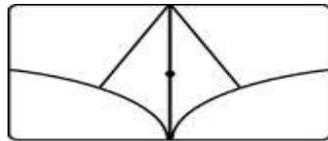


A SURVEY OF ENGLISH LITERATURE II



Khayyam University of Mashhad

Compiled by:

Mosayyeb Ramezani

<http://ramezani.zoomshare.com>

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PART I

RESTORATION OF MONARCHY AND THE AGE OF DRYDEN

Chapter 1

The Spirit of Restoration and the Rise of Neo-Classicism

Historical Background

As a literary period, Restoration begins with a historical event, the restoration of monarchy on May 29, 1660, and ends with the death of John Dryden in 1700, but the whole period is considered as part of the eighteenth century. We cannot declare that with the restoration of **Charles II** English literature underwent drastic changes and the Renaissance period ended. John Milton lived and wrote his great poems after the restoration of Charles and Dryden considered Ben Jonson as the best guide and source of imitation.

The beginning and the end of a literary period cannot usually be so precisely determined and stated as those of a historical period. Literary histories become unknowingly artificial whenever they talk about literary periods in terms of historical periods and events. A political event can be precisely dated, but no literary movement happens overnight. The literary qualities of a movement can very often be traced back to years, decades, even centuries before the movement is said to have started and they may survive, at least partially, long after it is ended. In a new literary movement very often the shifts of emphasis are considered as drastic changes and two literary periods are contrasted on the basis of exaggerated differences.

The Restoration literature is not only the basis but also an integral part of the eighteenth-century literature. The term 'eighteenth century' in the vocabulary of literary historians is commonly vague because it borrows as much as forty years from the seventeenth and gives away almost ten years to the nineteenth. Therefore, it is safer to talk about Restoration-eighteenth-century literature or the Neo-Classic period,

although **the age of baroque** is a more precise and suitable name because, in spite of their classical tendencies, most writers of the period are **unclassical classicists**.

After the victory of the Puritan army headed by **Oliver Cromwell** (1599-1658), Parliament gained power, abolished monarchy and the House of Lords, and proclaimed England a 'Commonwealth' or 'Free State'. Charles I was executed in 1649 and Charles II, after his fruitless attempt to defeat the Puritan army, fled to France and began his long period of exile watching the events happening in England. The Cavaliers or Royalists on the Continent were not inactive; they continued the war of pamphlets against the usurper.

English people were very soon disillusioned with the rule of Cromwell who called himself the Lord Protector. In spite of being one of England's ablest rulers, he turned out to be a great dictator. The Puritan Revolution was doomed to failure, not because people loved monarchy but because their expected liberty turned out to be nothing but bondage.

In 1653 Cromwell dissolved the Parliament and the Council of State, and began a five-and-a-half year period of personal rule that ended with his death in 1658. He was very honest, but his government was fiercely Puritan and too strict in administration to be tolerable to the people who had different expectations. He even passed sumptuary laws to prevent any kind of extravagance in private life by limiting expenditure for food and clothing. In spite of being a capable ruler, he could not provide a constitutional basis for his government. That is why his son, Richard, who succeeded him, fell before a military junta within eight months, an attempt to establish a Puritan republic failed, and General Monk restored Charles II to the English throne.

In 1660 Charles II, the Stuart king, returned to his throne. Once more English people were fed in their expectations. They expected a clear break with the past and delighted in revolting from the conventions and religious beliefs of the preceding generation. But the restoration of the Stuart dynasty in 1660, after eighteen years of civil war and Cromwellian regime, did not solve the constitutional problems which were the cause of civil war and which were finally settled by the Glorious Revolution of 1688. The restoration of Charles II

after eighteen years of wandering on the Continent was welcomed by the English people who were worn out by the long period of dissension and chaos and longed for stability and order.

Charles returned from exile amid popular approval. Dryden calls it the return of justice and Samuel Pepys writes in his famous diary: "The shouting and joy expressed by all is past imagination." The Cavaliers also came back from the Continent to enjoy the Indian summer. The whole nation conceived of the return of the rule of monarchy as the advent of a golden age of peace and security after the oppressive age of commonwealth. Charles' Act of Oblivion, encouraging charity and mercy, made people think of Charles as the symbol of peace, charity, truth, and justice.

The national life swung sharply back into the traditions and patterns of the reign of Charles I. The formerly dispossessed Anglican bishops and preachers were restored to their former positions, Parliament resumed its traditional role, and the court once more set the tone for polite society.

English people were at first sincerely happy with the restoration of Charles II, but old as well as new difficulties soon reasserted themselves. The first Parliament of Charles II, which was a royalist one, passed the Act of Conformity in 1662 that required all the clergy, college fellows, and schoolmasters to belong to the Anglican Church. Those who refused were removed from their positions and they came to be called Dissenters or Nonconformists meaning Protestants outside the Established Church.

The religious and political debates over the church authority and the constitutional limits of the royal prerogative were resumed. Such debates between the Anglicans and Dissenters, the Cavaliers and Puritans, the aristocracy and the commercial classes led to the formation of Whig and Tory parties (now called Labor and Conservative parties) that made the country stand on the brink of civil war in 1679. Charles II, in spite of his shrewdness, could not preserve the unity of the English people. His financial extravagance and his irresponsibility deprived him of the loyalty of many of his subjects.

Early in Charles' reign a series of disasters occurred in rapid succession. England was devastated in 1665 by bubonic plague, the worst epidemic since the Black Plague of the fourteenth century. Over 70,000 people died in London alone. In September 1666, London was virtually destroyed by the Great

Fire that raged for five days, burning 13,000 houses, leaving two-thirds of the population homeless, and eliminating the London of Chaucer's and Shakespeare's days. To the superstitious people such calamities seemed to be the work of a Divine Providence; others blamed Catholics and talked about the Gunpowder Plot and religious hostility.

Religion and politics were inseparable, and unresolved religious issues were barriers in the way of any stable political settlement. Catholics, Puritans, and Dissenters were actually excluded from the official world of politics because the restoration of monarchy meant the restoration of the Established Church. Charles had promised mildness toward his father's enemies, but the Anglican clergy were very hostile toward the Dissenters, and jails were filled with Nonconformist preachers who, like John Bunyan, refused to be silenced.

Charles himself was a Catholic, but he concealed from his subjects his Catholic sympathies that could lead to his deposition. In spite of his strong belief in the royal power and prerogatives, he promised to govern through Parliament. He was a courageous and skillful politician who gave Parliament no opportunity for a test of strength. But he brought about a great religious and constitutional crisis by naming his Catholic brother James, as his successor.

The appearance of **Whig and Tory parties** was one of the direct consequences of the religious and political turmoils. Tories supported the king and the Established Church as the two sources of social and political stability. The Whigs were heterogeneous groups who were jealous of the king's power and were united by their policies of toleration and support of commerce.

Charles II died in 1685 and **James II** came to the English throne. He openly admitted that he was a Catholic. His decision to advance the cause of the Roman Catholic Church prepared his downfall. William of Orange, a leading champion of Protestantism on the Continent, and his wife Mary, James's Protestant daughter, arrived in England at the head of a small army and were supported by Whigs. James II fled to France and **the Bloodless or Glorious Revolution** succeeded easily. William and Marv ruled the country jointly, and the **Exclusion Bill** barred all Catholics from universities and government jobs, but

the Toleration Act granted freedom of worship to the Dissenters.

Mary died in 1694 and after the death of William in 1702, Anne, the younger sister of Mary, succeeded to the throne of England. **Queen Anne** devoted herself to the Established Church that was threatened by the Whig ministers who wanted to favor the Dissenters. She dismissed her Whig ministers and appointed **Robert Harley (Earl of Oxford)** as Lord Treasurer and **Henry St. John (Viscount Bolingbroke)** as the Secretary of State whom Pope and Swift served and supported.

Queen Anne was the last Stuart monarch. The nation, especially the Whig lords and merchants, were growing prosperous through war and trade. It was these Whigs who returned to power after the death of Queen Anne in 1714 and the accession of George I, the son of late Sophia, Electress of Hanover, The three Georges ruled the country during the rest of the century. They were men of mean ability that spoke broken English, spent much of their time in Hanover, Germany, and had little interest in the affairs of England.

Intellectual Background

In spite of strong religious debates and conflicts, the Restoration period marks the beginning of the secularization of values and thoughts that characterizes modern Western society. It was in this age that Thomas Hobbes wrote his *Leviathan*, advocating an absolute government, Locke enhanced human understanding, and philosophical skepticism and Deism flourished.

The ancient Greek **Skepticism** reflected in the essays of Michel de Montaigne, the 16th-century French essayist, had great influence on European skepticism. The skeptics declared that knowledge is derived from our senses, which offer opinion, not idea. Therefore, most ethical, political, and intellectual beliefs are mere opinions that cannot be taken as truths. Dryden and some other writers of the age adhered to this doctrine that was of classical origin.

Charles II was a patron of arts as well as sciences. His chartering the **Royal Society** of London in 1662 marks the beginning of a serious attempt to accelerate the scientific movement and the study of

natural philosophy, which was started by Francis Bacon. Some of the members of the Royal Society who were clergymen and its spokesman Bishop Thomas Sprat never thought of the new science as something incompatible with Christianity, but so many opponents of the Royal Society identified science with rationalism that is forbidden in Christianity, which is a religion of the heart. The new science was often blamed for the widespread appeal of **Deism** or **Natural Religion**.

Deism deduced its simple rationalistic creed from the book of nature and the existence of God from the existence of the universe; that is, a creature presupposes a Creator. Deism is based on reason and the study of nature as opposed to 'revealed religion'. It is the religion of those who believe God rules the world according to the established laws. Deists believe neither in the divinity of Christ nor in the inspiration of the Bible.

The scientific findings of the Royal Society furthered the development of a rationalistic point of view, which relied upon reason instead of upon revelation in the consideration of man's relation to God and the universe.

Natural religion absorbed something from the theological movements of **Arianism**, which rejects the doctrine of **Trinity**, and Arminianism, which opposes Calvinistic predestination and emphasizes free will and moral responsibility. However, the fact that there were groups of theological Deists in the Restoration-eighteenth century as well as philosophical ones makes it difficult to give any accurate summary of the tenets of Deism, but they shared the following views:

1. The Bible is not the inspired word of God; only the parts reflecting natural religion are good, not the additions made by superstitious and designing priests.
2. The deity of Christ, the doctrine of Trinity, and the theory of atonement of sins must be rejected because they are nothing but the product of superstition and the invention of priests.
3. God is the creator and governor of the universe; He is perfect and He works through unchangeable laws. Therefore, miracles are to be rejected as impossible.
4. Human beings are free agents who act as they themselves choose and are responsible for their

choice. God knows but does not control man's thoughts.

5. Man is a rational creature and he is capable of understanding the laws of universe. Man can become perfect through the process of education. Man may come to know God through the study of nature, which has a perfect design and is an expression of God.

6. Practical religion for the individual consists in achieving virtue through the rational guidance of conduct.

7. Reason and revelation are not two different things; they are two different methods of discovering the same body of truth.

8. The origin and truth of religion may be scientifically investigated. The origin of true religion is conscience; organized religions are degenerated forms of natural religion.

9. The Book of Nature is the only valid revelation. It is man's duty to cooperate with God and Nature, and cultivate wisdom, virtue and benevolence.

In spite of so much talk about Rationalism, the term 'Age of Reason', which includes the Restoration period and the Augustan period (the first half of the 18th century), is not satisfactory. It is true that Hobbes and Locke elevated reason in human affairs, but reason was not the dominant characteristic of the literature of the whole age. It is more sensible to call it the period of good sense, restraint, and reasonableness.

The Rise of Neo-Classicism

The Restoration period resumed some of the literary traditions of the period before the civil war, leaning heavily on Ben Jonson. The term Neo-Classicism is applied to the Classicism which dominated the Restoration-18th-century literature. It draws its name from the fact that it found in classical literature and in contemporary French Neo-Classic writings models for its literary expressions and a group of attitudes toward life and art. The forces that went into Restoration literature were exemplified by Ben Jonson to whom Dryden and others looked back as the greatest English authority and the source of imitation in art.

Neo-Classical writers condemned the eccentricity and extravagance that they found in the late Renaissance literature, but it does not mean that they are more classical than the Renaissance writers, because any literary movement reacts to that of the preceding age. However, we cannot say that the Restoration period accomplished a complete literary revolution. To have a program or a poetic theory is one thing and to carry it out is another. Even Dryden's art is distinctly baroque. Of course, the tide of taste was in the Classical direction, but it does not mean that Neo-Classical writers accomplished what they were after.

Neo-Classicism was, at least in part, a reaction against the unclassical literary qualities found in Metaphysical poetry and the dying fires of the Renaissance Classicism. A view of man as a limited, dualistic and imperfect creature was imposed on the Renaissance view of man's boundless potentiality. It emphasizes reverence for order, delight in reason, and distrust for invention, innovation and imagination. Upon the enthusiasm of religious mysticism was imposed the restrained good sense of Deism. From Horace, Virgil and other Classical writers and from the French critics came the artistic ideals of order, logic, restrained emotion, correctness, good taste, and decorum or propriety.

Neo-Classical writers chose human nature as their subject matter. Their belief that literature should be judged in terms of its service to man resulted in literary expressions that aimed to delight, instruct, and correct man. A polite, urbane, witty, and intellectual art was developed in which intellectual power or wit was considered more important than the play of feeling.

The Neo-Classical poet was close to his public and claimed to be a part of it. He was a gentleman who found his audience in the select circle of ladies and gentlemen. He wrote about religion, politics, war, scientific progress, and whatever seemed interesting to the society in which he lived, trying to make poetry one of the amusements of life by recapturing the attitude and social manner of the drawing rooms and coffee-houses where such poems were judged.

