong man's burden, yet all through it, though our hearts quaked with doubt and fear, never could we blindly believe in the salvation which machinery offered to man, but we held fast to our trust in God and the truth of the human soul. And we can still cherish the hope, that, when power becomes ashamed to occupy its throne and is ready to make way for love, when the morning comes for cleansing the bloodstained steps of the Nation along the highroad of humanity, we shall be called upon to bring our own vessel of sacred water - the water of worship - to sweeten the history of man into purity, and with its sprinkling make the trampled dust of the centuries blessed with fruitfulness.

14.6 Nationalism and Tagore

Benedict Anderson defines the nation as “imagined community” but acknowledges that it is “notoriously difficult to define, let alone to analyse” “Nation, nationality, nationalism”. Hugh Seton-Watson maintains, “no ‘scientific definition’ of thenation can be devised”. Ernst Gellner observes that nationalism is an ‘invention,’ ‘fabrication’: “Nationalism is not the awakening of nations to self-consciousness: it invents nations where they do not exist”. Despite its “mythical” quality, and the difficulties involved in defining it, the phenomenon still enjoys profound political and emotional legitimacy in modern society. Bill Ashcroft et al. affirm that in spite of “all its contentiousness, and the difficulty of theorising it adequately, [nation/nationalism] remains the most implacably powerful force in twentieth century politics”.

Nationalism as a political expression, with people sharing a common geographical boundary and some unifying cultural/political signifier is relatively new, although cultural nationalism has prevailed since the beginning of society. Anderson suggests that the nation as a political institution is the product of European Enlightenment and Industrial Revolution. He argues that the rise of nationalism in Western Europe was made possible by the decline, if not the death, of religious modes of thought, in the wake of the rationalist secularism of the Enlightenment, or the Age of Reason. The guiding principles of this intellectual movement were the glorification of reason and faith in human dignity, both of which were sufficient to break down the old belief systems that gave centrality to the church and a theocentric worldview. Thus a more pragmatic and worldly socio- political system of nationalism emerged to suit the post-religious, secular world. Anderson explains, “What then was required was a secular transformation of fatality into continuity, contingency into meaning . . . few things were (are) better suited to this end than an idea of nation”.

Ernest Gellner, on the other hand, attributes the emergence of nationalism to the rise of industrial-capitalism in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. The epochal shift of human society from pre-industrial to industrial economies, he argues, set up the conditions required for the creation of larger social units and economies that would be culturally “homogenous” and cooperative as workforce, thus paving the way for the formation of the more complex and intricate social organisation of the nation-state. Effectively, the expansion of the workforce and the market made the earlier pre- industrial, tribal societies and their structures both inadequate and obsolete.

Timothy Brennan examines the role of literature, especially the novel, in the formation of national consciousness during its early period: “the end of the eighteenth and the beginning of the nineteenth centuries”. He maintains:

It was the novel that historically accompanied the rise of nations by objectifying the ‘one, yet many’ of national life, and by mimicking the structures of the nation. But

it did more than that. Its manner of presentation allowed people to imagine the special community that the nation was.

Despite literature's such active complicity in the formation of the institution and the global acceptance of nationalism as the only legitimate form of political organization, India's myriad-minded poet, Rabindranath Tagore—whom Bertrand Russell considered “worthy of the highest honour” (qtd. in Kripalani 358), and Ezra Pound deemed “greater than any of us” (qtd. in Kripalani 227) as a poet—shared not an iota of positive sentiment towards the ideology. His foremost objection came from its very nature and purpose as an institution. The very fact that it is a social institution, a mechanical organisation, modelled on certain utilitarian objectives in mind, made it unpalatable to Tagore, who was a champion of creation over construction, imagination over reason and the natural over the artificial and the man-made: “Construction is for a purpose, it expresses our wants; but creation is for itself, it expresses our very beings” (“Construction versus Creation,” Soares 59).

Tagore took the view that since nationalism emerged in the post-religious laboratory of industrial-capitalism, it was only an “organisation of politics and commerce” (Nationalism 7), that brings “harvests of wealth”, or “carnivals of materialism” (Soares 113), by spreading tentacles of greed, selfishness, power and prosperity, or churning up the baser instincts of mankind, and sacrificing in the process “the moral man, the complete man . . . to make room for the political and commercial man, the man of limited purpose”. Nationalism, according to Tagore, is not “a spontaneous self-expression of man as social being,” where human relationships are naturally regulated, “so that men can develop ideals of life in co-operation with one another”, but rather a political and commercial union of a group of people, in which they congregate to maximise their profit, progress and power; it is “the organised self-interest of a people, where it is least human and least spiritual”. Tagore deemed nationalism a recurrent threat to humanity, because with its propensity for the material and the rational, it trampled over the human spirit and human emotion; it upset man's moral balance, “obscuring his human side under the shadow of soul-less organisation”.

Thus, Tagore called into question both the constructed aspect of nationalism, which stifled the innate and instinctive qualities of the human individual, and its overemphasis on the commercial and political aspects, at the expense of man's moral and spiritual qualities. Both of these limitations reduced nationalism to an incomplete, monolithic and unipolar ideology—essentially inadequate for human beings given to an inherent multiplicity and seeming contraries, that needed to be unified and synthesised, through a process of soulful negotiation and striking of an axial line between opposites, to create the whole and wholesome person.

As seen previously, Tagore also found the fetish of nationalism a source of war, hatred and mutual suspicion between nations. In *The Home and the World*, Nikhil, Tagore's alter ego in the novel, who is patriotic but wouldn't place nation above truth and conscience says, “I am willing to serve my country; but my worship I reserve for Right which is far greater than country. To worship my country as a god is to bring curse upon it”. However, Nikhil's friend, Sandip, a charismatic but unconscionable nationalist, to whom any action in the name of the nation is right, no matter how far it may be from truth or justice, exclaims, “country's needs must be made into a god”, and one must “set aside . . . conscience . . . by putting the country in its place”. Tagore saw this radical view of Sandip, in which the nation is apotheosised and

placed above truth and conscience, as a recipe for disaster. It breeds exclusivism and dogmatism through the Hegelian dichotomous logic of self's fundamental hostility towards the other; thus every nation becomes narcissistic and considers the presence of another a threat to itself; waging war against other nations for its self-fulfilment and self-aggrandisement becomes a justifiable and even "holy" act.

Tagore explains:

The Nation, with all its paraphernalia of power and prosperity, its flags and pious hymns, its blasphemous prayers in the churches, and the literary mock thunders of its patriotic bragging, cannot hide the fact that the Nation is the greatest evil for the Nation, that all its precautions are against it, and any new birth of its fellow in the world is always followed in its mind by the dread of a new peril.

Tagore argued that British colonialism found its justification in the ideology of nationalism, as the coloniser came to India and other rich pastures of the world to plunder and so further the prosperity of their own nation. They were never sincere in developing colonised countries/nations, as to convert their "hunting grounds" into "cultivated fields" would have been contrary to their national interest. Like predators (and nationalism, as we saw above, inherently cultivates a rapacious logic), they thrived by victimising and violating other nations, and never felt deterred in their heinous actions by the principles of love, sympathy or universal fellowship. The logic is simple but cruel, and is sustained by a privileging norm, that in order to have rich and powerful nations, some nations sought to be left poor and pregnable: "Because this civilization is the civilization of power, therefore it is exclusive, it is naturally unwilling to open its sources of power to those whom it has selected for its purposes for exploitation". By its very nature as an organisation, Tagore argued, nationalism could ill afford any altruism in this regard.

One might think that Tagore's critique of nationalism is a little lofty and far-fetched—"too pious" as Pound might have said; his arguments are layered in atavistic spiritualism and romantic idealism. However, much of what Tagore said is intellectually valid and some of it is borne out by contemporary post-colonial criticism. Critics concur that nation is a necessity, it has laboured on behalf of modernity, and it helps to bolster the present civilization; as a political organisation it befits the social and intellectual milieu of present-day society, but they hardly claim its moral authority or its beneficial role in the reinforcement of human virtue.

Critics also view the constructed aspect of nationalism as a weakness in the ideology. It is vulnerable to regressing into more natural social units of clan, tribe and race, or language and religious groups. Its very formative process introduces a self-deconstructing logic in it. The process of formation/invention further makes it a potent site of power discourse; although it is meant to stand for horizontal comradeship, exploitation and inequality remain a daily occurrence in its body, and the nation never speaks of the hopes and aspirations of its entire "imagined community." In conceiving its overarching ideologies it often places the dominant group at the centre, pushing the minority population to the periphery. Thus, instead of a fraternity, it creates a new hierarchy and hegemony within its structure, and exposes the

fracture between its rhetoric and reality. Fanon expresses this misgiving, when he says, “National consciousness, instead of being the all-embracing crystallization of the innermost hopes of the whole people [becomes] a crude and fragile travesty of what it might have been [when] the nation is passed over for the race, and the tribe is preferred to the state”.

Several post-colonial critics agree with Tagore’s view that nationalism begets a disquisition of intolerance and “othering.” Ernest Gellner, Benedict Anderson and Tom Nairn have pointed out the irrationality, prejudice and hatred that nationalism generates, and Leela Gandhi speaks of its attendant racism and loathing, and the alacrity with which citizens are willing to both kill and die for the sake of the nation. I have also pointed out in the introduction of the essay how nationalism is often used as a pretext for terrorism, factional or state, and war. Sometimes these wars, especially by the rich and powerful nations, are disguised with expressions of noble intent, such as “liberating the people from an evil dictator” and/or “introducing democracy.” But such rhetoric is always disingenuous. In a letter to Yone Noguchi, a Japanese writer who had asked for Tagore’s moral support for Japan’s invasion of China in 1937, in the name of “saving China for Asia” (Dutta 192), Tagore roundly criticizes Noguchi for his naive acceptance of the grotesque rhetoric meant to veil an adventure of greed:

I was amused to read the recent statement of a Tokyo politician that the military alliance of Japan with Italy and Germany was made for ‘highly spiritual and moral reasons’ and ‘had no materialistic considerations behind it.’ Quite so. What is not so amusing is that writers and thinkers should echo such remarkable sentiments that translate military swagger into spiritual bravados. (Dutta 192-93)

Thomas Jefferson’s observation on the world situation of his day sums up the hypocrisy behind such use of exalted language in war, most tellingly:

We believe no more in Bonaparte’s fighting for the liberties of the seas, than in Great Britain’s fighting for the liberties of mankind. The object is the same, to draw to themselves the power, the wealth, and the resources of other nations. (qtd. in Chomsky 48)

Jefferson’s point further helps bolster Tagore’s claim that the discourse of nationalism overlaps with the discourse imperialism; the imperialist nations adopt the role of the Lacanian grand Other and seek to inscribe their authority unilaterally over the colonised nations; they are not impelled by the ideology of benevolence towards the colonised countries. Tagore describes them as aggressive people essentially driven by greed; who “go out of their way and spread their coat-tails in other peoples’ thoroughfares, claiming indemnity when these are trodden upon” (Dutta 255). According to Amy Cesaire, the imperial objective is to “thingify” the colonial subjects, and Fanon suggest that the colonisers are inherently bent upon not only plundering the wealth of the colonised nations but also to rob them of their culture: “By a kind of perverted logic, it turns the past of the oppressed people, and distorts, disfigures, and destroys it” (154). A classic example of this later instance was the introduction of English language in India in 1835 with the view of anglicising a group of Indians who would serve the colonial cause.

Check Your Progress

1. Trace the contribution of Tagore towards Nationalism in the West.

14.7 Summary

In My *Reminiscences*, Tagore humorously recollects that when he was young he was brought up under the rule of the servants, who were not only negligent but also oppressive. To avoid their responsibility, they would often put the young Tagore at a spot in the servants' quarter, draw a chalk line around him, and warn him "with a solemn face and uplifted finger of the perils of transgressing the circle" (Dutta 57). Tagore, aware of the fate of Sita in Ramayana, for overstepping a similar circle by her husband, would accede to the forceful confinement, but would feel a defiant wish to wipe out the chalk line and find the horizon. This childhood experience became the poet's lifelong companion; he would feel muffled by any confining circle and challenge it with utmost vigour. The national boundary was another such arbitrary "circle" for him that circumscribed his wish to be one with the rest of mankind. He would not accept such thorny hedges of exclusion or the labels and divisions that stood on the way to the formation of a larger human community. He said that if nationalism is something imaginary, humanity has to readjust their imagination by being more inclusive and encyclopaedic, or by extending the horizon of their mind's eye, so that the fellowship of the species does not stop at a geographical border, like commodities. He affirms:

Therefore man will have to make another great moral adjustment which will comprehend the whole world of men and not merely the fractional groups of nationality. The call has come to every individual in the present age to prepare himself and his surroundings for this dawn of a new era, when man shall discover his soul in the spiritual unity of all human beings. (Soares 104-05)

Tagore's process calls for a two-way ambiguous negotiation so that nations or communities can flourish and find their own fulfilment and yet rise above exclusivism and provincialism to forge an international community. It is like finding an axial line or a middle ground by shunning excesses, somewhat similar to the Emersonian "double consciousness," where the individual is required to keep his independence and yet not lose his sympathy; or the Whitmanesque celebration of the "self" and the "en-masse," or "I" and "you," in one breath. The moment we spurn national narcissism or chauvinism, and rise above the dichotomous reasoning of self/other, we become part of the Tagoresque "one world," through a recurrent dialogic process.

But to attain that stage, a more fundamental change is required. Currently, the nation is but an organisation of “politics and commerce,” focused on power and wealth. As an institution, its chief interest lies in the material well being of its people but not their moral or spiritual health. It reckons the individual’s head and stomach but not his heart, where the soul dwells. This will need to be altered through the restoration of the soul to its rightful place. Without the soul, the individual is like a torn-away line of verse looking for the other line that could give it fullness through a rhyme but has been smudged. Soul is what brings creativity and sympathy to the self, and makes the individual human and humane. In an interview with Einstein, Tagore said, “My religion is in the reconciliation of the supernatural man, the universal human spirit, in my own individual being” (Dutta 233). This three way reckoning of the self—in the individual, in humanity and in god, all connected by an invisible thread—brings the world together in one nest. This is the higher unity of humanity, which is different from corporate globalisation or what Tagore calls, the “mere political or commercial basis of unity” (Soares 105) between nations. His vision is given to a “magnificent harmony” that he believes is the ultimate destiny of humankind: the enlightened individuals and nations coming together to form an enlightened global society.

Tagore’s vision might seem idealistic but it is not unattainable. It calls for a humanitarian intervention into present self-seeking and belligerent nationalism, through the introduction of a moral and spiritual dimension in the institution. It also requires us to step out of history to reinvent a new future for ourselves that respects human dignity and sees every individual and nation as equals, in a true democratic spirit.

The risks for us not to take up Tagore’s trajectory are too high. The current form of nationalism that works rationally within a “lunatic” doctrinal framework is threatening our very survival. Violence is spreading around the world like virus. Our vast killing power is multiplying everyday with the introduction of yet more sophisticated ammunition in our arsenal. Paul Hirst, a leading international social theorist, has predicted that with the prospects of climate change that might attenuate our resources and result in mass migration from a loss of “habitable land in highly populated areas like Bangladesh or the southern coast of China,” or “desertification or water shortages in the Middle East or Southern Europe”; increase in the global income inequality; accretion of human rights violation worldwide; America’s quest for global dominance and challenges from “new ‘beggars’ armies” to the military hegemony, as well as the general selfishness of the developed nations, threatens the world with a “conflict ridden international environment” in the twenty-first century, with the prospects of several conventional wars, “to limited nuclear war”. Such a prospect casts gloom and doom on humanity. Perhaps it is not too late for us to wake up from our horrific moral slumber and accept the path of international solidarity, peace, harmony and justice paved by the Indian enlightened humanitarian poet, Rabindranath Tagore; by challenging the reigning ideological system of self-seeking nationalism and jingoism, we could still avert the all-consuming nightmare before us and alter the damning course of history.

14.8 Key Terms

Harmony: A balanced life derives from fulfillment in various important domains, combined with little or no negative effect in other ones. The importance of cross-domain balance clearly emerged in the WHO's definition of quality of life as a multicomponential construct (WHOQOL Group, 2004).

Prospect: A prospect is the possibility that something fabulous will happen. After you graduate top of your class at Harvard, for example, your job prospects look great. Prospect is from the Latin word prospectus which means a "view or outlook." A prospect is still a way of looking ahead and expecting good things.

Humanitarian: Humanitarianism is at once a broad dedication to and belief in the fundamental value of human life. Though lacking an agreed definition, this central ethics of humanitarianism crosses cultures and history.

Violence: Violence is the use of physical force to cause harm to people, animals, or property, such as pain, injury, death, damage, or destruction. Some definitions are somewhat broader, such as the World Health Organization's definition of violence as "the intentional use of physical force or power, threatened^[2] or actual, against oneself, another person, or against a group or community, which either results in or has a high likelihood of resulting in injury, death, psychological harm, maldevelopment, or deprivation."