Neo-Classical poetry favors clarity, simplicity, restraint, regularity, good sense, and easy, natural wit, which, unlike Metaphysical wit, surprises rather than shocks. Dryden and his contemporaries

were aware of the analogy between their age and the Roman Augustan age, when stability and peace dominated the country after the civil war that followed the assassination of Julius Caesar. They imitated Virgil, Horace, and Ovid, the chief writers of the Augustan Rome, who addressed their polished, disciplined, and carefully ordered poems to their select audience.

It is easy for any student of literature to become conscious of the sharply defined differences between the temper and styles of the writers of Dryden's age and those of the Renaissance poets. The desire for simplicity, clarity, and lucidity led Restoration poets to a more deliberate art with great emphasis on polish. They excel all their predecessors in polish as much as the writers of the Augustan Rome excel theirs in the same quality. But such qualities are not enough to make great poetry: they give added significance to the *Iliad* and *Oedipus*, but Restoration- 18th-century poets did not produce such works. Greek Classicism is more imaginative than Roman Classicism. Greek poets emphasized genius; Romans, art. Restoration poets imitated Romans, not Greeks. Modern poetry is suggestive and allusive, not quite simple and clear. Roman Classical poetry conveys nothing but what it says; and what it says, is said completely. It is always vigorous and direct, often pointed and aphoristic, but rarely suggestive, obscure or given to half-statement. As an instrument of expression, it is sharp, polished, and shining.

In the treatment of thought and feeling, the Classical writers wanted clarity; they wanted the ideas that the mass of men would readily apprehend and assent to; they wanted not hints or half-spoken suggestions, but complete statement. These are the qualities of prose, but what Neo-Classical writers did for prose did more exactly and less happily for verse. This kind of poetry appeals, with confidence, to the balanced judgment of those who distrust emotion. The appeal to intellect rather than to emotions led to the production of satire and fondness for wit.

Neo-Classical poetry exalts clarity and avoids the obscure and the mysterious. Its poetic diction and imagery tend to become conventional with details subordinated to design. Although blank verse and Spenserian stanza are sometimes used, heroic couplet is the favorite form of verse, a form that was

rarely used by the ancient Classics. In fact, so many characteristics of Restoration literature suggest strong French influences. Writers of the age of Dryden were reassured in their adherence to the Classical tradition of Ben Jonson by the contemporary taste of Paris that under Louis XIV established itself as the new capital of European civilization. English Neo-Classicism, in spite of being influenced by the French Neo-Classicism, was not a foreign importation. Dryden repeatedly says that the English verse owes its new sweetness and perfection to Waller, Cowley, and Denham, who were the disciples of Ben Jonson. These writers' skillful use of heroic couplet anticipates the poetic patterns of Dryden and Pope.

The Neo-Classical school in England, as in France, was a gradual development. It is a reflection in literature of the continued refinement in all aspects of life that characterized the 17th-century European civilization. In the epilogue to *The Conquest of Granada*, Dryden speaks of arriving at stability after a period of lawlessness, harshness, and barbarity. Dryden's age condemned the careless use of language and the metrical irregularities of Donne and his followers; tried to make a standard that could supplant the Jacobean dramatists' blank verse, which had become too loose for dignified utterance; put an end to the use of obscure Metaphysical conceits and Elizabethan and Jacobean vulgar terms; and demanded a standard of vocabulary for poets who wished to write for public taste and propriety.

Chapter 2

Satire: Its Origin and Development

Dr. Samuel Johnson, the first great English lexicographer, who was also a satirist and lived in the Neo-Classical age of satire, defines satire as “a poem in which wickedness or folly is censured.” Other definitions are rarely more satisfactory. No strict definition can encompass the complexity of satire that signifies a kind of literature as well as a mocking spirit or tone that not only manifests itself in many literary genres but also enters into almost any kind of human communication. Wherever wit is employed to expose something foolish or vicious, there satire exists, whether it be in song or sermon, on the television or the movies, in painting or political debate. In this sense, satire is everywhere, but in the vocabulary of satirists, there is a difference between the word ‘satiric’ and the word ‘satire’. There may be some satiric points in a poem that is not intended to be a satire.

Comedy evokes laughter as an end in itself, while satire intends to deride and, it uses laughter as a weapon. Still, we cannot say that all satires evoke laughter.

Satire is often considered as a corrective means of human vice and folly. Speaking of himself, Swift says:

Yet malice never was his aim;
He lashed the vice, but spared the name
His satire points at no defect,
But what all mortals may correct.

In spite of the claims of satirists, theory is not always compatible with practice. Very often, we see satire

employed against opponents or evoked by malice and hostility. However, it is generally accepted that satire has its roots in the Latin 'indignatio' (indignation), meaning righteous anger.

Satire is the only literary form that flourished in Rome, and it was the Romans that gave it its modern sense and purpose. Quintilian, the Roman rhetorician, had certainly read the Greek dramatist Aristophanes and was familiar with a number of Greek forms that one may call satiric, but he declares, "Satire is wholly ours." The Greeks had no specific name for satire. By **satura**, which means 'medley', 'miscellany', or 'a dish filled with mixed fruit' Quintilian means to specify that kind of poem invented by Lucilius (150-102 B.C.), written in hexameter on certain appropriate themes.

Elizabethan satirists, who were anxious to follow Classical models, were misled by a false etymology. They believed that the word 'satire' was derived from the Greek **satyr play** (satyr plays were rude and obscene), and thus concluded that satire should be harsh, coarse, and rough. The false etymology was exposed in the Restoration period but the old tradition did not disappear.

In ancient Rome, two kinds of satire were written: prose satire and verse satire. English satire was mainly influenced by Latin verse satirists. Satirists writing in prose with short interludes of verse had little or no influence on English satire. They are called **Menippean** satirists, who followed the Greek or rather Syrian Cynic philosopher Menippus of Gadara who flourished in the third century B.C. Menippus wrote satire to make fun of his philosophical opponents. Varro, Cicero's friend, brought Menippean satire into Latin, but his works are lost.

It is the Roman satiric poets and verse satires that are important for our purpose because they were the true sources of imitation for English satirists. The inventor of verse satire was **Lucilius** whose works are lost. He was followed by **Horace** (65-68 B.C.) who began with rather sour social criticism and gradually mellowed into philosophical and aesthetic discursiveness. He was followed by **Persius** (A.D. 34-61), who was a passionate admirer of Stoicism and wrote remarkable realistic satires. The greatest and widely imitated Roman satirist is **Juvenal** (A.D. 55-130) who produced the most bitter and eloquent social satires ever written. His best known and repeatedly imitated works are *Satire 3*, on the horrors of megapolitan life;

Satire 6, a relentless attack on women; and *Satire 10*, a somber but noble meditation on the vanity of human hopes.

Satire is fundamentally of two types practiced by Horace and Juvenal, the two distinguished Roman satirists: Horatian satire is gentle, urbane, and smiling; it aims to correct human vices and folly by gentle and broadly sympathetic laughter. Juvenalian satire is bitter and angry; it points with moral indignation to the corruption and vices of men and situations.

Horace and Juvenal, the two great Roman poets, who set the lineaments of the genre known as formal verse satire, influenced all subsequent literary satirists and gave laws to the genre that they established. In his first three satires, Horace discusses the tone appropriate to the satirist who, out of moral concerns, attacks the vice and folly he sees around him.

As opposed to the harshness of Lucilius, Horace favors mild mockery and playful wit as the means most effective to his ends. He portrays examples of folly, but he does not like to give pain because he is not motivated by malice. The character of the satirist, as projected by Horace, is that of an urbane man of the world, concerned about folly but moved to laughter rather than rage.

Juvenal, over a century later, has a different view of the satirist's role. The character of the satirist as projected by Juvenal is that of the upright man of the world who looks with horror on the corruptions of his time while his heart is consumed with anger and frustration. He writes satire because tragedy and epic are not relevant to his age in which viciousness and corruption have so dominated Roman life that it is difficult for an honest man not to write satire. His satire goes beyond the limits established by his predecessors; it has taken to itself the lofty tone of tragedy.

Juvenal's innovation has confused literary critics. What is satire if the two supreme masters of satire differ so completely? The formulation of John Dryden has been widely accepted. Dryden says that Roman satire has two kinds; comical satire and tragical satire. The Horatian satire merges into comedy; Juvenalian satire merges into tragedy. Although the great engine of both satire and comedy is irony, in satire, irony is militant.

Dryden, Boileau, and Pope catch the Horatian tone, although satire's wit can also be somber, deeply probing, and prophetic as in Juvenal and Samuel Johnson. Satire can be found in all literary forms that try to convey moral instruction by means of laughter, ridicule, and mockery. It adapts any mode, prose or verse, which seems congenial. Its targets range from one of Pope's dunces to the entire race of man as in Samuel Johnson, from Erasmus's attack on corruptions in the church to Swift's attack on all civilized institutions in *Gulliver's Travels*.

The satiric spirit has combined reality with those forms of prose fiction that deal with ugly realities of the world. Since the publication of More's *Utopia* in 1516 satire has become an important ingredient of the Utopian "fiction because More draws heavily on Horace, Juvenal, and Lucian. The prose satire of More and Swift becomes a means of exposing human vices and folly. Swift employs many techniques that more has used to expose human vices and folly.

One of the main effects of the rediscovery of Classical literature in the Restoration period was that writers learnt much more about the precise character of the various literary types, and about the method appropriate to each. They came to realize that the epigrams of Martial (A.D. 40-120), which are akin to satire and in particular to Juvenal's satire, can exceed the damage a satirist can do with a loud and long denunciation. Therefore, the influence of Martial, either directly or through Juvenal, should not be ignored. Our special interest lies in the influence exerted on Neo-Classical satirists by their Roman predecessors.

One has to remember that the effect of verse satire was primary. There was not enough Classical prose satire known to tempt Neo-Classical satirists to emulate it. Therefore, even the Neo-Classical prose satires are mainly influenced by Roman verse satire. The Neo-Classical verse satire shows, by its form or matter, or both form and matter, the influence of the Roman verse satirists.

Renaissance writers knew little about Roman satire. Greco-Roman drama, elegy, ode, and pastoral poetry were studied and understood fairly early because the first appearance of these literary types closely followed the publication of the first edition of each Classical model. But satire was not fully

understood until Isaac Casaubon (1559-1614), the French Classical scholar, published in 1605 an elucidation of satire's history and meaning, attached to his edition of Persius.

Verse satire in the Roman style reached England rather late because the models were little known. No Renaissance satire is truly Horatian or Juvenalian. Dryden wrote the satires that place him high among the world's best. He produced the best English version of Juvenal (1693) with an instructive preface based mainly on Casaubon's essay. In spite of his sound knowledge of Classical satire, he is a baroque satirist because he adapts the traditional modes and forms of expression to the uses of a self-conscious modernism. In fact, the relation between baroque satirists and Roman satirists was so close that they not only imitated and adapted but also often translated their models. However, Dryden's satiric poems were more quickly produced than the usual baroque satire; they deal with exceptional subjects: and they are more original than those of Boileau and Pope are.

Dryden's satires are more similar to mock-heroic poems than to Classical satire. *Absalom and Achitophel* and *Mac Flecknoe* are something new because they are mock epics with identifiable characters. Mock-heroic episodes can be found in Roman satire but they are very short. There is no mock epic on this scale in Classical literature, dealing with political criminals like Achitophel and Absalom or dunces like Mac Flecknoe.

Classical satires, particularly the poems of Juvenal, contain a number of short character-sketches, but none so long, full, independent, and identifiable as those in Dryden's satires. He continues for 80 lines giving the character-sketch of Achitophel followed by Achitophel's long speech addressed to Absalom. Such characters are clearly identifiable. Everybody knows that Achitophel stands for the Earl of Shaftesbury. Identifiable characters very often make us question the satirist's intention. It is true that exaggeration is an integral part of satire and the satirist has to magnify the victim's vices and make him stand for some human vice or folly. But no human being is a god or a devil. Dryden identifies Shaftesbury with Milton's Satan while even the contemporaries of Dryden knew that Shaftesbury had his own virtues, and the Glorious Revolution achieved what Shaftesbury was seeking.

Alexander Pope's *The Rape of the Lock* is the greatest mock-heroic satire in English. In spite of all its beauty, no Classical poet has produced such a mock epic or something similar to Pope's *Dunciad*. Perhaps the greatness of Dryden's and Pope's satires depends on their departure from Classical satire and looking more English than Roman, but their approach and subject matter belong to their own time and place and, thus, they stop being so universal as the Classical satirists.

Samuel Johnson's satires are more Classical than those of Dryden and Pope. In his two fine imitations of Juvenal, he avoids giving character-sketches and identifiable characters; he attacks vices, not human beings. Johnson's *London*, adapted from Juvenal's megapolitan *Satire*, and *The Vanity of Human Wishes*, adapted from Juvenal's *Satire 10*, are the best examples of Juvenalian satire in English.

Boileau, Dryden, and Pope are baroque satirists. The differences between their satires and those of the Roman satirists are as considerable as the differences between the baroque heroic tragedy and the Greco-Roman tragedy. The differences appear in several aspects of their satires including meter and subject matter.

All Roman verse satirists write in free-running hexameter, which has a range unequalled by that of any other meter except perhaps the English blank verse at its fullest development. Roman satirists can make hexameter do almost everything, from comical light conversation to sustained and lofty declamation. But the verse satirists of the baroque age write in end-stopped heroic couplet, a meter capable of great delicacy and wit, but quite unable to attain a wide range of emotion and variety of effects. Compared with their Classical models, the baroque satirists are limited in their choice of medium.