14.9 Review Questions

1. Discuss the contribution of Tagore towards literature.
 2. Elucidate the most prominent works by Tagore.
 3. Can Tagore be considered as a true nationalist? Discuss.
 4. Assess the life and career of Tagore till death.
 5. Describe 'Geetanjali' as one of the most important works of Tagore.
-

14.10 References

- Bhattacharya, S. (2001), "Translating Tagore", *The Hindu*, Chennai, India (published 2 September 2001), archived from the original on 1 November 2003, retrieved 9 September 2011
- Brown, G. T. (1948), "The Hindu Conspiracy: 1914–1917", *The Pacific Historical Review*, **17** (3), University of California Press (published August 1948): 299–310, doi:10.2307/3634258, ISSN 0030-8684, JSTOR 3634258
- Cameron, R. (2006), "Exhibition of Bengali Film Posters Opens in Prague", *Radio Prague* (published 31 March 2006), retrieved 29 September 2011
- Chakrabarti, I. (2001), "A People's Poet or a Literary Deity?", *Parabaas* (published 15 July 2001), retrieved 17 September 2011

- Das, S. (2009), "Tagore's Garden of Eden", *The Telegraph*, Calcutta, India (published 2 August 2009), archived from the original on 3 March 2010, retrieved 29 September 2011
- Dasgupta, A. (2001), "Rabindra-Sangeet as a Resource for Indian Classical Bandishes", *Parabaas* (published 15 July 2001), retrieved 17 September 2011
- Dyson, K. K. (2001), "Rabindranath Tagore and His World of Colours", *Parabaas* (published 15 July 2001), retrieved 26 November 2009
- Tagore, Rabindranath (1914), *The Post Office*, translated by Mukerjee, D., London: Macmillan
- Tagore, Rabindranath (2004), "The Parrot's Tale", *Parabaas*, translated by Pal, P. B. (published 1 December 2004)
- Tagore, Rabindranath (1995), *Rabindranath Tagore: Selected Poems*, translated by Radice, W. (1st ed.), London: Penguin (published 1 June 1995), ISBN 978-0-14-018366-5
- Tagore, Rabindranath (2004), *Particles, Jottings, Sparks: The Collected Brief Poems*, translated by Radice, W, Angel Books (published 28 December 2004), ISBN 978-0-946162-66-6
- Tagore, Rabindranath (2003), *Rabindranath Tagore: Lover of God*, Lannan Literary Selections, translated by Stewart, T. K.; Twichell, C., Copper Canyon Press (published 1 November 2003), ISBN 978-1-55659-196-9

UNIT 15: THEORY OF AUTO - BIOGRAPHY

STRUCTURE

- 15.1 Objectives
- 15.2 Introduction
- 15.3 Autobiography
- 15.4 Origin of the Term
- 15.5 The Emergence of Autobiography
- 15.6 Types of Autobiography
- 15.7 Summary
- 15.8 Key Terms
- 15.9 Review Questions
- 15.10 References

15.1 Objectives

The learners shall know the following:

- The definition of term Auto – Biography.
- The origin of the term Auto – Biography.
- The Types of Auto – Biography.
- The importance of the term Auto – Biography.

15.2 Introduction

Autobiography continues to be one of the most popular forms of writing, produced by authors from across the social and professional spectrum. It is also central to the work of literary critics, philosophers, historians, and psychologists, who have found in autobiographies not only an understanding of the ways in which lives have been lived, but the most fundamental accounts of what it means to be a self in the world. The Introduction describes what autobiography means and compares it to other forms of ‘life-writing’. Autobiographical writing is seen to act as a window on to concepts of self, identity, and subjectivity, and into the ways in which these are themselves determined by time and circumstance.

15.3 Autobiography

An autobiography is a written account of the life of a person written by that person. Autobiographical works can take many forms, from the intimate writings made during life that were not necessarily intended for publication (including letters, diaries, journals, memoirs, and reminiscences) to a formal book-length autobiography.

Formal autobiographies offer a special kind of biographical truth: a life, reshaped by recollection, with all of recollection's conscious and unconscious omissions and distortions. The novelist Graham Greene said that, for this reason, an autobiography is only "a sort of life" and used the phrase as the title for his own autobiography (1971).

15.4 Origin of the Term

The word 'autobiography' was first used deprecatingly by William Taylor in 1797 in the English periodical the *Monthly Review*, when he suggested the word as a hybrid but condemned it as 'pedantic'; but its next recorded use was in its present sense by Robert Southey in 1809. The form of autobiography however goes back to antiquity. Biographers generally rely on a wide variety of documents and viewpoints; an autobiography, however, may be based entirely on the writer's memory. Closely associated with autobiography (and sometimes difficult to precisely distinguish from it) is the form of memoir.

15.5 The Emergence of Autobiography

There are but few and scattered examples of autobiographical literature in antiquity and the Middle Ages. In the 2nd century bce the Chinese classical historian Sima Qian included a brief account of himself in the *Shiji* ("Historical Records"). It may be stretching a point to include, from the 1st century bce, the letters of Cicero (or, in the early Christian era, the letters of St. Paul), and Julius Caesar's *Commentaries* tell little about Caesar, though they present a masterly picture of the conquest of Gaul and the operations of the Roman military machine at its most efficient. Generally speaking, autobiography in its modern, Western sense can be considered to have emerged in Europe during the Renaissance, in the 15th century. One of the first examples was written in England by Margery Kempe.

In her old age Kempe, a religious mystic of Norfolk, dictated an account of her bustling, far-faring life, which, however concerned with religious experience, reveals her somewhat abrasive personality. One of the first full-scale formal autobiographies was written a generation later by a celebrated humanist publicist of the age, Enea Silvio Piccolomini, after he was elevated to the papacy, in 1458, as Pius II. In the first book of his autobiography—misleadingly named *Commentarii*, in evident imitation of Caesar—Pius II traces his career up to becoming pope; the succeeding 11 books (and a fragment of a 12th, which breaks off a few months before his death in 1464) present a panorama of the age.

The autobiography of the Italian physician and astrologer Geronimo Cardano and the adventures of the goldsmith and sculptor Benvenuto Cellini in Italy of the 16th century; the uninhibited autobiography of the English historian and diplomat Lord Herbert of Cherbury, in the early 17th; and Colley Cibber's *Apology for the Life of Colley Cibber, Comedian* in the early 18th—these are representative examples of biographical literature from the Renaissance to the Age of Enlightenment. The latter period itself produced three works that are especially notable for their very different reflections of the spirit of the times as well as of the personalities of their authors: the urbane autobiography of Edward Gibbon, the great historian; the plainspoken, vigorous success story of an American who possessed all talents, Benjamin Franklin; and the introspection of a revolutionary Swiss-born political and social theorist, the *Confessions* of Jean-Jacques Rousseau—the latter leading to two autobiographical explorations in poetry during the Romantic period in England, William Wordsworth's *Prelude* and Lord Byron's *Childe Harold*, cantos III and IV.

15.6 Types of Autobiography

An autobiography may be placed into one of four very broad types: thematic, religious, intellectual, and fictionalized. The first grouping includes books with such diverse purposes as *The Americanization of Edward Bok* (1920) and Adolf Hitler's *Mein Kampf* (1925, 1927). Religious autobiography claims a number of great works, ranging from *The Confessions of St. Augustine* in the Middle Ages to the autobiographical chapters of Thomas Carlyle's *Sartor Resartus* and John Henry Cardinal Newman's *Apologia* in the 19th century. That century and the early 20th saw the creation of several intellectual autobiographies, including the severely analytical *Autobiography* of the philosopher John S. Mill and *The Education of Henry Adams*. Finally, somewhat analogous to the novel as biography is the autobiography thinly disguised as, or transformed into, the novel.

This group includes such works as Samuel Butler's *The Way of All Flesh* (1903), James Joyce's *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man* (1916), George Santayana's *The Last Puritan* (1935), and the novels of Thomas Wolfe. Yet in all of these works can be detected elements of all four types; the most outstanding autobiographies often ride roughshod over these distinctions.

Check Your Progress

1. Discuss the other types of Auto – biographies.

15.7 Summary

From the 17th century onwards, "scandalous memoirs" by supposed libertines, serving a public taste for titillation, have been frequently published. Typically pseudonymous, they were (and are) largely works of fiction written by ghostwriters. So-called "autobiographies" of modern professional athletes and media celebrities—and to a lesser extent about politicians—generally written by a ghostwriter, are routinely published. Some celebrities, such as Naomi Campbell, admit to not having read their "autobiographies". Some sensationalist autobiographies such as James Frey's *A Million Little Pieces* have been publicly exposed as having embellished or fictionalized significant details of the authors' lives.

15.8 Key Terms

Autobiographical memory: is a memory system consisting of episodes recollected from an individual's life, based on a combination of episodic (personal experiences and specific objects, people and events experienced at particular time and place) and semantic (general knowledge and facts about the world) memory. It is thus a type of explicit memory.

Autobiographical comics: An **autobiographical comic** (also **autobio**, **graphic memoir**, or **autobiocomic**) is an autobiography in the form of comic books or comic strips. The form first became popular in the underground comix movement and has since become more widespread. It is currently most popular in Canadian, American and French comics; all artists listed below are from the U.S. unless otherwise specified. Autobiographical comics are a form of **biographical comics** (also known as **biocomics**).