One great weakness of heroic couplet is that it makes its users overindulge in certain arrangements of thought. It is an art of antithesis. Its logical pattern is a pair of balances. The statement made in the first line is exactly balanced by the statement made in the second line. The two lines are linked and the second line is driven home by the rhyme. Within each line, there is a caesura, which more or less divides the single line into halves, into precise halves in the French alexandrine. There is an antithesis in each couplet and an antithesis between the ideas expressed in the halves of each single line. Thus, satire

becomes the art of finding antithetical contrasts. As long as verse is subject to such strict and monotonous control, it cannot reproduce the full variety, energy, and flexibility of human thought and emotion.

Most baroque verse satirists are narrow in style and limited in subject matter. They shrink from strong themes and miss opportunities. As Pope says of Addison, they are “willing to wound, and yet afraid to strike.” They use a constricted metrical scheme, a narrow range of poetic and emotional effects, and very often a tame and abstract vocabulary to deal with a relatively small range of material. Such limitations are not the direct result of their imitation of the Classical satirists; Roman satire is, in fact, much bolder and richer.

Chapter 3

Minor Poets of the Restoration Period

Restoration-18th-century is the great age of satire, and in spite of Dryden's justification of satire as a sort of 'epical, heroic verse,' satire is a different literary type. Restoration period considered epic and tragedy as the greatest literary types. The period produced tragedy but failed to produce a notable epic and found its natural talent in satire. After Milton, the heroic age was actually dead. It is true that Milton published his epics and tragedy in the Restoration period, but he had planned and partly written them. Besides, he had no contact with the Restoration society and continued the Renaissance tradition.

Milton preserves the richness of the humanist intellect, while Dryden belongs to the realistic, critical, and skeptical tradition; he worked in satire and didactic poetry, and the lesser Restoration poets in general followed Dryden, although they are now overshadowed by Dryden's greatness. Some of these poets may be classed as Caroline or Metaphysical poets who lived into the restoration period.

Dryden repeatedly asserted that the new sweetness and perfection of English verse had been the discovery of Denham, Cowley, and Waller, who considered themselves as the disciples of Ben Jonson. They were not satirists; it was their styles that influenced Dryden and other Neo-Classic poets. **Sir John Denham** (1615-1669) was a Royalist whose fortune rose and fell with the king's. His famous long poem *Cooper's Hill* appeared in 1642, a poem that is popular for its landscape description. Dryden praises the poem "for the majesty of the style" which "is, and ever will be, the exact standard of good writing." Samuel Johnson confers on him "the rank and dignity of an original author." His skillful use of the heroic couplet anticipates the poetic patterns of Dryden and Pope.

In poetic style, **Abraham Cowley** (1618-1667), whose Pindaric odes influenced Dryden, belongs rather to the Metaphysical poets of the earlier generation than to the Restoration. He grew up with Royalist sentiments, and during the Civil War, he served as secretary to the exiled queen in France, sharing her poverty. After the Restoration, he retired to a quiet life in the country.

Edmund Waller (1606-1687), a Royalist, was praised in the Neo-Classical period as “the most celebrated lyric poet that England ever produced.” He was implicated in a Royalist plot in 1643, captured and tried, but escaped with a sentence of exile. He made peace with Cromwell, upon whose death he published a poem praising him, but with a witty rejoinder, he reconciled himself with Charles II, who told Waller that the poetic address of welcome to the king was inferior to the verses on Cromwell. Waller answered with a bow: “Sir, we poets never succeed so well in writing truth as fiction.” Waller returned to Parliament, lived in the Restoration society as an honored and respected old man, and enjoyed the reputation of having been one of the first refiners of English verse. Such lyrics as “Go, lovely rose” and “On a Girdle” express a charming courtliness in a perfect gem-like art.

Dryden had been preceded as a verse satirist by **Samuel Butler** (1612-1680), who is a quite different poet. Butler’s *Hudibras*, a burlesque romance, is a great satire that is much different from those of Dryden. The court of Charles II considered it as an excellent attack on Puritans, but it was more complex and more interesting than that; it is an attack by a mild rationalist and skeptic directed against passion and prejudice in social, religious, and political arguments. He talks about a society in which people proclaim with passion, violence, intolerance, and conviction, their doctrine as the only true one.

Hudibras consists of three parts, each containing three cantos and the whole is written in octosyllabic couplets. Hudibras, the mock-hero, is a Presbyterian colonel and knight. Ralpho, an Independent in religion, is Hudibras’s squire. Hudibras stands for Sir Samuel Luke, a zealous Puritan and colonel in Cromwell’s army.

The book starts with Hudibras, a Presbyterian, who rides a worn-out horse and bears rusty arms. He and his squire Ralpho never cease from pedantic religious squabbling. They attack a crowd, preparing for bear baiting, a sport condemned by Puritans, and put their leaders in the stocks, but they release their

leader and put Hudibras and Ralpho in the stocks. Hudibras becomes enamored with the desirable real estate of a widow and vows to gain her hand.

In Part II, we have the woeful misadventures of Hudibras in trying to win the widow. He fails to regain a widow's favor and he is cheated by an astrologer. In Part III, he visits the widow without gaining favor, and he is not only beaten by the astrologer's friend in fiendish disguise but also he is forced to confess his many sins. His adventures in trying to win the widow are fruitless. The last two cantos are concerned with the activities of Republicans just before the Restoration.

Hudibras and Ralpho resemble Cervantes' Don Quixote and Sancho Panza, but Butler's satirical intentions and the arguments over theology and church government are no longer interesting. His scope is much vaster than ridiculing the Puritans; he mocks the pedantries of the schools, the absurdity of astrology, and the new science. He draws upon his vast scope of reading for the themes that might help his burlesque. He ridicules every kind of extravagance and folly in contemporary thought and society. Most religious sects of the seventeenth century are mocked.

In its mock-heroic form, *Hudibras* is a satire on the pretentiousness of epic and romance and on all the extravagances of passion and diction with which poets have treated human situations.

Hudibras has its own defects. It is episodic and lacks structure. Its language and texture are not artistic. Butler goes on for forty lines, describing Hudibras's beard. There are many such excessively detailed descriptions, but he has a remarkable gift for portraiture. He is read for his brilliant satirical portraits and for the wit and humor of mock-heroic action.

Butler may not be praised as a man of genius or a great artist, but his intellectual quality is admirably demonstrated in all his works. In him a complete skeptic is combined with a complete conservative. Both *the Elephant in the Moon* and the *Satire on the Royal Society* show Butler's unsympathetic attitude towards the new science. He hates silly new mechanical ways of doing things in an age obsessed with the need for progress. He has nothing but contempt for the so-called intellectual self-sufficiency. He demands common sense, reason, and the recognition of

human limitations.

Butler had no worthy disciple. Formal satire, as distinguished from travesty or burlesque, swept over Samuel Butler. The work, of **John Oldham** (1653-1683) belongs to the formal tradition. His poetic life did not last very long for he died of smallpox when he was thirty years old. The excitement over the Popish Plot during those few years led him to political satire. *A Satire Upon a Woman* (1678), *A Satire Against Virtue* (1679), and *Four Satires Upon the Jesuits* (1681) were written in the aftermath of the discovery of the Popish Plot by Titus Oates. The manner is confident; the matter, aggressive in the extreme. He “was interested in the roughness of effect and the stylistic excesses of his age.

In his *Satires upon the Jesuits*, Oldham avoids mock-heroic narrative and uses a dramatic monologue that gives high heroic eloquence. His true medium is the closed heroic couplet, which he uses with an abruptness and ruggedness that are individual and sincere but not always pleasantly smooth. ‘Dryden’s touching lines *To the Memory of Mr. Oldham* are the best praise of Oldham and his most enduring monument.

Butler and Oldham were almost professional poets patronized by the court. The chief court poets, who were the last of the Cavalier breed, were Rochester, Sedley, Dorset, Charles Cotton, and a few others. The most notable and the most notorious of all these was **John Wilmot, Earl of Rochester** (1647-1680), a man of peculiar personality. He was the patron of several poets, on most of whom he turned maliciously after some friendly gestures. He was a skeptic, a materialist, and a selfish pleasure-loving sensationalist whose self-love made him embrace the dangerous doctrines of Hobbes. His sensual appetites were so strong that he died of ruined health at the age of thirty-three, and became a black warning to all youthful lords.

Rochester was a vigorous satirist in the fields of philosophy, literature, manners, and politics. He was an intellectual but not a great thinker. The *Satire Against Mankind* attacks both man and man’s reasoning powers. His anti-rationalist remarks and his skepticism come from Montaigne. His satire called *Upon Nothing* seems to be his strongest effort because of its ingenious and brilliant

playfulness and cynicism. The poem's clever wit is at the expense of Stoic metaphysics. The Stoics held that all creation was derived from an original universal Something. Rochester ironically asserts the precedence of Nothing.

Allusion to Horace's 10th Satire of the First Book is Rochester's most important satire. It is a hasty and unpolished piece, which is a personal satire rather than literary criticism. It is a battle waged against many poets including Dryden. His political satires are remarkable for their blunt and .obscene attacks on Charles II and his mistresses and advisors. It was for such reasons that he was banished many times from the court but pardoned soon after. Perhaps Charles compared himself and Rochester to Lear and the bitter fool.

Rochester was also a notable writer of amorous songs that benefit also from his gift of phrasing. While in his satires phrasing is heightened by fiery, spontaneous scorn, in the songs there is no parallel poetic or sexual fury behind the phrases. His songs show all the skill, grace, and the artificiality of the Cavalier poets. Had he lived, his mastery of the heroic couplet and his searching intellectuality might have made him one of the great English poets.

Sir Charles Sedley (1639-1701) was admired by Rochester as a fellow-rake and poet. Of course, Rochester usurped Sedley's position as the most disreputable man in London. He is the author of three plays and some satirical poems, but now he is remembered for his love songs. Some of his love lyrics are pleading, witty solicitations, reminiscent of Elizabethan lyrics. His other love lyrics are playful, almost satiric, songs. However, Sedley's songs establish him as one of the best gay lyric poets of the Restoration period.

Charles Sackville, Earl of Dorset (1638-1706), was a friend and patron of poets such as Dryden. He tends to be caustic rather than playful in his songs and satires. Rochester describes him as a pointed satirist, "the best Good Man with the worst-natur'd Muse." He wrote relatively few satirical poems, but several are tinged with satire. He is now remembered for 'Song Written at Sea' (1664), a rollicking piece of light verse.

Charles Cotton (1630-1687) achieved reputation as a writer of Cavalier lyrics. He was a disciple of Herrick and Carew. In his lifetime his fame was based on his burlesques and his excellent translation of Montaigne's *Essays*. His nature lyrics, which were first published in 1689 as *Poems on Several Occasions*, were admired by Wordsworth, Coleridge, and Lamb. In *The Retirement*, Cotton escapes from the town and relaxes in his native environment, praising the silver river Dove. Wordsworth admires the simplicity and profusion of *The Retirement* and *The Ode to Winter*. Cotton's delicately simple artistry in lyric poetry has been much admired. He is much interested in describing storms, especially at sea. His love poems are natural and genuine, and the details of his descriptive poems are valued most.

John Sheffield, Earl of Mulgrave (1648-1721), experienced a stormy political life. His prose *Essay on Satire* (1680) was mistakenly ascribed to Dryden, who was attacked in Covent Garden and severely beaten by Rochester's bullies. His *Essay upon Poetry* (1682), written in heroic couplets, anticipates Pope's *Essay on Criticism*. He also wrote a number of love lyrics and several prose pieces. He reworked Shakespeare's *Julius Caesar* into two plays with additional love interest. Sheffield was a generous patron to Dryden and he financed Dryden's monument in Westminster Abbey.

Wentworth Dillon, Earl of Roscommon (1633-1685) is famed as the first critic to praise *Paradise Lost* and recognize the greatness of John Milton. In 1680, he translated Horace's *Ars Poetica* into blank verse. In his *Essay on Translated Verse*, in heroic couplets, Dillon formulated the concept of 'poetic diction'. He was interested in founding a British Academy to 'refine and fix the standard of our language'.

The Cavalier tradition was revived in England at the Restoration, and court wits, Dryden and Butler represented various kinds of Anti-Puritan feeling, but it does not mean that the Puritan tradition was dead or weakened. The Indian summer of the Cavaliers did not last long, and the Puritan ethos flourished in the prose pieces of the Puritans, like John Bunyan, who cultivated the plain prose style.

Chapter 4

Restoration Drama: Heroic Plays and Tragedies

Restoration theater reflects the limitations of Restoration society. The dramatists aimed to please those people in London who belonged to the fashionable world. The middle class, especially Puritans and those who had Puritan leanings, continued their traditional hostility to the theater, and in the comedies of the time were subjected to ridicule.

After the Restoration, the theater was no longer the popular institution it had been in the Elizabethan age. The theaters of London had been closed officially from the autumn of 1642 until after the Restoration of Charles II. In the summer of 1660, the King issued 'patents' to Sir William Davenant and Thomas Killigrew, which gave them a virtual monopoly in organizing companies of actors and producing plays. Killigrew's company became known as the King's Players, and after 1674, they were housed in the Theater Royal in Drury Lane. The Duke of York (later James II) was the patron of Davenant's company that acted after 1671 in a new theater in Dorset Garden. It was the court influence and courtier management that diminished the appeal of the theater to the middle class.

In 1682, when political excitement reduced the number of playgoers, the two companies were obliged to merge. In 1696, a second company was formed under the leadership of the famous actor Thomas Betterton, who made the theater prosperous by making it appeal to the middle class, with plays of a different taste.

The drama of the Restoration was not an importation from France, and the English fashionable world remained English. English dramatists frequently borrowed characters and incidents from the French drama,

but the fine art and the essential spirit of the great French dramatists never crossed the English Channel.

The romantic comedies of Shakespeare could not please the Restoration society, but the realistic and satirical comedy of Ben Jonson was greatly admired. The dramatists and critics praised Jonson's classical techniques of drama, especially the observance of Aristotle's rule of the three unities of time, place, and action, which were respected by all European dramatists. But in trying to refine Jonson's art, English dramatists lost a great deal of Jonson's rugged and honest common sense.

The Restoration dramatists were less successful in tragedy than in comedy because they confused tragedy with epic and, instead of aiming at purgation by arousing in us pity and fear, they aimed at mingling pity with admiration. The result is the exaggerated and impossible heroics in an essentially unheroic age.

In some of his plays, Davenant makes so much excellent use of scenery and music that he has been called the initiator of English opera as well as of heroic play. Dryden is not only the chief writer of heroic tragedy but also the principal commentator on it. In his essay *Of Heroic Plays*, prefixed to *The Conquest of Granada*, Dryden analyzes and defends heroic drama. He regards Davenant as the father of the type, and recognizes the influence of Ariosto on the heroic poems. He observes that a "heroic play ought to be an imitation, in little, of an heroic poem; and consequently, that Love and Valor ought to be the subject of it." However, many characteristics of heroic drama can be traced back to the decadent of Beaumont and Fletcher, the development of opera in England, the French court romances, and even the Elizabethan tradition. Although the elements of heroic play appear in Davenant's *Siege of Rhodes* (1656), Roger Boyle, the Earl of Orrey, wrote the first full-fledged heroic drama, *The General* (1662). Dryden is, however, the greatest writer of heroic drama, and his *Conquest of Granada* is its best example.

Heroic drama is a type of tragedy or tragi-comedy that developed in the Restoration period. It is characterized by excessive spectacle, violent emotional conflicts in the main characters, extravagant bombastic dialogue, and epic personages as the chief characters. Heroic play usually has its setting in some distant land such as Mexico, Morocco, or India. Its hero rivals Achilles in warlike deeds and

easily surpasses him in love. The beloved is usually a captive princess or the daughter of the hero's greatest enemy. The hero is constantly torn between his passion for the beloved and his honor or duty to his country. If he is able to satisfy the demands of both love and duty, the play ends happily for the hero and heroine and unhappily for the villain and villainess. The heroine is always a paragon of virtue and honor, often torn between her loyalty to her villain-father and her love for the hero. The villain is usually a tyrant and usurper with an unlimited passion for power or else with a base love for some beautiful and virtuous lady. The villainess is a passionate rival of the heroine. The hero's rival in love is sometimes the villain and sometimes the hero's best friend. All are unreal, all speak in hyperbole, all rant and rage. These plays are usually written in heroic couplets, the scenery is elaborate, and the action of the play is grand, often revolving around the conquest of some empire.

In the first two decades of the Restoration period, these qualities were achieved by a group of dramatists of whom many wrote their heroic tragedies in heroic couplets. **Roger Boyle, the Earl of Orrery** (1621-1679), exercised considerable influence as one of the first writers of heroic tragedy. He uses English materials in two historical plays, *Henry V* (1642) and *The Black Prince* (1667), but the pattern is the theme of love versus honor. He uses the popular device of antithetical emotions to tear the souls of his chief characters between the conflicting duties to a beloved and to a friend, or between love and filial piety. In *The General* (1664), the hero is torn between love and honor. The emotional conflicts in *Mustapha* (1665), which is Boyle's most typical play, are very complex. The political and domestic intrigues of an oriental royal family are seen in swiftly shifting situations and heard in lofty, declamatory rhetoric. However, the death of Mustapha is more pathetic than heroic.

John Dryden is the most accomplished tragedian of the age, but to modern readers his plays seem not only old-fashioned but also unreal. In the epilogue to the second part of *The Conquest of Granada*, Dryden says that a playwright must adapt his genius to the demands of his audience. He did not try to be universal, to be appealing to all ages. He later said that among his plays only *All for Love* was written to please himself, and that is the only play that is appreciated today.

Restoration drama is often accused of lacking the essential staff of human experience and being boring. This is true of many Restoration plays, but not all of them. It depends on the play's concept of love. Love may be an idle pastime in some comedies, but in some of Dryden's heroic tragedies love is such a great power that leads the lover into a conflict with earthly and heavenly obligations. Love is the central part of his heroic drama; compared to the world of decay, it is worth fighting for and losing one's life in trying to secure it. But love in Dryden's plays is not consistent. His heroic love very often reflects the sentimental, metaphysical Platonism of the French heroic romances. His heroic lovers are slaves to their emotions and self-centered ambitions.

Dryden's heroic plots portray two kinds of love. One is an irrational disease; the other is Platonic love, ideal, spiritual, and wholly consistent with right reason. In *The Conquest of Granada*, Parts I & II, love is purely sensual; it is bold and blind. Almanzor's love is physical as well as Platonic.

T. S. Eliot believes that *The Conquest of Granada* is the masterpiece of heroic drama. The Moorish stronghold in Spain is being besieged and Boabdelin, the Moorish king of Granada, can hardly control his quarreling subjects. Almanzor tries to unite Granadans against Spaniards, but the scheming Lyndaraxa, who is ambitious to become queen, causes trouble. She promises Abdalla to marry him if he would kill his brother, Boabdelin, whose betrothed Almahide attracts Almanzor and Zulema, Lyndaraxa's brother. When the usurping Abdalla favors Zulema's suit, Almanzor restores Boabdelin. Abdalla flees to the Spanish camp. Boabdelin will not grant his betrothed Almahide to Almanzor, who is dejected and goes to exile.

Abdalla's love for the ambitious villainess, Lyndaraxa, overthrows his rational duty of loyalty to his brother the king, but Almanzor is an excellent example of self-control. He considers his passion for the noble Almahide a kind of slavery. In spite of his excessive love, he acts in accordance with reason. Because of Almahide's betrothal to the king, Almanzor respects her honor and relinquishes his own right to her. His ideal love is contrasted with the demands of Zulema. Almanzor suffers the physical separation from her, and in so doing enjoys a freedom that is denied to Zulema, whose sensual enslavement demands the possession of her person. Thus, Dryden's heroic plays show what men of great spirits would do when they

fall in love.

Almanzor, the hero, is a noble foreigner; he is a natural man, but not a wild man. His freedom of spirit is the only condition of his primitive origin. Human freedom, as realized in the character of Almanzor, is the key to any commentary on the actions of all major characters. The Christian conquest of Granada is considered by the Spanish as the restoration of freedom and true faith.

In Part II of *The Conquest of Granada*, the balance of power has shifted from the king to his subjects. Forced by his subjects to recall the hero from exile, the king begs Almahide to summon Almanzor's aid, and then, he interprets her consent as the evidence of her complicity in a love-plot.

Abdalla refuses to be the slave of fortune and rebels against his brother, King Boabdalin, only to become a king who is the slave of Lyndaraxa. In Abdalla and Zulema, the impulse for honorable action is thwarted by passion. The whole play expresses the idea that liberality is the proper action of only a free man. Almanzor is the symbol of human freedom. His actions are determined by no rule outside his own sense of justice. He has great faith in affection for friendship. His liberality proves his essential nobility, but his rashness in exercising this freedom indicates that he is not a suitable leader, while his moral victories over self are positive acts, which are consistent with moral law and show him a truly self-sufficient man.

The heroic character of the protagonist in *The Conquest of Granada* is defined in moral terms. Like Almanzor, the heroic character of the protagonist of *Aureng-Zebe* (1675), whose name provides the title of the tragedy, is overshadowed by a moral ideal. Like Almanzor, Aureng-Zebe becomes king at the end of the play, not by means of heroic passion or heroic strength, but by virtue of his filial piety.

Set in Mogul India, *Aureng-Zebe* concerns the love of Aureng-Zebe for Indamora, the captive queen. Their love becomes entangled with a struggle for power in the court of Shah Jehan, the Mogul emperor and Aureng-Zebe's father. Both the emperor and Morat, his son by his second wife, pursue Indamora. But Aureng-Zebe remains loyal to his father. The struggle for power leads to the deaths of Aureng-Zebe's mother and Morat. The emperor rewards Aureng-Zebe by abandoning his pursuit of Indamora and offering

him the crown.

Aureng-Zebe's virtues distinguish him early in the play from his three brothers. Dorah, the eldest, "openly does love and hatred show;" Sujah, the second son of the emperor, is merely very courageous; Morat, the youngest, is "too insolent, too much a Brave, / His Courage to his Envy is a Slave." Qualities such as impatience, self-confidence, arrogance, and even liberality, which mark Dryden's earlier heroes as great men, are precisely those, which make Dorah and Morat unsatisfactory as successor to the throne.

The Indian lords have placed their hopes upon the virtues of Aureng-Zebe, who is

By no strong passion sway'd,

Except his Love, more temp'rate is ...

In Council cool, but in Performance bold:

He sums theirs' [his brothers'] Virtues in himself alone

And adds the greatest, of a Loyal Son.

Aureng-Zebe's conflict is entirely internal because he aspires to be an ideal son and an ideal lover. He remains patient when Morat attempts unjustly to rob him of his love, Indamora, and paternal favor. He is encouraged to rise against his father's injustice, but he resists any temptation. Dryden himself disapproves of a "tame hero who never transgresses the bounds of moral virtue," and he gives Aureng-Zebe jealousy to humanize him.

Morat is described as Hobbes's natural man, a savage who can exist only in the natural state of perpetual war. He rationalizes that it is necessary to be great by any means; he cannot control his heroic energy. But in the last act, Indamora converts him to a moral conception of greatness: "All Greatness is in Virtue understood" and "It is only necessary to be good." Morat accepts her view, saying "Now you have given me Virtue for my guide."

Dryden introduces Aureng-Zebe as the true hero of the play by laying emphasis on his internal struggles and his interest in the domestic relations of parents and children. The ideal of heroism in the play is conceived of in terms of the capacity for feeling the tender emotions of love and for sharing the

misfortunes of others. Dryden seems to sentimentalize his older heroic ideal and thus, anticipates the sentimental drama.

In *All for Love, or the World Well Lost*, Dryden imitates the ancients, observes the unities, and intends to emulate 'the divine Shakespeare'. He discards heroic couplet in favor of blank verse, presents all scenes in Alexandria, and treats the story of Antony and Cleopatra in the light of love and honor. The world is well lost for the sake of love.

In the first act, Ventidius, who is the voice of honor and duty, rouses the lovelorn Antony to martial valor, but Cleopatra turns the table in the second act. The rising tension of the following acts climaxes with Antony's sacrifice of everything for the Egyptian beauty. Dryden excludes all characters unessential to the theme of love and honor.

All for Love is a masterpiece and perhaps the greatest English tragedy in the period following the Renaissance. No other play on a Shakespearean theme comes as close to rivalry as Dryden's does. Antony is no bully from the heroic tragedy; he is a convincing man, caught in the tangles of love. He knows that his love is quite unwise, but he cannot escape it. Dryden's Cleopatra has all the loveliness and grandeur of womanhood, but she is not the developing heroine of Shakespeare.

Antony's disregard of honor for the sake of love suggests the bankruptcy of the older heroic ideal. His love is opposed both to the rational law and the honor of Rome, but the Roman honor is not the heroic ideal of the play because to Antony, love and honor are identical, and he describes his ideal of love as a combination of the divine powers of Venus and Mars. He loses the whole world for the sake of love, and he is aware of the decline of his honor as a soldier. He is often referred to as the 'mighty ruins', 'the noble ruin' to show the magnitude of his decline. In Act II he tells Cleopatra, "The world fell mould'ring from my hand each hour." When at the end of the play, he hears the false news of Cleopatra's death, he says, "My torch is out; and the world stands before me, / Like a black desert at the approach of night." Thus, the images of darkness, decay, and barrenness prevail. His empire is meaningless to him without Cleopatra: "My power, my empire, / Were but my merchandise to buy her love." He commits suicide to join her and she also dies

to join him.

In spite of Dryden's greatness, Restoration period is not a great age of tragedy because its playwrights confuse tragedy with epic and aim at mingling pity with admiration. **Thomas Otway** (1652-1685) is one of the Restoration dramatists whose tragedies were then popular. His *Venice Preserved; or, a Plot Discovered* (1682) is an attack directed against Shaftesbury. The story is related to love and honor, while marital and filial love dominate the play.

Priuli, the Venitian senator, resents the elopement of his daughter, Beividera, with Jaffeir who, as a result of being slighted, joins the conspiracy against Venice. Beividera persuades Jaffeir to reveal the plot on the condition that the conspirators will not be slain. When the conspirators are tried and condemned to death, Jaffeir threatens Beividera's life unless she can induce her father to intercede for the condemned men. She fulfills the mission, but too late. Jaffeir commits suicide, and Beividera goes mad and then dies of the broken heart.

Jaffeir is torn between love and honor. Otway's concern is for man's capacity for feeling, especially for self-torture. The most powerful scenes are detailed psychological analyses of emotional entanglement. Beividera is one of the great heroines of the English drama; she is strong in affection, personality, and character.

Nathaniel Lee (1653-1692), who studied at Westminster School and Cambridge, is one of the gifted Restoration writers of tragedy. Addison says, "none could be better tuned for tragedy than Lee, if he had restrained his genius." Madness was Lee's favorite subject. It is ironic that as a result of madness he was confined from 1684 to 1689, and he died supposedly of intoxication.