15.9 Review Questions

1. Discuss the importance of Autobiography in literature.
2. Comment on the origin of Autobiography.
3. Cite the major auto – biographies written in literature.
4. How can auto – biography be differentiated from biography? Discuss.
5. Elucidate the narrative style of Auto – Biography.

15.10 References

- Barros, Carolyn (1998). *Autobiography: Narrative of Transformation*. Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press.
- Buckley, Jerome Hamilton (1994). *The Turning Key: Autobiography and the Subjective Impulse Since 1800*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press.
- Ferrieux, Robert (2001). *L'Autobiographie en Grande-Bretagne et en Irlande*. Paris: Ellipses. p. 384. ISBN 9782729800215.
- Lejeune, Philippe (1989). *On Autobiography*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.
- Olney, James (1998). *Memory & Narrative: The Weave of Life-Writing*. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press.
- Pascal, Roy (1960). *Design and Truth in Autobiography*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press.

UNIT 16: RUSSELL'S AUTO - BIOGRAPHY

STRUCTURE

- 16.1 Objectives
- 16.2 Introduction
- 16.3 Early Life and Background
- 16.4 Later Life
- 16.5 Final Years and Death
- 16.6 Russell's Views on Philosophy
- 16.7 The Prologue to Bertrand Russell's *Autobiography*
- 16.8 Russell's Influence on Society
- 16.9 Summary
- 16.10 Key Terms
- 16.11 Review Questions
- 16.12 References

16.1 Objectives

The learners shall know the following:

- The new concept of Auto – Biography.
- The role of Bertrand Russell in the field of literature.
- Contribution of Russell towards literature.
- The analysis of the text Auto – Biography.

16.2 Introduction

Bertrand Arthur William Russell, 3rd Earl Russell, (18 May 1872 – 2February 1970) was a British philosopher, logician, mathematician, historian, social critic and political activist. At various points in his life he considered himself a liberal, a socialist, and a pacifist, but he also admitted that he had never been any of these in any profound sense. He was born in Monmouthshire, into one of the most prominent aristocratic families in Britain.

Russell led the British "revolt against idealism" in the early 20th century. He is considered one of the founders of analytic philosophy along with his predecessor Gottlob Frege, colleague G. E. Moore, and his protégé Ludwig Wittgenstein. He is widely held to be one of the 20th century's premier logicians. With A. N. Whitehead he wrote *Principia Mathematica*, an attempt to create a logical basis for mathematics. His philosophical essay "On Denoting" has been considered a "paradigm of philosophy". His work has had a considerable influence on logic, mathematics, set theory, linguistics, artificial intelligence, cognitive science, computer science, and philosophy, especially philosophy of language, epistemology, and metaphysics.

Russell was a prominent anti-war activist; he championed anti-imperialism and went to prison for his pacifism during World War I. Later, he campaigned against Adolf Hitler, then criticised Stalinist totalitarianism, attacked the involvement of the United States in the Vietnam War, and was an outspoken proponent of nuclear disarmament. In 1950 Russell was awarded the Nobel Prize in Literature "in recognition of his varied and significant writings in which he champions humanitarian ideals and freedom of thought".

16.3 Early Life and Background

Bertrand Russell was born on 18 May 1872 at Ravenscroft, Trellech, Monmouthshire, into an influential and liberal family of the British aristocracy. His parents, Viscount and Viscountess Amberley, were radical for their times. Lord Amberley consented to his wife's affair with their children's tutor, the biologist Douglas Spalding. Both were early advocates of birth control at a time when this was considered scandalous. Lord Amberley was an atheist and his atheism was evident when he asked the philosopher John Stuart Mill to act as Russell's secular godfather. Mill died the year after Russell's birth, but his writings had a great effect on Russell's life.

His paternal grandfather, the Earl Russell, had been asked twice by Queen Victoria to form a government, serving her as Prime Minister in the 1840s and 1860s. The Russells had been prominent in England for several centuries before this, coming to power and the peerage with the rise of the Tudor dynasty. They established themselves as one of Britain's leading Whig families, and participated in every great political event from the Dissolution of the Monasteries in 1536–40 to the Glorious Revolution in 1688–89 and the Great Reform Act in 1832. Lady Amberley was the daughter of Lord and Lady Stanley of Alderley. Russell often feared the ridicule of his maternal grandmother, one of the campaigners for education of women.

Childhood and Adolescence

Russell had two siblings: brother Frank (nearly seven years older than Bertrand), and sister Rachel (four years older). In June 1874 Russell's mother died of diphtheria, followed shortly by Rachel's death. In January 1876, his father died of bronchitis following a long period of depression. Frank and Bertrand were placed in the care of their staunchly Victorian paternal grandparents, who lived at Pembroke Lodge in Richmond Park. His grandfather, former Prime Minister Earl Russell, died in 1878, and was remembered by Russell as a kindly old

man in a wheelchair. His grandmother, the Countess Russell (née Lady Frances Elliot), was the dominant family figure for the rest of Russell's childhood and youth.

The countess was from a Scottish Presbyterian family, and successfully petitioned the Court of Chancery to set aside a provision in Amberley's will requiring the children to be raised as agnostics. Despite her religious conservatism, she held progressive views in other areas (accepting Darwinism and supporting Irish Home Rule), and her influence on Bertrand Russell's outlook on social justice and standing up for principle remained with him throughout his life. (One could challenge the view that Bertrand stood up for his principles, based on his own well-known quotation: "I would never die for my beliefs, I could be wrong".) Her favourite Bible verse, 'Thou shalt not follow a multitude to do evil' (Exodus 23:2), became his motto. The atmosphere at Pembroke Lodge was one of frequent prayer, emotional repression, and formality; Frank reacted to this with open rebellion, but the young Bertrand learned to hide his feelings.

Russell's adolescence was very lonely, and he often contemplated suicide. He remarked in his autobiography that his keenest interests were in religion and mathematics, and that only his wish to know more mathematics kept him from suicide. He was educated at home by a series of tutors. At age eleven, his brother Frank introduced him to the work of Euclid, which transformed Russell's life.

During these formative years he also discovered the works of Percy Bysshe Shelley. In his autobiography, he writes: "I spent all my spare time reading him, and learning him by heart, knowing no one to whom I could speak of what I thought or felt, I used to reflect how wonderful it would have been to know Shelley, and to wonder whether I should meet any live human being with whom I should feel so much sympathy". Russell claimed that beginning at age 15, he spent considerable time thinking about the validity of Christian religious dogma, which he found very unconvincing. At this age, he came to the conclusion that there is no free will and, two years later, that there is no life after death. Finally, at the age of 18, after reading Mill's "Autobiography", he abandoned the "First Cause" argument and became an atheist.

University and First Marriage:

Russell won a scholarship to read for the Mathematical Tripos at Trinity College, Cambridge, and commenced his studies there in 1890, taking as coach Robert Rumsey Webb. He became acquainted with the younger George Edward Moore and came under the influence of Alfred North Whitehead, who recommended him to the Cambridge Apostles. He quickly distinguished himself in mathematics and philosophy, graduating as a high Wrangler in 1893 and becoming a Fellow in the latter in 1895.

Russell first met the American Quaker Alys Pearsall Smith when he was 17 years old. He became a friend of the Pearsall Smith family—they knew him primarily as 'Lord John's grandson' and enjoyed showing him off—and travelled with them to the continent; it was in their company that Russell visited the Paris Exhibition of 1889 and was able to climb the Eiffel Tower soon after it was completed.

He soon fell in love with the puritanical, high-minded Alys, who was a graduate of Bryn Mawr College near Philadelphia, and, contrary to his grandmother's wishes, married her on 13 December 1894. Their marriage began to fall apart in 1901 when it occurred to Russell, while he was cycling, that he no longer loved her. She asked him if he loved her and he replied that he didn't. Russell also disliked Alys's mother, finding her controlling and cruel. It was to be a hollow shell of a marriage and they finally divorced in 1921, after a lengthy period of separation. During this period, Russell had passionate (and often simultaneous) affairs with a number of women, including Lady Ottoline Morrell and the actress Lady Constance Malleson.

Early Career

Russell began his published work in 1896 with *German Social Democracy*, a study in politics that was an early indication of a lifelong interest in political and social theory. In 1896 he taught German social democracy at the London School of Economics, where he also lectured on the science of power in the autumn of 1937. He was a member of the Coefficients dining club of social reformers set up in 1902 by the Fabian campaigners Sidney and Beatrice Webb. He now started an intensive study of the foundations of mathematics at Trinity. In 1898 he wrote *An Essay on the Foundations of Geometry* which discussed the Cayley-Klein metrics used for non-Euclidean geometry. He attended the International Congress of Philosophy in Paris in 1900 where he met Giuseppe Peano and Alessandro Padoa. The Italians had responded to Georg Cantor, making a science of set theory; they gave Russell their literature including the *Formulario mathematico*. Russell was impressed by the precision of Peano's arguments at the Congress, read the literature upon returning to England, and came upon Russell's paradox. In 1903 he published *The Principles of Mathematics*, a work on foundations of mathematics. It advanced a thesis of logicism, that mathematics and logic are one and the same.

At the age of 29, in February 1901, Russell underwent what he called a "sort of mystic illumination", after witnessing Whitehead's wife's acute suffering in an angina attack. "I found myself filled with semi-mystical feelings about beauty... and with a desire almost as profound as that of the Buddha to find some philosophy which should make human life endurable", Russell would later recall. "At the end of those five minutes, I had become a completely different person."

In 1905 he wrote the essay "On Denoting", which was published in the philosophical journal *Mind*. Russell became a fellow of the Royal Society in 1908. The three-volume *Principia Mathematica*, written with Whitehead, was published between 1910 and 1913. This, along with the earlier *The Principles of Mathematics*, soon made Russell world-famous in his field.

In 1910 he became a lecturer in the University of Cambridge, where he was approached by the Austrian engineering student Ludwig Wittgenstein, who became his PhD student. Russell viewed Wittgenstein as a genius and a successor who would continue his work on logic. He spent hours dealing with Wittgenstein's various phobias and his frequent bouts of despair. This was often a drain on Russell's energy, but Russell continued to be fascinated by him and encouraged his academic development, including the publication of Wittgenstein's *Tractatus*

Logico-Philosophicus in 1922. Russell delivered his lectures on Logical Atomism, his version of these ideas, in 1918, before the end of the First World War. Wittgenstein was, at that time, serving in the Austrian Army and subsequently spent nine months in an Italian prisoner of war camp at the end of the conflict.

16.4 Later Life

During the 1940s and 1950s, Russell participated in many broadcasts over the BBC, particularly *The Brains Trust* and the Third Programme, on various topical and philosophical subjects. By this time Russell was world-famous outside of academic circles, frequently the subject or author of magazine and newspaper articles, and was called upon to offer opinions on a wide variety of subjects, even mundane ones. En route to one of his lectures in Trondheim, Russell was one of 24 survivors (among a total of 43 passengers) in an aeroplane crash in Himmelvika in October 1948. He said he owed his life to smoking since the people who drowned were in the non-smoking part of the plane. *A History of Western Philosophy* (1945) became a best-seller and provided Russell with a steady income for the remainder of his life.

In 1943, Russell expressed support for Zionism: "I have come gradually to see that, in a dangerous and largely hostile world, it is essential to Jews to have some country which is theirs, some region where they are not suspected aliens, some state which embodies what is distinctive in their culture".

In a speech in 1948, Russell said that if the USSR's aggression continued, it would be morally worse to go to war after the USSR possessed an atomic bomb than before it possessed one, because if the USSR had no bomb the West's victory would come more swiftly and with fewer casualties than if there were atom bombs on both sides. At that time, only the United States possessed an atomic bomb, and the USSR was pursuing an extremely aggressive policy towards the countries in Eastern Europe which it was absorbing into its sphere of influence. Many understood Russell's comments to mean that Russell approved of a first strike in a war with the USSR, including Nigel Lawson, who was present when Russell spoke. Others, including Griffin, who obtained a transcript of the speech, have argued that he was merely explaining the usefulness of America's atomic arsenal in deterring the USSR from continuing its domination of Eastern Europe. However, just after the atomic bombs exploded over Hiroshima and Nagasaki, Russell wrote letters, and published articles in newspapers from 1945-1948, stating clearly that it was morally justified and better to go to war against the USSR using atomic bombs while the USA possessed them and before the USSR did. After the USSR exploded the atomic bomb, Russell changed his position 180 degrees and advocated now the total abolishment of atomic weapons.

In 1948, Russell was invited by the BBC to deliver the inaugural Reith Lectures—what was to become an annual series of lectures, still broadcast by the BBC. His series of six broadcasts, titled *Authority and the Individual*, explored themes such as the role of individual initiative in the development of a community and the role of state control in a progressive society.

Russell continued to write about philosophy. He wrote a foreword to *Words and Things* by Ernest Gellner, which was highly critical of the later thought of Ludwig Wittgenstein and of ordinary language philosophy. Gilbert Ryle refused to have the book reviewed in the philosophical journal *Mind*, which caused Russell to respond via *The Times*. The result was a month-long correspondence in *The Times* between the supporters and detractors of ordinary language philosophy, which was only ended when the paper published an editorial critical of both sides but agreeing with the opponents of ordinary language philosophy.

In the King's Birthday Honours of 9 June 1949, Russell was awarded the Order of Merit, and the following year he was awarded the Nobel Prize in Literature. When he was given the Order of Merit, George VI was affable but slightly embarrassed at decorating a former jailbird, saying, "You have sometimes behaved in a manner that would not do if generally adopted". Russell merely smiled, but afterwards claimed that the reply "That's right, just like your brother" immediately came to mind. In 1952 Russell was divorced by Spence, with whom he had been very unhappy. Conrad, Russell's son by Spence, did not see his father between the time of the divorce and 1968 (at which time his decision to meet his father caused a permanent breach with his mother).

Russell married his fourth wife, Edith Finch, soon after the divorce, on 15 December 1952. They had known each other since 1925, and Edith had taught English at Bryn Mawr College near Philadelphia, sharing a house for 20 years with Russell's old friend Lucy Donnelly. Edith remained with him until his death, and, by all accounts, their marriage was a happy, close, and loving one. Russell's eldest son John suffered from serious mental illness, which was the source of ongoing disputes between Russell and his former wife Dora. John's wife Susan was also mentally ill, and eventually Russell and Edith became the legal guardians of their three daughters, two of whom were later diagnosed with schizophrenia.

In September 1961, at the age of 89, Russell was jailed for seven days in Brixton Prison after taking part in an anti-nuclear demonstration in London, for "breach of peace". The magistrate offered to exempt him from jail if he pledged himself to "good behaviour", to which Russell replied: "No, I won't."

In 1962 Russell played a public role in the Cuban Missile Crisis: in an exchange of telegrams with Soviet leader Nikita Khrushchev, Khrushchev assured him that the Soviet government would not be reckless. Russell sent this telegram to President Kennedy:

YOUR ACTION DESPERATE. THREAT TO HUMAN SURVIVAL. NO CONCEIVABLE JUSTIFICATION. CIVILIZED MAN CONDEMNS IT. WE WILL NOT HAVE MASS MURDER. ULTIMATUM MEANS WAR... END THIS MADNESS.

According to historian Peter Knight, after JFK's assassination, Russell, "prompted by the emerging work of the lawyer Mark Lane in the US ... rallied support from other noteworthy and left-leaning compatriots to form a *Who Killed Kennedy Committee* in June 1964, members of which included Michael Foot MP, Caroline Benn, the publisher Victor Gollancz, the

writers John Arden and J. B. Priestley, and the Oxford history professor Hugh Trevor-Roper. Russell published a highly critical article weeks before the Warren Commission Report was published, setting forth *16 Questions on the Assassination* and equating the Oswald case with the Dreyfus affair of late 19th-century France, in which the statewrongly convicted an innocent man. Russell also criticised the American press for failing to heed any voices critical of the official version.

16.5 Final Years and Death

Russell published his three-volume autobiography in 1967, 1968, and 1969. Russell made a cameo appearance playing himself in the anti-war Hindi film *Aman* which was released in India in 1967. This was Russell's only appearance in a feature film.

On 23 November 1969 he wrote to *The Times* newspaper saying that the preparation for show trials in Czechoslovakia was "highly alarming". The same month, he appealed to Secretary General U Thant of the United Nations to support an international war crimes commission to investigate alleged torture and genocide by the United States in South Vietnam during the Vietnam War. The following month, he protested to Alexei Kosygin over the expulsion of Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn from the Writers Union.

On 31 January 1970 Russell issued a statement condemning Israel's aggression in the Middle East, and in particular, Israeli bombing raids being carried out deep in Egyptian territory as part of the War of Attrition. He called for an Israeli withdrawal to the pre-Six-Day War borders. This was Russell's final political statement or act. It was read out at the International Conference of Parliamentarians in Cairo on 3 February 1970, the day after his death.

Russell died of influenza on 2 February 1970 at his home, Plas Penrhyn, in Penrhyndeudraeth, Merionethshire, Wales. His body was cremated in Colwyn Bay on 5 February 1970. In accordance with his will, there was no religious ceremony; his ashes were scattered over the Welsh mountains later that year.

In 1980 a memorial to Russell was commissioned by a committee including the philosopher A. J. Ayer. It consists of a bust of Russell in Red Lion Square in London sculpted by Marcelle Quinton.

16.6 Russell's Views on Philosophy

Russell is generally credited with being one of the founders of analytic philosophy, but he also produced a body of work that covers logic, the philosophy of mathematics, metaphysics, ethics and epistemology, including his 1913 *Theory of Knowledge* and the related article he wrote for the 1926 edition of *Encyclopædia Britannica*.