For Lee's second play, *Sophonisba*, Purcell wrote music for the stage for the first time. His *Oedipus* (1679) is a heroic play with the appearance of classicism. *The Rival Queens; or, The Death of Alexander the Great* (1677) is Lee's most popular tragedy in which Alexander is the subject of contention between his first wife Roxana and his second wife Statira who is stabbed by Roxana. Cassander, one of the conspirators, poisons Alexander, who becomes mad and dies.

Lee's play remained popular on the English stage for two centuries. The men in his tragedies are all martial and manly and women are widely passionate. The madness scenes in his tragedies mark the transition between heroic and neoclassical drama. His characters are mainly historical and classical, and blank verse is his medium. Love-versus-honor is no longer the central theme. Platonic love, which is an inevitable ingredient of heroic tragedy, is usually subordinated to swelling passion, especially in *The Rival Queens*, in which Alexander is intoxicated with Oriental splendor and his own power.

George Villiers, Duke of Buckingham (1628-1687) used to ridicule heroic tragedy and he is ridiculed by Dryden in the character of Zimri in *Absalom and Achitophel*. Buckingham's *Rehearsal* (1672) is one of the greatest mock-heroic dramas in the English language. Its main aim is to ridicule Dryden's plays. A man called Johnson takes his country visitor, Smith, to a stage rehearsal of a new play by Mr. John Beyes (Dryden). The humor arises mainly from the burlesque of the heroic plays of Dryden and partly from the comments of Smith and Johnson. The plot of the play rehearsed is so confused that the actors cannot follow it. Its incidents are plagiarized, and the action lacks motivation. An actor mocks the love-versus-honor conflict in a long formal debate. Finally, everyone walks on Mr. Beyes in disgust. Thus, Buckingham lampoons all the weak aspects of heroic tragedy, and he remains in the history of drama as the writer of a mock-heroic drama rather than a dramatist.

Chapter 5

Restoration Comedy

Diverse elements went to the making of Restoration comedy. Of the two acting companies, Killigrew's company revived seven plays of Ben Jonson, while Davenant's revived some plays of Beaumont and Fletcher, Shakespeare, and lesser Elizabethan playwrights. Critics praised Jonson, Beaumont and Fletcher, and Shakespeare, but the Restoration playgoers did not appreciate Shakespeare's romantic comedies. To Samuel Pepys, *Twelfth Night* is 'a silly play' and *A Midsummer Night's Dream* 'the most insipid ridiculous play'. But the whole age acknowledged the authority of Ben Jonson and admired his realistic and satirical comedy, his dramatic technique, and observance of the unities of time, place, and action. In spite of his 'love of Shakespeare, Dryden considers Jonson as the best guide in the art of drama. Jonson's popular type of low comedy and his method of characterization by means of humor were common throughout the whole period. Shakespeare, who had some influence on Restoration tragedy, had little influence on its comedy because the age did not care for idealistic romanticism in comedy. Thus, Restoration comedy is the continuation of the work of the earlier disciples of Ben Jonson together with the Restoration prejudices against life in the country and against the merchant class in London.

Restoration dramatists and critics agree that the aim of literature is moral instruction that should be achieved through social criticism, and comedy should correct vices and follies, but it is laughter or entertainment, and not moral improvement, that is the true objective of the Restoration comedy. The comedy that the court patronized was highly immoral and cynical because the manners of the court

were highly corrupt. Most Restoration writers of comedy were men of fashion or courtiers who were crudely indecent. Therefore, the element of idealism was replaced by cynicism and the denial or disregard of moral values. But the real source of comic effect concerns manners rather than morals.

The Elizabethan comedy is an imaginative representation of men living; the Restoration comedy is an anatomy of life, a commentary on life; it reflects the social world of the court wits; it is an upper-class drama. The dramatists are conscious of class patterns, and comic implications arise from patterns of social class. Restoration comedy is not so much a representation of life as it is a commentary upon manners. To quote L. C. Knights, Restoration comedy lacks 'the essential stuff of human experience'.

The Restoration comedy is very often identified with the comedy of manners, which is brought to its fullest form by the courtly wits of the Restoration. To the gallants of the court of Charles II, life was a pleasant comedy of which marriage is the main design. The gentleman in the comedy has a host of love affairs and mistresses, but he is neither plagued with love nor resolute in marriage. The lady who is involved in this battle of wits and sex is equally independent. When brought to marriage, she also insists on her dear liberty. The married state is commonly made a subject for laughter.

Restoration comedy has its own techniques. Plots are double or triple and, therefore, the unity of action is not carefully observed. Romantic plots may be in verse, but most of the comedies are in prose, and they are realistic rather than idealistic. Repartee is much valued in these comedies, and very often plot is neglected for the discussion of proper conditions for marital happiness and the nature of wit. In such conversations, Congreve is the supreme artist with a remarkable gift at repartee.

The early years of the period (1660-1676) are marked by the revival of the old plays and the experimentation of the new ones. **John Dryden** himself knew that he was not highly endowed for comedy. He lacks comic humor. His anti-romantic attitude can be found in every one of his comic plots. The Jonsonian 'humor' is frequently encountered in his comedies. More characteristic are 'humors' which depend for their comic effect upon an implicit social standard—in deviating through ignorance, ineptness, or prejudice from the norm of refinement in wit, conversation, or manners.

Dryden began his dramatic career with his *Wild Gallant* (1663), a play of Jonsonian humors and confused intrigue, in which Isabelle's campaign for a husband is the lively driving force. In the best of Dryden's comedies, marriage is conceived of not only as the least troublesome means of satisfying physical appetite but as something attractive in itself. In *Sir Martin Mar-all* (1667) he borrows his material from Moliere without borrowing any sparkle of his wit. *Marriage a la Mode*, *The Tempest* (1667), and *The Spanish Friar* (1680) were designed as comedy, but they follow the pattern of Fletcherian tragi-comedy, which "wants deaths, which is enough to make it no tragedy, yet brings some near it which is enough to make it no comedy." Dryden, who frequently confessed his shortcomings in comedy, found tragi-comedies like *The Rival Ladies* (1664), *Secret Love* (1667), and *Love Triumphant* (1693) more congenial to his temperament.

Many minor playwrights endeavored to provide the Restoration stage with comedies in the contemporary taste. **Sir George Etherege** (1634-1691) resided with the exiled king in France and returned to England to enjoy an unbridled life of a Restoration rake who got himself involved in disreputable street brawls. Pepys disliked Etherege's *The Comical Revenge* (1664), which inaugurated the Restoration comedy of manners and had undeserved success. His *She Wou'd If She Cou'd* (1668) achieved popularity, and Shadwell called it "the best comedy that has been written since the Restoration of the stage." Shadwell's opinion is not in line with his opinion, expressed in his Preface to *The Sullen Lovers*, where he attacks the impudent lechery of current comedies that lack humorous Jonsonian characters. Etherege's characters are rationally defined rather than imaginatively created.

Of Etherege's three comedies the third, *The Man of Mode, or Sir Fopling Flutter* (1676) is the best. It provides constant opportunity for polished repartee and sparkling wit. The plot, which is unified, concerns the rake Dorimant's progress in his amours. The plot of this prose comedy of manners is summarized in his remark (I. i. 200): "Next to the coming to a good understanding with a new Mistress, I love a quarrel with an old one." Modern readers find Dorimant cruel to Mrs. Loveit and Bellinda, but the scene's involving these ladies were comic to a generation that had no sympathy for ladies who took

their light loves seriously.

Richard Steele; in an essay in *The Spectator*, singled out *The Man of Mode* as the symbol of the entire genre because this prose comedy draws largely on the actual Restoration life. It is the clearest expression of the Restoration comic spirit, which is unhinged by any moral sentiment and directs laughter not at moral faults but at aberrations of taste. The central character, Dorimant, casts off Mrs. Loveit; he is currently conducting an affair with Bellinda and is much interested in Harriet who is intended for the young Bellair, who is drawn to Emilia. Tricks and dissimulation surround all characters. Finally, Emilia and Bellair, Harriet and Dorimant are to be wed.

Dorimant, who provided the model for many subsequent stage gallants, is Etherege's example of the contemporary hero, a man who, with his easy manner and sparkling wit, refuses 'to betray a lady' after he has ruined her. He is successful in his numerous immoral conquests. He indulges in sexual triumphs purely for vanity, while Harriet guides him into expressing his natural drives through marriage. It is unfortunate that Dorimant and his friend Medley, 'genteel rakes of wit', were admired by the Restoration dramatists and audience. Sir Fopling Flutter, who was the model for numerous imitations, is the prototype of the empty-headed fool of fashion that cares for clothes and outward show. With his Puritan tendencies, he is a ridiculous pretender to the manners of a gentleman, as opposed to men of good sense. These so-called gentlemen escape the tragic view of life by avoiding sympathy and feeling; they regard the entire world, including sex, with a cool detachment and a dry intellectualism and, therefore, ridicule the emotional raging of a discarded mistress. They remind us of Horace Walpole's remark that life is a tragedy to the man who feels and a comedy to the man who thinks.

William Wycherley (1640-1716) resided in France in his youth and became a Roman Catholic convert. His reputation enabled him to marry the widow of the Earl of Drogheda in 1680, but at her death, attendant lawsuits resulted in his imprisonment. James II rescued him from prison and pensioned him. His power and spirit declined after the Glorious Revolution.

Wycherley wrote, early in his life, four plays which resemble those of Etherege, but he learned little

from Etherege's cynical avoidance of genuine emotion or from his light criticism of the polite society. Etherege transcribes life, but he lacks philosophy. To him, life is a frivolous game, and to become emotionally involved in it seems slightly vulgar. But Wycherley has a graver view of life and offers a greater commentary on life.

Wycherley's first play, *Love in a Wood* (1671), like Etherege's *Comical Revenge*, presents a series of love intrigues, but Wycherley focuses more on citizens and less on the life of fashion. Alderman Gripe, a hypocritical Puritan who is a perfectly Jonsonian comic figure, ultimately marries a wench. Lady Flippant, his sister, is the amorous widow whose eager quest for a husband became the prototype of many later spinsters. Dapperwit, who is a fop of wit, marries Gripe's daughter but, being a fool, he misses getting her fortune. Ranger temporarily forsakes his mistress Lydia to complicate the course of true love for the romantic and partly sentimental couple, Valentine and Christiana, who do not come from the same realistic world as do the other characters.

The Gentleman Dancing-Master (1672) is Wycherley's simplest play. It concentrates on a single intrigue, that of Hippolita, who avoids marrying a Frenchified and finds herself a true gentleman who acts as her dancing-master and finally becomes her husband. The comedy arises from the fact that the fop, though English, burlesques French manners by being more French than the French.

Wycherley's *The Country Wife* (1675) is a comedy of manners that involves two intrigues and can be called his best. In the first intrigue, Horner has recently returned from France to practice cuckolding. He wins the favor of Margery, The Country Wife, who has married the sensualist Pinchwife who, by temperament and experience, is jealous and suspicious. Pinchwife has come to London to marry his sister Alithea to the fop Sparkish. The intrigue concerns the gulling of Sparkish. Broad indecency dominates the play, which focuses on the whimsical gulling of cuckolds, especially the distasteful Pinchwife. Margery's country frankness continually punctures the polite diplomacy of London social pretense. She is not innocent at all; her purity of the ignorant passes for innocence. She does not succumb simply because she has not had any opportunity. In the society depicted by Wycherley, love

has vanished.

The Plain Dealer (1674), Wycherley's adaptation of Shakespeare's *Twelfth Night*, delighted James II who saved the fortunes of the imprisoned playwright. In its own day, *The Plain Dealer* was thought Wycherley's finest achievement. Manly, *The Plain Dealer*, has been loved and wronged by his mistress Olivia and his closest friend, Vernish. He is aided throughout his misfortunes by the virtuous and lovely Fidelity, who has long followed him, disguised as a man. Manly rivals the railing malcontents of the Elizabethan drama. He also anticipates some of the traits of the eighteenth-century good man or benevolist, a man who is easily gulled and is honest in the extreme, but his tone is misanthropic rather than benevolent.

In all his plays, except the second one, Wycherley exposes the absurdities of mere pretenders to wit, and he lashes the hypocrisies of mankind. He depicts a dark picture of the men and women of his age. Unlike Etherege and Congreve, he scorns backbiting, hypocrisy, and falseness, while in *Christina* and *Fidelity*, he presents more virtuous charm than we can find in the other leading comedies of the time.

Wycherley's scenes, unlike those of other Restoration writers of comedy, are not laid in a certain class or limited to the upper class. For a man educated in France, it is strange that he lacks aristocratic tone. He did not limit his respect to the class to which he belonged: he even disliked certain aspects of his own character. In short, he never wrote without both imaginative and intellectual conviction. That is why his pictures of real life are genuine.

After 1677, Etherege and Wycherley wrote no more for the stage, Dryden produced no important comedy, and no single playwright of distinction appeared before 1692. By then **Thomas Shadwell** (1642-1692) had produced eighteen plays. Shadwell is one of the most interesting among those minor dramatists. He is a self-proclaimed disciple of Ben Jonson and believes that he shares Jonson's moral judgement and realism. In the Preface to his first play, *The Sullen Lovers* (1668), Shadwell announces his program: he is against the frivolities of wit or repartee, against the love-and-honor theme, and against the use of either romantic or modishly disreputable lovers; he claims to adhere to the school of

Ben Jonson or the comedy of humors. But to have a program is one thing and to carry it out is another. He at times equals Wycherley in brutality and vulgarity. In his prefaces, prologues, and epilogues, he is concerned with obeying the rules rather than the comic effects. He did not win much critical esteem because the coarse and low material typical of Jonsonian comedy was no longer appreciated by 1680. Dryden's animosity is somehow responsible for Shadwell's lack of success.