Analytical Philosophy:

Bertrand Russell helped to develop what is now called "Analytic Philosophy." Alongside G. E. Moore, Russell was shown to be partly responsible for the British revolt against idealism, a philosophy greatly influenced by G. W. F. Hegel and his British apostle, F. H. Bradley. This revolt was echoed 30 years later in Vienna by the logical positivists' "revolt against metaphysics." Russell was particularly critical of a doctrine he ascribed to idealism and coherentism, which he dubbed the doctrine of internal relations; this, Russell suggested, held that to know any particular thing, we must know all of its relations. Russell argued that this would make space, time, science and the concept of number not fully intelligible. Russell's logical work with Whitehead continued this project.

Russell and Moore were devoted to clarity in arguments by breaking down philosophical position into their simplest components. Russell, in particular, saw formal logic and science as the principal tools of the philosopher. Russell did not think we should have separate methods for philosophy. Russell thought philosophers should strive to answer the most general of propositions about the world and this would help eliminate confusions. In particular, he wanted to end what he saw as the excesses of metaphysics. Russell adopted William of Ockham's principle against multiplying unnecessary entities, Occam's Razor, as a central part of the method of analysis.

Logic and Philosophy of Mathematics:

Russell had great influence on modern mathematical logic. The American philosopher and logician Willard Quine said Russell's work represented the greatest influence on his own work.

Russell's first mathematical book, *An Essay on the Foundations of Geometry*, was published in 1897. This work was heavily influenced by Immanuel Kant. Russell later realised that the conception it laid out would make Albert Einstein's schema of space-time impossible. Thenceforth, he rejected the entire Kantian program as it related to mathematics and geometry, and rejected his own earliest work on the subject.

Interested in the definition of number, Russell studied the work of George Boole, Georg Cantor, and Augustus De Morgan. Materials in the Bertrand Russell Archives at McMaster University include notes of his reading in algebraic logic by Charles Sanders Peirce and Ernst Schröder. In 1900 he attended the first International Congress of Philosophy in Paris, where

he became familiar with the work of the Italian mathematician, Giuseppe Peano. He mastered Peano's new symbolism and his set of axioms for arithmetic. Peano defined logically all of the terms of these axioms with the exception of *0*, *number*, *successor*, and the singular term, *the*, which were the primitives of his system. Russell took it upon himself to find logical definitions for each of these. Between 1897 and 1903 he published several articles applying Peano's notation to the classical Boole-Schröder algebra of relations, among them *On the Notion of Order*, *Sur la logique des relations avec les applications à la théorie des séries*, and *On Cardinal Numbers*. He became convinced that the foundations of mathematics could be derived within what has since come to be called higher-order logic which in turn he believed to include some form of unrestricted comprehension axiom.

Russell then discovered that Gottlob Frege had independently arrived at equivalent definitions for *0*, *successor*, and *number*, and the definition of number is now usually referred to as the Frege-Russell definition. Russell drew attention to Frege's priority in 1903, when he published *The Principles of Mathematics*. The appendix to this work, however, described a paradox arising from Frege's application of second- and higher-order functions which took first-order functions as their arguments, and Russell offered his first effort to resolve what would henceforth come to be known as the Russell Paradox. Before writing *Principles*, Russell became aware of Cantor's proof that there was no greatest cardinal number, which Russell believed was mistaken. The Cantor Paradox in turn was shown (for example by Crossley) to be a special case of the Russell Paradox. This caused Russell to analyse classes, for it was known that given any number of elements, the number of classes they result in is greater than their number. This in turn led to the discovery of a very interesting class, namely, the class of all classes. It contains two kinds of classes: those classes that contain themselves, and those that do not. Consideration of this class led him to find a fatal flaw in the so-called principle of comprehension, which had been taken for granted by logicians of the time. He showed that it resulted in a contradiction, whereby *Y* is a member of *Y*, if and only if, *Y* is not a member of *Y*. This has become known as Russell's paradox, the solution to which he outlined in an appendix to *Principles*, and which he later developed into a complete theory, the Theory of types. Aside from exposing a major inconsistency in naive set theory, Russell's work led directly to the creation of modern axiomatic set theory. It also crippled Frege's project of reducing arithmetic to logic. The Theory of Types and much of Russell's subsequent work have also found practical applications with computer science and information technology.

Russell continued to defend logicism, the view that mathematics is in some important sense reducible to logic, and along with his former teacher, Alfred North Whitehead, wrote the monumental *Principia Mathematica*, an axiomatic system on which all of mathematics can be built. The first volume of the *Principia* was published in 1910, and is largely ascribed to Russell. More than any other single work, it established the speciality of mathematical or symbolic logic. Two more volumes were published, but their original plan to incorporate geometry in a fourth volume was never realised, and Russell never felt up to improving the original works, though he referenced new developments and problems in his preface to the second edition. Upon completing the *Principia*, three volumes of extraordinarily abstract and

complex reasoning, Russell was exhausted, and he felt his intellectual faculties never fully recovered from the effort. Although the *Principia* did not fall prey to the paradoxes in Frege's approach, it was later proven by Kurt Gödel that neither *Principia Mathematica*, nor any other consistent system of primitive recursive arithmetic, could, within that system, determine that every proposition that could be formulated within that system was decidable, i.e. could decidewhether that proposition or its negation was provable within the system.

Russell's last significant work in mathematics and logic, *Introduction to Mathematical Philosophy*, was written while he was in jail for his anti-war activities during World War I. This was largely an explication of his previous work and its philosophical significance.

Philosophy of Language:

Russell made language, or more specifically, *how we use language*, a central part of philosophy, and this influenced Ludwig Wittgenstein, Gilbert Ryle,

J. L. Austin, and P. F. Strawson, among others, who used many of the techniques that Russell originally developed. Russell, and GE Moore, argued that clarity of expression is a virtue.

A significant contribution to philosophy of language is Russell's theory of descriptions, set out in *On Denoting* (*Mind*, 1905). Frank P. Ramsey described thispaper as "a paradigm of philosophy." The theory considers the sentence "The present King of France is bald" and whether the proposition is false or meaningless. Frege had argued, employing his distinction between sense and reference, that such sentences were meaningful but neither true nor false. Russell argues that the grammatical form of the sentence disguises its underlying logical form. Russell's Theory of Definite Descriptions enables the sentence to be construed as meaningful but false, without commitment to the existence of any present King of France. This addresses a paradox of great antiquity (e.g. "That which is not must in some sense be. Otherwise, how could we say of it that it is not?" etc.), going back at least as far as Parmenides. In Russell's own time, Meinong held the view of that which is not being in some sense real; and Russell held this view prior to *On Denoting*.

The problem is general to what are called "definite descriptions." Normally this includes all terms beginning with "the," and sometimes includes names, like "Walter Scott." (This point is quite contentious: Russell sometimes thought thatthe latter terms shouldn't be called names at all, but only "disguised definitedescriptions," but much subsequent work has treated them as altogether different things.) What is the "logical form" of definite descriptions: how, in Frege's terms, could we paraphrase them to show how the truth of the whole depends on the truths of the parts? Definite descriptions appear to be like names that by their very nature denote exactly one thing, neither more nor less. What, then, are we to say about the proposition as a whole if one of its parts apparently isn't functioning correctly?

Russell's solution was, first of all, to analyse not the term alone but the entire proposition that contained a definite description. "The present king of France is bald," he then suggested, can be reworded to "There is an x such that x isa present king of France, nothing other than x is a present king of France, and x is bald." Russell claimed that each definite description in fact contains a claim of existence and a claim of uniqueness which give this appearance, but these

can be broken apart and treated separately from the predication that is the obvious content of the proposition. The proposition as a whole then says three things about some object: the definite description contains two of them, and the rest of the sentence contains the other. If the object does not exist, or if it is not unique, then the whole sentence turns out to be false, not meaningless.

One of the major complaints against Russell's theory, due originally to Strawson, is that definite descriptions do not claim that their object exists, they merely presuppose that it does.

Wittgenstein, Russell's student, achieved considerable prominence in the philosophy of language after the posthumous publication of the *Philosophical Investigations*. In Russell's opinion, Wittgenstein's later work was misguided, and he decried its influence and that of its followers (especially members of the so-called "Oxford school" of ordinary language philosophy, whom he believed were promoting a kind of mysticism). He wrote a foreword to Ernest Gellner's *Words and Things* which was a fierce attack on the Oxford School of Ordinary Language philosophy and Wittgenstein's later work and was supportive of Gellner in the subsequent academic dispute. However, Russell still held Wittgenstein and his early work in high regard, he thought of him as, "perhaps the most perfect example I have ever known of genius as traditionally conceived, passionate, profound, intense, and dominating." Russell's belief that philosophy's task is not limited to examining ordinary language is once again widely accepted in philosophy.