Among Shadwell's early works, *The Sullen Lovers* is a successful satire on the Howard family of wits. In *The Virtuoso*, Shadwell has fun with the supposed absurdities of the new science with its strange experiments and its love of theory. In the years following the Popish Plot, Shadwell, as a 'true blue' Whig, won partisan popularity with two political comedies, *The Lancashire Witches* and *The Amorous Bigotte*. Of Shadwell's later plays, *The Squire of Alsatia* (1688) and *Bury Fair* (1689) are the best. Alsatia was a low section of London, and in its environment Shadwell develops a discussion as to the best way of rearing a son. In *Bury Fair*, a comedy of humor, Gertrude, essentially a sensible young woman, determines to reform her lover before marriage, and Wildish gracefully yields to the force of true love and promises reformation. Lady Fantast is gulled into marrying La Roche, a French barber. The curtain falls upon a double wedding.

Toward the end of the Restoration period, we come to the final brilliant outburst of comedies composed, in spite of the rising tide of moral criticism, in the Restoration spirit by Vanbrugh, Congreve, and Farquhar. Jeremy Collier published *A Short View of the Immorality and Profaneness of the English Stage* in 1698. He complains that the popular plays of the period encourage immorality; they promote vice instead of correcting it. Of course, the dramatists were shocked to see their works attacked by Collier.

Sir John Vanbrugh (1664-1726) was the grandson of a French merchant. He studied art in Paris and spent two years in a French prison as an English spy. Drama was subsidiary to his work as an architect. He built the Haymarket Theater and beautiful country mansions. He wrote *The Relapse* (1696) in six weeks as a rejoinder to Colley Cibber's *Love's Last shift*.

In *The Relapse*, Loveless, who is bored with the faithful Amanda, conducts an affair with her cousin, Berinthia. Worthy seeks to seduce Amanda, but the faithful wife maintains her virtue in spite of alluring seduction, and consequently, Loveless is reformed. In the subplot that is more interesting than the main plot Lord Foppington is tricked out of his bride by his brother.

The critic Jeremy Collier, who was a clergyman, bitterly attacked *The Relapse* on moral grounds, but Vanbrugh claimed that the play was a dramatic sermon on the text 'Lead us not into temptation'. In his masterpiece, *The Provok'd Wife* (1697), Lady Brute is tempted by Constant, while her niece, Belinda, captures the fancy of Heartfree. Lady Fanciful, who is angered by Constant's attention to Lady Brute, tries to brew mischief, but she fails. Lady Brute remains faithful to Lo/d Brute, and Belinda marries Heartfree.

The Provok'd Wife, with its well-knit plot, approaches domestic drama, especially in the great scene in which Sir John Brute and Lady Brute reveal their mutual resentments. Sir John Brute, in spite of not being admirable, is one of the most memorable characters in English drama.

William Congreve (1670-1729) is the greatest and the most popular Restoration writer of comedy. He wrote exceedingly brilliant roles in each of his four plays for Mrs. Bracegirdle, one of the loveliest actresses of the age and the object of his affections.

Congreve regarded himself as a reformer of the stage, and he was praised by Dryden, Addison, and Swift. But his reform is concerned with the technique of drama, its wit, structure, and dialogue. He is a formalist, a technician, a man of artistic rather than moral conscience. In defending his plays against Collier, he declares that the aim of his plays is the unmasking of follies.

Congreve's highest excellences are not seen in his plots. His heroes do not love a quarrel with a cast mistress. They are inconstant in love without being aware of it. His first play, *The Old Bachelor* (1693), involves a series of intrigues on different social levels. Heartwell, the bachelor of the title who despises women, falls in love with Silvia and is persuaded to marry her, but he discovers that Silvia is Vainlove's discarded mistress, and Belmour, who persuaded them to marry, is Vainlove's friend. Heartwell is still a

bachelor, and a husband is found for Silvia in the person of Sir Joseph Wittol, a foolish old man deceived into believing he is marrying Araminta. His companion, the bully Captain Bluffe, is similarly deceived into marrying Silvia's maid.

The plot of Congreve's second play, *The Double Dealer* (1693), is much more unified. It focuses on the struggle of Mellefont against the jealous Lady Touchwood and the Iago-like Maskwell to win his charming Cynthia. There are thrilling episodes but no divergent intrigues as in the first play. The darkness of the villainy changes the play into a tragi-comedy and explains its cool reception.

Love for Love (1695) was for a long time the most popular of Congreve's plays. In its comic effect, its plot is the best. Valentine, who is at odds with a critical father, is likely to lose his estate to a sea-going younger brother and miss getting his beloved heiress, Angelica. The intrigue turns largely on the ultimate triumph of the intelligent young couple over a star-crazed uncle and an unnatural father. In the last act, there is a masked marriage that tricks the fop Tattle into wedding the blemished Mrs. Frail instead of the expected Angelica.

The Way of the World (1700) is Congreve's best comedy, although its excellent plot is treated negligently. It is often called a masterpiece and the best Restoration comedy. No other Restoration play sustains throughout such brisk, sparkling dialogues. Mirabell loves Millamant, and in order to marry her, he has to win the consent of her aunt, Lady Wishfort. His best hopes lie in Lady Wishfort's eagerness for a lover of her own, but she is only one of the obstacles. Mirabell disguises his servant Waitwell (already married) as a nobleman, hoping for his marriage to Lady Wishford. Then, on the threat of telling the world how she was duped, Mirabell can blackmail Lady Wishford into giving him Millamant and her property. Mrs. Marwood, whose love Mirabell had not returned, is more threatening.

Millamant cannot be easily won. She lays down difficult conditions on which she would contemplate marriage to Mirabell. Learning of his wife's former relations with Mirabell, Fainall threatens full revelation unless all property is signed over his name. Mirabell produces a deed from Mrs. Fainall, before her marriage, that conveys all her property to Mirabell. When the villainies of Mrs. Marwood and

Fainall are exposed, Lady Wishfort consents to the marriage of her niece, Millamant. Triumphant in law and in the ways of the world, Mirabell marries Millamant.

The Way of the World is a complex play that gradually reveals how far self-interest may go to make money and mar marriages. The way of the world is falsehood and pretense, suggested by unloving marriages, which are based on love of property. But Mirabell and Millamant try to build a true marriage. Congreve realizes the absurdity of romantic marriage in Shakespearean comedy that ignores the realities of the current world. While Millamant has always been chaste, Mirabell has been a rake, although he will be reformed.

Millamant is one of the greatest women of the Restoration drama. She is a wit, a woman of the world, chaste, and determined to remain chaste. She is a virtuous and worldly-wise woman.

Both Millamant and Mirabell must play the game of the deceitful world to achieve their marriage; they require rational terms for a companionable and genteel marriage partnership. In their elegant and polite conversations, they remind us of the complexity and sadness in human relationships.

The fourth act of *The Way of the World* is considered as the finest in the Restoration drama. All the comic themes are drawn together, leading to the climax of the unequalled scene of the marriage suggesting originality and freshness.

Colley Cibber (1671-1757), a great comedian, began acting in 1690. He was quite successful in playing the role of empty-headed fops. Because he was a devoted Whig, he was made poet laureate in 1730. The first four acts of his play, *Love's Last Shift* (1696), are those of a comedy of manners, but the last act makes it a sentimental comedy. The comedy is the story of Amanda who has been separated from her husband, Loveless, for eight years. When her husband returns from abroad, he fails to recognize her. She presents herself to Loveless as a mistress, and the next day, he is a reformed husband, convinced that the real happy life can be found only in the arms of a virtuous wife.

George Farquhar (1678-1707) introduced into Restoration comedy some of the moral and humanitarian spirit of the age of Addison and Steele. He brought back into comedy the human sympathy

with all sorts and conditions of men that the Restoration writers had definitely avoided. His short life was a series of misfortunes, and he died in poverty at the age of twenty-nine. The short career of this highly gifted young dramatist indicates a transitional trend. He was somehow influenced by Collier's protest and wrote a rather different kind of comedy.

Farquhar's first two plays, *Love and a Bottle* (1698) and *The Constant Couple* (1699), established him as a popular playwright, and he produced eight comedies before he died. His reputation rests chiefly on his last two plays, *The Recruiting Officer* (1706) and *The Beaux' Stratagem* (1707), both based on his experience in the provinces as a recruiting officer.

In *The Recruiting Officer*, London is abandoned for a provincial atmosphere. Sergeant Kite is recruiting at Shrewsbury and also pimping for his superior, Captain Plume. One of the recruits is Sylvia Ballance, who is in love with the captain and pursues him, disguised as a boy. In the end, it is Sylvia's recruiting that proves successful. Another recruiting officer, Captain Brazen, seeks the wealthy Melinda, but is tricked into marrying Melinda's maid. The characters maintain a vigor and realism alien to other Restoration comedies of manners. Sylvia is Farquhar's most charming heroine, and the play implicitly criticizes a morally weak and selfish society.

The Beaux' Stratagem, Farquhar's last and most successful play, is also a comedy of manners in which Aimwell and Archer are the beaux, and their stratagem is to recoup their lost fortunes by marrying country girls by means of a complicated imposture. Archer marries Dorinda. Aimwell almost seduces Mrs. Sullen, but she is saved because a gang of thieves breaks into the house. Finally Mrs. Sullen and her husband agree to divorce. Aimwell is to be her next husband.

The Beaux' Stratagem is a merry comedy which Farquhar completed while suffering his mortal illness. It is representative of his mixture of new elements with the older tradition of the court wits. In his vigorous comic scene, Farquhar has much in common with his Restoration predecessors, but his rich humor and his human sympathy anticipate Goldsmith. His true and skilful gifts for comedy and his lack of any excessive love for moral instruction keeps him most of the time within the Restoration tradition, but his

scenes are socially, not morally, lower than those of his predecessors.

After Farquhar the comedy of manners withered and a new kind of comedy called 'genteel comedy' appeared which substituted social foibles and drawing-room discussions for the wit and bedroom scenes of the earlier comedy.

PART II

THE AGE OF POPE AND SWIFT

Chapter 6

The Augustan Literary and Political Temper

Queen Anne's rule was brief (1702-1714), but it was glorious for England. From the accession of James I to the throne of England in 1603, Scotland and England had one monarch but theoretically remained two separate kingdoms. In 1707, they were formally united under the name of Great Britain. All subsequent parliaments have been numbered from the first Parliament of Great Britain in 1707. The Tory ministry that triumphed in 1710 represented the first complete and peaceful transfer of power under the modern English party system.

The Glorious Revolution of 1688 was more than a political event; it continued to have its decisive influence on the development of modern English national life. As a result of the Revolution, the ministry became responsible to the House of Commons rather than to the king, who nominally appointed it. Only a ministry that could command a majority in the House of Commons could function and continue in power. That is why party principles became important and men of literary talent expressed their party principles and prejudices in poetry, prose, or journalism. With the growth of the reading public, writers preferred to please their audience rather than the courtly patrons. Thus, the era of courtly dominance of English literature was ended, and writers began to depend directly on the reading public.

The rapid development of foreign and colonial trade, which made England the richest and the most powerful nation in Europe, was interrelated with political changes. It was the middle class that seized the opportunities of the new economic expansion. The newly rich merchants of London challenged the traditions of the English gentleman and they became a dominant influence in politics.

Touring England during Queen Anne's reign, Defoe calls it 'the most flourishing and opulent country in the world'. The development of commerce and industry, which led to the rise of the middle class, accounted for most of this prosperity.

Queen Anne favored the Tory ministry, and national affairs were in the hands of the Oxford-Bolingbroke ministry that were seriously opposed by Whigs. Life for the unfortunate Queen Anne was largely a series of stillborn children. Her successor in 1714 was George I, the great-grandson of James I. This German House of Hanover continued to occupy the English throne until 1901. In 1721, Sir Robert Walpole became England's first true prime minister. Since George was ignorant of the English language and affairs, Walpole became the actual ruler of the nation. In the reign of George II, who spoke English with a heavy German accent, actual government was also in Walpole's hands, and the Whigs ruled the country.

The great Whig aristocrats, who were the real governors of England, represented the middle class merchants both by their political liberalism and their support of the expanding commercial prosperity. It was the age of political controversies to which men of letters and even poets could not remain indifferent. That is why the literature of this period is permeated with politics, and much of the personal bitterness reflected in the literature of the period was caused by political differences. Whigs and Tories were equally vehement in denouncing one another as a 'faction'. Addison, who repeatedly condemned and ridiculed party feeling, was an uncompromising Whig whose friendship with Swift cooled when the latter went over to the Tories. All the literary clubs had political leanings and were often engaged in political journalism.

In the early 18th century, social clubs and literary associations were common. They were part of the society within which they existed. Five of the foremost Tory wits of the time—Swift, Pope, Arbuthnot, Gay, and Parnell—collaborated in the formation of the **Scriblerus Club** with a program to attack all false taste in learning. The significance of the club lies in its involvement in the events of the time.

When there remained no hope of further cooperation between Swift, Addison and Steele, Swift looked for new friends to found a new literary club. The Scriblerus Club owed its formation to Pope, who sketched out a plan for it. His design was to publish monthly an account of the works of the unlearned, but

Pope was only twenty-four-years old and too inexperienced to undertake such a heavy project. Therefore, he approached Swift with the, proposal of the formation of a literary circle to collaborate on a burlesque monthly periodical in which follies in learning and criticism could be satirized in ironic reviews.

Swift approved of Pope's plan, but he and other Tory friends objected to Pope's friendship with Steele and other Whigs. Besides, Button's Coffee House, the meeting place of the Whig group was too worshipful in its attitude toward Addison to suit Pope's taste. Moreover, John Dennis's fierce attack on Pope's *Essay on Criticism* and similar attacks on Pope's poetry fostered a combative spirit in him. Therefore, he began to search for some means of carrying his attacks against those whom he considered guilty of bad criticism and foolish learning. He came to think of a project called the works of the unlearned.

The plan of the Scriblerus Club was proposed by Pope and accepted cordially by Swift because such satire was much more congenial to Swift, who had used burlesque and irony of a similar kind with great effectiveness in many pieces. Besides, Swift had no fear of stirring up Grub Street, Addison and his followers, against himself. Pope, who was ineligible for any public office because of his Catholic faith, needed support, and Swift did not neglect the chance to be of service. Thus, the two groups, Pope and Gay on one side and Swift, Arbuthnot and Parnell on the other, were merged. The Earl of Oxford functioned as a patron, attended their meetings, and gave prestige and Tory coloring to their project. Their favorite place was Dr. Arbuthnot's room in St. James's Palace, where the meetings could be held while the doctor was on duty as physician to the Queen.

Robert Harley, the Earl of Oxford, always appreciated the contribution of the literary clubs. In 1710, when Harley gained power, he wanted Swift, who was a political and satirical writer, to get involved in his government. In 1711, Swift joined Harley's Saturday Club, and later, he became a member of St. John's Brothers Club and attended the meetings until the members grew too large. It was then that he became the key figure in the Scriblerus Club. Swift and Arbuthnot were once members of the Brothers Club and both took an active share in the literary warfare against the Whigs.

The literary fame of the learned, witty, and kindly Dr. Arbuthnot was due to his rich humor and boundless knowledge. He was the most prolific of all collaborators. He and Pope were the main writers of *The Memoirs of Martin us Scriblerm*.

It is difficult to trace the influence of the club on the members and the independent pieces that carried out hints from other members. *Gulliver's Travels* and Pope's *Dunciad* are the most important works that owe much to the stimulus of the club. Much of the idea for the satire on science in the third voyage resulted from Swift's association with Arbuthnot.

Addison and Steele had their own club and literary circle. They associated with the leaders of the Whig party. Their widely differing personalities supplemented each other in perhaps the most successful literary partnership in English literature. Both were the members of the Kit-Cat Club of Whig wits, and both were drawn into politics because of their literary talents manifested in *The Tatler* and *The Spectator*. In short, one can hardly find an Augustan writer who was not involved in politics.

The political and economic changes provided writers with a larger public. The development of classicism reached its climax after 1700, when the desire for delicacy in taste and refinement in style was witnessed not only in literature but also in all other arts. Although the Augustan writers regarded themselves as disciples of Dryden, they nourished stricter ideals of elegance and propriety. Alexander Pope desired to become the most correct English poet. Addison and Pope expressed the literary aspirations of the age that is called the Augustan age of English Classicism.

A literary movement that is so much interested in artistic standards is expected to produce extensive literary discussion and criticism, but it was too late to say anything new concerning the essential principles of Classicism. The Augustans, who knew that the strength of Classicism was in its tradition, accepted the standard of poetic achievement from the ancients, and they agreed with the principles of art promoted by Aristotle and Horace.

The basic formula of Classicism was that art imitates nature, and nature is, according to Pope, "At once the source, and end, and test of Art." Art must place a higher value on the human experience that

has universal meaning. In the classical conception of art as the imitation of nature, one discovers an ancient tradition of confidence in the psychological and philosophical stability of the human race. This faith, that man lives in a world of orderly and universal human values, lends to the whole age an atmosphere of repose that has been called 'the peace of the Augustans'.

Chapter 7

Periodical Essays: Addison and Steele

Joseph Addison (1672-1719) and **Sir Richard Steele** (1672-1729) were educated at Charterhouse in London and at Oxford, but their education in the best tradition of public schools and universities did not prevent them from understanding and sympathizing with the new middle class, although they were dissatisfied with the inherited prejudices of the merchants who had no taste for art and literature.

The personalities of Addison and Steele differed widely, but they supplemented each other in the most successful literary partnership in English literature. Steele was jovial, sympathetic, and intimate, but impulsive. Addison was grave, reserved, and inclined to be a spectator of affairs rather than a participant in them.

In 1699, Addison was offered a pension to travel abroad and prepare himself for a career in diplomacy. He returned to London in 1703 with no prospects, but his poem, *The Campaign* in heroic couplets, celebrating Marlborough's victory at Blenheim, was of great help to him. He compares the general to an angel directing the battle. Marlborough was much pleased, and Addison was appointed Commissioner of Appeals. Thus, he got involved in politics and became popular as a Whig of firm and deep convictions. In 1706 he was appointed under-secretary of state, entered the House of Commons in 1708 and in 1709, became secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland.

Both Addison and Steele were drawn into politics because of their literary talents, and both were the members of the Kit-Cat Club of Whig wits. Steele left Oxford without taking a degree and became Captain Steele, a friend of the wits of the town. In 1701, he wrote *The Christian Hero*, which became

very popular, showing that the idealism of pagan moralists is not enough to sustain a man in moral heroism. His three comedies, *The Funeral*, *The Lying Lover*, and *The Tender Husband* are moral in purpose. They are responses to the moral irresponsibility of the Restoration drama. However, he prospered, and in 1706, he became gentleman waiter to Prince George, the Queen's husband. In 1707, he was appointed to the editorship of *The Gazette*.

Restoration indecency and moral irresponsibility led to a demand for moral education toward the end of the seventeenth century with the invention or appearance of periodical essay which reached its climax of achievement early in the eighteenth century in the essays of Addison and Steele, the great educators of the English middle class, who tried to bridge the gap between town and country, to unite past and present, and to establish the continuity of English history. Their aim was frankly educational, and they achieved extraordinary success in their endeavor "to enliven morality with wit, and to temper wit with morality." These two men corrected the Restoration excesses and made morality fashionable. In the tenth *Spectator*, Addison writes of his readers: "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." He claims to have brought philosophy out of schools and libraries "to dwell in clubs and assemblies, at tea-tables and coffee-houses."

Periodical essay produced the moral and educational program for the post-Restoration English society, and it disappeared about 1800. The shaping influences of periodical essay were journalistic rather than the traditions of Montaigne, Bacon, and Cowley. Its aim is that of poetry as demanded by Horace: first to teach or improve and then, to amuse the reader. It was through the skillful management of the teaching and improving function, without neglecting that of amusement, that Addison and Steele achieved their great success.

No periodicals published by others or even by Addison or Steele separately can compete with those published jointly. The superiority of *The Tatler* and *The Spectator* over all other such periodicals is due to the happy combination of these two authors. Addison surpasses Steele in literary reputation, but he is

not so great a prose writer as Steele, who is a great essayist. As a pamphleteer, Steele is more dramatic and stirring, but his prose never attains the elegant case and correctness of Addison's, and yet Steele's tendency to write intimately, as the reader's friend, contributes much to the success of his essay. Addison's best essays succeed because of his rather chilly insight into the mental attitudes of his day. But Steele is interested in family affairs and writes kindly of 'the fair sex'.

On April 21, 1709, Steele began *The Tatler*, published three times a week, with the serious purpose of improving taste and manners and exposing the 'false arts of life'. He had some help from Swift, who was his intimate friend. The papers, which were written in an amusing and agreeable style, became immediately popular. Steele recommends "a general simplicity in our dress, our discourse, and our behavior." He seeks to broaden human sympathies by urging that avoiding to give offense is the height of good breeding. He describes all kinds of vanity, pretension, hardness of heart, and ill-nature to warn people not to offend anybody.

Addison was, then, in Dublin, where he received the issues of *Tatler* and began sending his friend contributions. Out of the 271 numbers of *The Tatler*, 188 were written by Steele, 42 by Addison, and the other 36 ones by both of them jointly. When *The Tatler* was discontinued in January 1711, Addison and Steele began *The Spectator* jointly on March 1, 1711 Alexander Pope also made some contributions. It continued daily for 555 issues until December 1, 1712 when it was discontinued until June 1714, when Addison, without Steele's help, revived it.

Addison contributed the larger number of papers, but the two authors collaborated with remarkable success. Steele had the editorial responsibility, and he was usually identified with Mr. Spectator, who, as described in the first issue, resembles Addison more than Steele. Addison wrote more papers in *The Spectators* than Steele did. His essays and prose style are so polished and easy that they make his other works seem cold and formal.

The success of the two authors depended precisely on their ability to popularize moralizing. Steele's criticism of the Restoration drama suggests that, more than anybody else, he reacted against the moral

irresponsibility of the Restoration period.

Diverse social comments appear in *The Spectator*. Problems regarding love and marriage appear continually. The follies and foibles of the ladies are often laughed at, and the feminine violence in party politics and Italian opera are ridiculed. There are philosophical essays on benevolence, courage, tranquility, and the dangers of enthusiasm, superstition, and self-love.

Many of the papers give interesting descriptions of everyday life in different parts of London, but the best descriptive papers are those dealing with country life. Steele's memorable essay on the pains and pleasures of married life in the country is one of the best.

Addison is an excellent literary critic, and Steele's dramatic criticism is both wise and influential. While almost any subject is treated in *The Spectator* essays, the two authors firmly banned politics. They had promised to avoid extreme party spirit and attacking ministers of state. This fact is expressed in the first paper: "I never espoused any Party with Violence, and am resolved to observe Neutrality between the Whigs and Tories, unless I shall be forced to declare myself by the hostilities of either Side." Pope, in his satirical portrait of Addison, calls him Atticus, which is the name of Cicero's non-partisan friend. However, the non-partisan promise was kept. In fact, Addison was not interested in writing political pamphlets.

When the Tories were in power, Addison and Steele were out of office, and *The Spectator* papers were a kind of holiday exercise. Even when the Whigs took over the government, the two authors stayed away from political controversy, but they favored the middle class and were interested in trade. Addison was quite aware of the party bias of his ideas. He used to praise the merchants frequently and highly because of bringing the culture of all the world to the Thames.

The Spectator papers are the best picture of the eighteenth-century thought and tendencies. The collected editions of the papers were read with pleasure throughout the whole century. The influence of these papers is due to their charm of style and to their natural journalistic sympathy with their environment and the people in it. People loved Addison's prose style, which was the best model for simplicity, plainness,

and elegance.

The best successor to *The Spectator* was Steele's *Guardian*, which ran daily for 175 numbers from March 12 to October 1, 1713. *The Guardian* was superior to all periodicals except *The Spectator*. The fact that Addison was busy with his tragedy, *Cato*, and had no part in the early numbers diminished its interest. There was a great deal of politics but no effective satire in *The Guardian*. Steele's attack on Swift in number 53 made Swift react by saying "Let him 'fair sex' it to the world's end." Pope wrote eight papers for Steele before leaving Whigs.

The Guardian began in a bitter season of politics. The Tory peace of Utrecht brought about responses from Whig and Tory writers. New peers were to be created to support the Tory majority. Steele protested to it by publishing a pamphlet, *Letter to Sir M. W. Concerning Occasional Peer*. Addison's *Cato* was a political document favored by both Whigs and Tories, but his partisan pamphlet, *The Trial of Count Tariff*, was more typical of the moment.

Christianity was sadly mixed with politics. A Tory parson preached a sermon called *Whigs no Christian*, which led to too many Whig retorts. The Tory *Post Boy* attacked *The Guardian* repeatedly for its politics. The parliament was dissolved, but both Addison and Steele were re-elected. These defenders of morality began scattering false charges. Steele began to attack the ministry. He discontinued *The Guardian* and within a week, began a more partisan *Englishman* (57 numbers). In his fiery pamphlet, *The Crisis*, Steele attacked Tories by calling them Catholics at heart, an unjust charge that was repeated by many Whigs. A solid Tory vote expelled Steele from the House of Commons, but his attacks continued until George I became, king.

The other periodicals published by Addison and Steele are of little literary significance. Steele's *Lover* (40 numbers, 1714) was an attempt to recapture the attention of the fair sex. His other periodicals like *The Reader* (1714), *Town Talk* (1715-1716), *The Tea Table* (1715-1716), and *Chit Chat* (1716) were all short-lived. Addison's *Freeholder* (55 numbers, 1716) was a combination of polite talk with politics and trade. The proposal of Whig ministers to limit the size of peerage was supported by Addison in his *Old*

Whig (4 numbers, 1719), but Steele opposed the proposal in *The Plebeian* (4 numbers, 1719), which cost him the loss of his standing for parliamentary election because his opposition angered the Whig party chiefs. Addison, who was the governor of Drury Lane Theater, died two months later, and Steele was not allowed to take over the job. This was the end of Steele's political life. He devoted the rest of his life to drama and dramatic criticism. While Steele very often acted emotionally, Addison was never at war with himself or his age. Addison's greatest achievement rests in his Neoclassical ideal of 'middle style' of prose and perfectly organized essays.

Chapter 8

Novel: Its Rise and Definition

The Rise of Novel and Its Definition

Fiction means any imagined or invented narrative, but in common use it is restricted to novels and short stories. Any novel is fictional but any kind of fiction is not necessarily a novel. Drama and narrative poetry are also forms of fiction because they do not deal with facts; fables, parables, fairy tales, and folklore contain fictional elements; chronicle plays are historical fiction, but they are not called fiction. Sometimes authors write fictional biography that is neither novel nor fiction, though there are novels that are autobiographical.