Logical Atomism:

Perhaps Russell's most systematic, metaphysical treatment of philosophical analysis and his empiricist-centric logicism is evident in what he called logical atomism, which is explicated in a set of lectures, "The Philosophy of Logical Atomism," which he gave in 1918. In these lectures, Russell sets forth his concept of an ideal, isomorphic language, one that would mirror the world, whereby our knowledge can be reduced to terms of atomic propositions and their truth-functional compounds. Logical atomism is a form of radical empiricism, for Russell believed the most important requirement for such an ideal language is that every meaningful proposition must consist of terms referring directly to the objects with which we are acquainted, or that they are defined by other terms referring to objects with which we are acquainted. Russell excluded some formal, logical terms such as *all*, *the*, *is*, and so forth, from his isomorphic requirement, but he was never entirely satisfied with our understanding of such terms. One of the central themes of Russell's atomism is that the world consists of logically independent facts, a plurality of facts, and that our knowledge depends on the data of our direct experience of them. In his later life, Russell came to doubt aspects of logical atomism, especially his principle of isomorphism, though he continued to believe that the process of philosophy ought to consist of breaking things down into their simplest components, even though we might not ever fully arrive at an ultimate atomic fact.

Epistemology:

Russell's epistemology went through many phases. Once he shed neo-Hegelianism in his early years, Russell remained a philosophical realist for the remainder of his life, believing that our direct experiences have primacy in the acquisition of knowledge. While some of his views have lost favour, his influence remains strong in the distinction between two ways in which we can be familiar with objects: "knowledge by acquaintance" and "knowledge by description". For a time, Russell thought that we could only be acquainted with our own sense data— momentary perceptions of colours, sounds, and the like—and that everything else, including the physical objects that these were sense data of, could only be inferred, or reasoned to—i.e. known by description—and not known directly. This distinction has gained much wider application, though Russell eventually rejected the idea of an intermediate sense datum.

In his later philosophy, Russell subscribed to a kind of neutral monism, maintaining that the distinctions between the material and mental worlds, in the final analysis, were arbitrary, and that both can be reduced to a neutral property— a view similar to one held by the American philosopher/psychologist, William James, and one that was first formulated by Baruch Spinoza, whom Russell greatly admired. Instead of James' "pure experience," however, Russell characterised the stuff of our initial states of perception as "events," a stance which is curiously akin to his old teacher Whitehead's process philosophy.

Philosophy of Science:

Russell claimed that he was more convinced of his *method* of doing philosophy than of his philosophical conclusions. Science was one of the principal components of analysis. Russell was a believer in the scientific method, that science reaches only tentative answers, that scientific progress is piecemeal, and attempts to find organic unities were largely futile. He believed the same was true of philosophy. Russell held that the ultimate objective of *both* science and philosophy was to *understand* reality, not simply to make predictions.

Russell's work contributed to philosophy of science's development into a separate branch of philosophy. Much of Russell's thinking about science is expressed in his 1914 book, *Our Knowledge of the External World as a Field for Scientific Method in Philosophy*, which influenced the logical positivists.

Russell held that of the physical world we know only its abstract structure except for the intrinsic character of our own brain with which we have direct acquaintance (Russell, 1948). Russell said that he had always assumed copunctuality between percepts and non-percepts, and percepts were also part of the physical world, a part of which we knew its intrinsic character directly, knowledge which goes beyond structure. His views on science have become integrated into the contemporary debate in the philosophy of science as a form of Structural Realism, people such as Elie Zahar and Ioannis Votsis have discussed the implications of his work for our understanding of science. The seminal article "The Concept

of Structure in *The Analysis of Matter*" by William Demopoulos and Michael Friedman was crucial in reintegrating Russell's views to the contemporary scene.

Russell wrote several science books, including *The ABC of Atoms* (1923) and *The ABC of Relativity* (1925).

Ethics:

While Russell wrote a great deal on ethical subject matters, he did not believe that the subject belonged to philosophy or that when he wrote on ethics that he did so in his capacity as a philosopher. In his earlier years, Russell was greatly influenced by G.E. Moore's *Principia Ethica*. Along with Moore, he then believed that moral facts were objective, but known only through intuition; that they were simple properties of objects, not equivalent (e.g., pleasure is good) to the natural objects to which they are often ascribed (see Naturalistic fallacy); and that these simple, undefinable moral properties cannot be analysed using the non-moral properties with which they are associated. In time, however, he came to agree with his philosophical hero, David Hume, who believed that ethical terms dealt with subjective values that cannot be verified in the same way as matters of fact.

Coupled with Russell's other doctrines, this influenced the logical positivists, who formulated the theory of emotivism or non-cognitivism, which states that ethical propositions (along with those of metaphysics) were essentially meaningless and nonsensical or, at best, little more than expressions of attitudes and preferences. Notwithstanding his influence on them, Russell himself did not construe ethical propositions as narrowly as the positivists, for he believed that ethical considerations are not only meaningful, but that they are a vital subject matter for civil discourse. Indeed, though Russell was often characterized as the patron saint of rationality, he agreed with Hume, who said that reason ought to be subordinate to ethical considerations.

Religion and Theology:

For most of his adult life Russell maintained that religion is little more than superstition and, despite any positive effects that religion might have, it is largely harmful to people. He believed religion and the religious outlook (he considered communism and other systematic ideologies to be forms of religion) serve to impede knowledge, foster fear and dependency, and are responsible for much of the war, oppression, and misery that have beset the world.

In his 1949 speech, "Am I an Atheist or an Agnostic?", Russell expressed his difficulty over whether to call himself an atheist or an agnostic:

As a philosopher, if I were speaking to a purely philosophic audience I should say that I ought to describe myself as an Agnostic, because I do not think that there is a conclusive argument by which one can prove that there is not a God. On the other hand, if I am to convey the right impression to the ordinary man in the street I think that I ought to say that I am an Atheist, because, when I say that I cannot prove that there is not a God, I ought to add equally that I cannot prove that there are not the Homeric gods.

—Bertrand Russell, *Collected Papers*, vol. 11, p. 91

However, in the 1948 BBC Radio Debate between Bertrand Russell and Frederick Copleston, Russell chose to assume the position of the agnostic, though it seems to have been because he admitted to not being able to prove the non-existence of God:

Copleston: Well, my position is the affirmative position that such a being actually exists, and that His existence can be proved philosophically. Perhaps you would tell me if your position is that of agnosticism or of atheism. I mean, would you say that the non-existence of God can be proved?

Russell: No, I should not say that: my position is agnostic.

—Bertrand Russell v. Fr. Copleston, 1948 BBC Radio Debate on the Existence of God

Though he would later question God's existence, he fully accepted the ontological argument during his undergraduate years:

For two or three years...I was a Hegelian. I remember the exact moment during my fourth year [in 1894] when I became one. I had gone out to buy a tin of tobacco, and was going back with it along Trinity Lane, when I suddenly threw it up in the air and exclaimed: "Great God in Boots! – the ontological argument is sound!"

—Bertrand Russell, *Autobiography of Bertrand Russell*, pg. 60

This quote has been used by many theologians over the years, such as by Louis Pojman in his *Philosophy of Religion*, who wish for readers to believe that even a well-known atheist-philosopher supported this particular argument for God's existence. However, elsewhere in his autobiography, Russell also mentions:

About two years later, I became convinced that there is no life after death, but I still believed in God, because the "First Cause" argument appeared to be irrefutable. At the age of eighteen, however, shortly before I went to Cambridge, I read Mill's *Autobiography*, where I found a sentence to the effect that his father taught him the question "Who made me?" cannot be answered, since it immediately suggests the further question "Who made God?" This led me to abandon the "First Cause" argument, and to become an atheist.

—Bertrand Russell, *Autobiography of Bertrand Russell*, pg. 36

Russell made an influential analysis of the omphalos hypothesis enunciated by Philip Henry Gosse—that any argument suggesting that the world was created as if it were already in motion could just as easily make it a few minutes old as a few thousand years:

There is no logical impossibility in the hypothesis that the world sprang into being five minutes ago, exactly as it then was, with a population that "remembered" a wholly unreal past. There is no logically necessary connection between events at different times; therefore nothing that is happening now or will happen in the future can disprove the hypothesis that the world began five minutes ago.

—Bertrand Russell, *The Analysis of Matter*, 1927, pp. 159–60; cf. *Philosophy*, Norton, 1927, p. 7, where Russell acknowledges Gosse's paternity of this anti-evolutionary argument.

As a young man, Russell had a decidedly religious bent, himself, as is evident in his early

Platonism. He longed for eternal truths, as he makes clear in his famous essay, "A Free Man's Worship", widely regarded as a masterpiece of prose, but a work that Russell came to dislike. While he rejected the supernatural, he freely admitted that he yearned for a deeper meaning to life.

Russell's views on religion can be found in his book, *Why I Am Not a Christian and Other Essays on Religion and Related Subjects*. Its title essay was a talk given on 6 March 1927 at Battersea Town Hall, under the auspices of the South London Branch of the National Secular Society, UK, and published later that year as a pamphlet. The book also contains other essays in which Russell considers a number of logical arguments for the existence of God, including the first cause argument, the natural-law argument, the argument from design, and moral arguments. He also discusses specifics about Christian theology.

His Conclusion:

Religion is based, I think, primarily and mainly upon fear. It is partly the terror of the unknown and partly, as I have said, the wish to feel that you have a kind of elder brother who will stand by you in all your troubles and disputes. [...] A good world needs knowledge, kindness, and courage; it does not need a regretful hankering after the past or a fettering of the free intelligence by the words uttered long ago by ignorant men.

—Bertrand Russell, *Why I Am Not a Christian and Other Essays on Religion and Related Subjects*

16.7 The Prologue to Bertrand Russell's Autobiography

What I Have Lived For

Three passions, simple but overwhelmingly strong, have governed my life: the longing for love, the search for knowledge, and unbearable pity for the suffering of mankind. These passions, like great winds, have blown me hither and thither, in a wayward course, over a great ocean of anguish, reaching to the very verge of despair.

I have sought love, first, because it brings ecstasy - ecstasy so great that I would often have sacrificed all the rest of life for a few hours of this joy. I have sought it, next, because it relieves loneliness--that terrible loneliness in which one shivering consciousness looks over the rim of the world into the cold unfathomable lifeless abyss. I have sought it finally, because in the union of love I have seen, in a mystic miniature, the prefiguring vision of the heaven that saints and poets have imagined. This is what I sought, and though it might seem too good for human life, this is what--at last--I have found.

With equal passion I have sought knowledge. I have wished to understand the hearts of men. I have wished to know why the stars shine. And I have tried to apprehend the Pythagorean power by which number holds sway above the flux. A little of this, but not much, I have achieved.

Love and knowledge, so far as they were possible, led upward toward the heavens. But always pity brought me back to earth. Echoes of cries of pain reverberate in my heart. Children in

famine, victims tortured by oppressors, helpless old people a burden to their sons, and the whole world of loneliness, poverty, and pain make a mockery of what human life should be. I long to alleviate this evil, but I cannot, and I too suffer.

This has been my life. I have found it worth living, and would gladly live it again if the chance were offered me.

Check Your Progress

1. Critically analyze the text *Auto – Biography*.

16.8 Russell's Influence on Society

Political and social activism occupied much of Russell's time for most of his life. Russell remained politically active almost to the end of his life, writing to and exhorting world leaders and lending his name to various causes.

Russell argued for a "scientific society", where war would be abolished, population growth limited, and prosperity shared. He suggested the establishment of a "single supreme world government" able to enforce peace, claiming that "the only thing that will redeem mankind is co-operation".

Russell was an active supporter of the Homosexual Law Reform Society, being one of the signatories of A.E. Dyson's 1958 letter to *The Times* calling for a change in the law regarding male homosexual practices, which were partly legalised in 1967, when Russell was still alive.

In "Reflections on My Eightieth Birthday" ("Postscript" in his *Autobiography*), Russell wrote: "I have lived in the pursuit of a vision, both personal and social. Personal: to care for what is noble, for what is beautiful, for what is gentle; to allow moments of insight to give wisdom at more mundane times. Social: to see in imagination the society that is to be created, where individuals grow freely, and where hate and greed and envy die because there is nothing to nourish them. These things I believe, and the world, for all its horrors, has left me unshaken". Russell often characterized his moral and political writings as lying outside the scope of philosophy, but Russell's admirers and detractors are often more acquainted with his pronouncements on social and political matters, or what some (e.g., biographer Ray Monk) have called his "journalism," than they are with his technical, philosophical work. There is a marked tendency to conflate these matters, and to judge Russell the philosopher on what he himself would certainly consider to be his non-philosophical opinions. Russell often cautioned people to make this distinction. Beginning in the 1920s, Russell wrote frequently for *The Nation* on changing morals, nuclear disarmament and literature. In 1965, he wrote that the magazine "...has been one of the few voices which has been heard on behalf of individual liberty and social justice consistently throughout its existence."

16.9 Summary

As Nicholas Griffin discusses in the introduction to *The Cambridge Companion to Bertrand Russell*, Russell had a major influence on modern philosophy, especially in the English-speaking world. While others were also influential, notably Frege, Moore, and Wittgenstein, Russell made analysis the dominant methodology of professional philosophy. The various analytic movements throughout the last century all owe something to Russell's earlier works. Even Ray Monk, no admirer of Russell's personal snobbery, characterized his work on the philosophy of mathematics as intense, august and incontestably great and acknowledged in the preface to the second volume of his biography that he is one of the indisputably great philosophers of the twentieth century.

Russell's influence on individual philosophers is singular, perhaps most notably in the case of Ludwig Wittgenstein, who was his student between 1911 and 1914.

Wittgenstein had an important influence on Russell as he himself discusses in his *My Philosophical Development*. He led him, for example, to conclude, much to his regret, that mathematical truths were purely tautological truths, however it is doubtful that Wittgenstein actually held this view, which he discussed in relation to logical truth, since it is not clear that he was a logicist when he wrote the *Tractatus*. What is certain is that in 1901 Russell's own reflections on the issues raised by the paradox that takes his name Russell's Paradox, led him to doubt the intuitive certainty of mathematics. This doubt was perhaps Russell's most important 'influence' on mathematics, and was spread throughout the European universities, even as Russell himself laboured (with Alfred North Whitehead) in an attempt to solve the Paradox and related paradoxes, such as Burali-Forti. As Stewart Shapiro explains in his *Thinking About Mathematics*, Russell's attempts to solve the paradoxes led to the ramified theory of types, which, though it is highly complex and relies on the doubtful axiom of reducibility, actually manages to solve both syntactic and semantic paradoxes at the expense of rendering the logicist project suspect and introducing much complexity in the PM system. Philosopher and logician F.P. Ramsey would later simplify the theory of types arguing that there was no need to solve both semantic and syntactic paradoxes to provide a foundation for mathematics. The philosopher and logician George Boolos discusses the power of the PM system in the preface to his *Logic, logic & logic*, stating that it is powerful enough to derive most classical mathematics, equating the power of PM to that of Z, a weaker form of set theory than ZFC (Zermelo-Fraenkel Set theory with Choice). In fact, ZFC actually does circumvent Russell's paradox by restricting the comprehension axiom to already existing sets by the use of subset axioms.

Russell left a large assortment of writing. From his adolescent years, he wrote about 3,000 words a day, with relatively few corrections; his first draft nearly always was his last, even on the most complex, technical matters. His previously unpublished work is an immense treasure trove, and scholars continue to gain new insights into Russell's thought.

16.10 Key Terms

Immense: Marked by greatness especially in size or degree *especially*.

Scholars: A scholar is a person who is a researcher or has expertise in an academic discipline. A scholar can also be an academic, who works as a professor, teacher, or researcher at a university. An academic usually holds an advanced degree or a terminal degree, such as a master's degree or a doctorate (PhD).

Logician: Logician is a personality type with the Introverted, Intuitive, Thinking, and Prospecting traits. These flexible thinkers enjoy taking an unconventional approach to many aspects of life. They often seek out unlikely paths, mixing willingness to experiment with personal creativity.

Insights: A clear, deep, and sometimes sudden understanding of a complicated problem or situation: insight into It was an interesting book, full of fascinating insights into human relationships.

16.11 Review Questions

1. Discuss Russell's influence on Society.
 2. Comment on the text *Auto – Biography* by Russell.
 3. Discuss the major works of Russell.
 4. Elucidate the in – depth analysis of his other writings.
 5. Compare Russell with that of his contemporaries.
-

16.12 References

- Marcos Farrajota, "Desassossego" (reprinting his article of introduction to Portuguese comics for *Š!* magazine)
- Pace, Eric (2001-02-25). "Miné Okubo, 88, Dies; Art Chronicled Internment Camps" (PDF). *New York Times*. Retrieved 2008-07-10.
- Duffus, R.L. (1944-10-15). "Japanese in America" (PDF, fee required). *New York Times*. p. BR3. Retrieved 2008-07-01.
- Bierwirth, Bettina-Jeannette (27 October 2010). "Text and image relations in Miné Okubo's *Citizen 13660*". *Discover Nikkei*. Retrieved 2018-05-30.
- "Miné Okubo's Masterpiece | Japanese American National Museum". www.janm.org. Retrieved 2021-09-23.
- "'Chiko,' 'A View of the Seaside,' and 'Mister Ben of the Igloo': Visual and Verbal Narrative Technique in Three Classic Manga by Yoshiharu Tsuge", by Tom Gill, *Hooded Utilitarian*, June 9, 2014