English novel first fully emerged in the 18th century. Some literary historians have wrongly assumed that fiction and novel are one and the same thing. Of course, as long as men have told stories there has been fiction and it is only in this sense that any work of fiction written before the 18th century in England may be an ancestor of the English novel, though novel itself is something new. The term novel is a shortened form of the Italian word *novella*, meaning new, which is a kind of enlarged anecdote; a short, compact, broadly realistic tale popular in the medieval period like those of Boccaccio's *Decameron*. Such stories are novelties because they are not reworkings of known fables and myths. In most European countries the word *roman* is used rather than novel which is thus linked with romance. But romance is an improbable tale of the old days, while novel is bound by the facts of the actual world and the laws of probability.

The novel could not have matured without the richness of literary activity that preceded it. The narrative interest developed in the stories of Arthur, the pastoral romances like Sidney's *Arcadia*, the

historical interest of diaries and journals, character portrayal in biographies, certain papers illustrative of character by Addison and Steele in *The Spectator*, the straightforward narrative style used by John Bunyan in *The Pilgrim's Progress*, and Swift's *Gulliver's Travels* provided the obvious background for the emergence of the English novel.

The language of novel is prose; the events described are unheroic; the settings are streets and taverns, not battlefields and palaces; gods do not move the action: and the dialogue is homely rather than aristocratic. It was out of the need to find a literary type, which was anti-epic in both substance and language, that the first prose fiction of Europe seems to have been conceived. Novels <have tried to depict the actual life, to become human comedy. English novels are basically the products of the middle class, appealing to the middle-class ideals and sensibilities, and emphasizing human behavior from the agreed public attitudes. From Richardson until the early 20th century the plot patterns of English novels were based on the improvement of social relationship: love is followed by marriage; quarrel, by reconciliation. The class-consciousness depicted in novels, the importance of social and financial status, and the use of the rise or fall from one class to another indicates the middle-class origin of novel. English novel has tended to realism in the sense that it deals with people living in the social world known to the writer.

Hazlitt, the Romantic essayist, before the greater part of the world's major novels had appeared, expressed his view of the novel:

We find there a close imitation of man and manners; we see the very web and texture of society as it really exists, and as we meet it when we come into the world. If poetry has 'something divine' in it, this savors more of humanity. We are brought acquainted with the motives and characters of mankind, imbibe our notions of virtue and vice from practical examples, and are taught a knowledge of the world.

Like any other artist, the novelist is a maker. He imitates the actual **life** and gives a model of life as he sees and feels it. His conclusions about it **are** expressed in the characters he invents, in the situations he places them, and in the very words he chooses for those purposes.

Novelists have given different reasons for writing novels: Richardson writes to promote right conduct; Fielding, to reform the manners of the age; Dickens, to expose social evils; Trollop, to make money by providing acceptable entertainment.

The novelist's choice of material is governed by the deepest compulsions of his personality. It is these that dictate both the nature of his novels and the conclusions about life he expresses through them. That is why in judging a novel we are faced with the task of assessing not only the novelist's ability to create characters, but also the values inherent in the characters and their behavior. A novel is a totality and must be judged as a totality of which characterization is only one part, but an essential part and the most important one. Only through characters can the novelist's apprehension of man's fate be expressed.

Characterization is conditioned by everything in the novel. Part of the novelist's art is to mediate between his characters and the reader. This is mainly true of the novelists who speak in their own persons and interpret character and action during the course of their novels. It is also true of the novelists who keep themselves out of the actions they narrate. Thus, every novelist gives us his own personal vision of the world. The vision is acted out by the images of men and women. It is for this reason that we talk about a novelist's 'world' by which we mean the whole realm of his imagination as he has put it down on paper. Since novel is a totality, it is not proper to isolate characters from plot, dialogue, setting, style, and other components of novel because all of them condition and qualify one another. Yet it is through his characters that a novelist can succeed in his main social function that is to awaken sympathetic comprehension in his characters.

Chapter 9

Eighteenth-Century Novel

Daniel Defoe (1660-1731) has always been considered as a pioneer in the rise of English novel. He is also called the first English novelist, though he was a journalist who wrote romances, not what can truly be called novels. His life was full of surprising adventures. He was the son of James Foe and when he was over forty years old, he added 'De' to his own last name and came to be called Daniel Defoe. His career as a satirical and political poet, a dissenter, and an ironist was quite dangerous. He loved strange stories and he wrote *Strange Surprising Adventures of Robinson Crusoe* which is a fictional grafting upon the story of Alexander Selkirk, who had lived alone on Juan Fernandez from 1704 to 1709, and whose return to England caused the publication of many narratives of his history. Defoe's fiction was very successful, and it was followed by a second volume called *Further Adventures of Robinson Crusoe*, which is not worthy of the first part. In 1720, a moralizing treatise called *Serious Reflections of Robinson Crusoe* was added as the third volume. Only the first part won fame.

In spite of being sprawling in structure and careless in detail, *Robinson Crusoe* expresses the eighteenth-century epic theme of the power of the average man to preserve life and to organize an economy in the face of the most unpromising environment. A modern novelist would focus on the horrors and loneliness, which are natural to Crusoe.

Robinson Crusoe and Moll Flanders are highly episodic and loosely constructed. They are presented as biography rather than real fiction. There is a difference between Defoe's journalistic writing and a true novelist's attempt to create a group of characters who are faced with complex psychological problems. Defoe has little interest in character, and his story becomes interesting only when he learns to combine his

sense of social and material reality with some awareness of the complexities of human personality and with some awareness of the tensions between the private moral and public forces, between morality and gentility. This kind of combination is found in the novels of Richardson.

Robinson Crusoe (1719) is the story of Crusoe, a mariner, who is wrecked off the South American coast on a desert island where he lives for 28 years until he is rescued by an English vessel. The novel's universal appeal comes from Crusoe's struggle to survive amidst hostile surroundings. Crusoe is the epitome of the English middle-class virtues: he is industrious, practical, pious, and shrewd. He triumphs over fate and hostile surroundings and becomes the idealization of middle-class solid endurance. He is unimaginative, stoic with regard to his problems; he never dreams, never worries, and is completely untroubled by sex. Rousseau calls it "the finest treatise on education according to nature." Its significance lies in its detailed realism. The reader believes Defoe's prefatory statement: it is "a just history of fact; neither is there any appearance of fiction in it."

Moll Flanders (1722) is probably Defoe's greatest piece of fiction. Moll is born in the Newgate prison. She starts life as a servant in a kind household. She yearns to be a lady, and she seems on the way of becoming a lady with the attention of the younger son of the family. She is seduced by the elder son, and she conceals it from the younger brother whom she weds. After his death, she passes from one love affair and marriage to another. Thus, the novel becomes a bitter account of a woman struggling with every weapon at her disposal simply to exist in a society that is indifferent to her. A sentimental novelist would have wept copious tears over a woman battling alone in a hostile environment, but the power of Defoe's account lies in the very absence of this kind of emotion.

We may call *Moll Flanders* a sociological novel because throughout the novel the emphasis is on the effect of the environment on the character. However, in spite of Defoe's contribution to the English novel, it is with **Richardson** that the tradition of serious moral fiction in English begins.

By the middle of the 18th century, three great novelists had modified the art of English fiction: of these **Richardson** dilated novel by means of psychological or sentimental detail; **Fielding** added

structure, style, and a realistic attitude towards life: and **Smollet** excelled in the invention and presentation of vivid burlesque episodes. It was through these three men that fiction acquired a sense of pattern or structure, richness of varied detail, and gravity as well as comedy.

Fielding's aim was to reform the manners of the age, but Richardson, by presenting models of virtue, sought to improve its morals. **Richardson** was the spokesman of justice, but he did not conceive of justice in political terms and he was not a critic of the class structure of his age because his protest was in the name of morality and religion.

As Defoe established the novel or romance of incident, **Samuel Richardson** (1689-1761) created the novel of character. Defoe may be challenged as a true novelist, but no one can deny that Richardson wrote genuine novels. Richardson established the following kinds of novels: (1) the novel of personality, portraying human beings struggling for self-realization, while Defoe's characters very often seem healthy, determined animals fighting their way out of the traps of circumstances, Richardson's characters appear as complex human beings; (2) Richardson wrote novels of sensibility or novels with sentimental patterns in which the quality and intensity of feeling are the criteria of his characters; (3) Richardson wrote the novel of moral conflict in society: his presentation of human problems, as distinguished from Defoe's animalistic problems, makes him the true father of English novel. He was the first genuine creator of fully round characters in English novel.

Richardson's *Pamela; or, Virtue Rewarded* (1741-1742) is the first example of what may be called the Modern English novel of character. The story is told in a series of letters sent to her parents by the heroine, Pamela Andrews, a young maid-servant whose mistress has died when the story opens. The lady's son, Mr. B. or Squire B. loves Pamela and wants to take dishonorable advantages of her, but she leaves the house and defends herself when he pursues her. Finally Mr. B. decides to marry her. The second part of the novel is less interesting; it presents Pamela married while suffering with dignity the burden of a vicious husband.

The class background is not a simple one of a low-born maiden and a high-born lord. Richardson

suggests that worth depends on one's effort rather than one's status. Yet his age was fascinated by status and could not help admiring and envying it. This gives conflicting feelings to the whole moral pattern of the novel. Mr. B. is dishonest, malevolent, and cruel. He does everything he can to get Pamela into his physical power, and once he is on the point of committing rape, when Pamela providentially falls into fits and scares him off. Yet she returns voluntarily when he sends for her, loving and admiring him all the time, though disapproving of his attempt to dishonor her. Whenever he relaxes his attempts, she is all respect and admiration for him, and when he finally convinces her that her continued successful resistance has led him to offer marriage, she is all humble love and gratitude.

Successful resistance turns lust to love. Once Mr. B. overcomes his weakness, he is seen by Richardson as an admirable person worthy of the love of a virtuous girl like Pamela. Richardson is talking either naively or ironically of the reformation of character, brought about by Pamela's virtue, in a young gentleman. Of course, motivation is complex, and the relation between a character's moral attitude and the full psychological explanation of his actions is far from simple.

Richardson's *Clarissa; or, The History of a Young Lady* (1748) appeared in seven volumes, told in 547 letters totaling over a million words; the longest novel in English. The story is told by means of letters, written by the heroine Clarissa to her friend Miss Howe, and by Robert Lovelace to his friend John Belford.

Clarissa, a young lady of good family, is won by Lovelace, an unscrupulous man of fashion. Clarissa's family oppose the match but in vain. Clarissa dies of shame and Lovelace is killed in a duel by her cousin Colonel Morden.

Clarissa's theme is much the same as that of *Pamela*: conscious virtue is pursued by unrelenting viciousness. *Clarissa* is a profounder work than *Pamela* and by general agreement Richardson's masterpiece. The development of the plot is a great achievement. Clarissa, the virtuous, beautiful and talented young daughter of a wealthy family, with a fortune of her own left her by her grandfather, is manipulated from a position of wealth and virtue to a position in which she is despised and rejected,

becoming a Christlike suffering saint. This is not achieved by a sudden dramatic reversal of fortune, but by a series of little incidents.

Clarissa is given the appearance of guilt without being guilty; she seems to fall without being really fallen. At the end, when public opinion seems to have condemned her, she rises in death from her degradation to shine high in glorious resurrection. The situation developed enables Richardson to unfold much richer moral pattern than anything found in *Pamela*.

Clarissa finds herself obliged to disobey her parents. Richardson is saying that children must obey their parents, but parents should never force their children into marriage against their inclinations. Clarissa is a rebel against parental authority, but she epitomizes spiritual idealism: Lovelace gains victory of the flesh, but Clarissa's victory is that of the soul. She is the most believable picture of saintliness in English novel. Lovelace confines her in an indecent house and she does not try to escape because her trap is symbolic of the entire physical world in which the heavenly spirit is snared, and escape is possible only to the realm of heaven.

Richardson's last novel, *Sir Charles Grandison* (1754), in seven Volumes, is less interesting than the other two novels because it lacks moral conflict.

The ideals employed in Richardson's novels are prudence and virtue, gentility and morality, reputation and character. The relation between these ideals is often complex. Gentility is sometimes a sign of morality and sometimes opposed to morality. Reputation is generally the reward of good character. Prudence and virtue often go together.

Richardson is quite aware of the social context. Justice matters to him and the difference between classes is something he never forgets. His moral patterns are built up against a background of social relationships, which provide the most real facts about human life. For him all the tests of life are public, carried out in full view of the society; his moral dramas are acted out on a public stage, and any moment of private anguish is promptly communicated by the sufferer to a friend in a letter. The epistolary technique is bound up with the social context of Richardson's moral patterns. He is the first important English

novelist to deal with basic moral problems in a detailed social context.

There is a great difference between Richardson's epistolary technique and the stream of consciousness method. The latter emphasizes the privateness and uniqueness of individual experience, and is appropriate for novels in which the essential loneliness of the individual is stressed and the impossibility of adequate communication between individuals is a major problem.

The great theme of the 18th-century and often the 19th-century novelists is the relation between gentility and virtue that of modern novelists is the relation between loneliness and love. The former theme requires a more public kind of elaboration, and letters are the most effective way of publicizing private experience. Publicity is important for Richardson. Virtue must be publicly known and admired. Clarissa's death scene is most carefully staged; it is a device for demonstrating saintliness in action. The moral life is a public life, something to be seen, approved, and imitated or at least admired. Martyrdom would be useless if no one knew of it, and exemplary life could not be exemplary if no one observed it. Clarissa represents the former, Pamela the latter.

Daniel Defoe claimed his novels to be facts, and Richardson considered his novels as moral preaching. **Henry Fielding** (1707-1754) was the first writer of novel in the sense of imaginary delineations of characters and circumstances designed primarily for the understanding of human situation. It is for this reason that some critics claim that Tom Jones was the first and is still the greatest English novel.

Defoe's works picture the world of romance, the realm of distant adventures; Richardson's novels are all extreme and rather unlikely cases; but in the novels of Henry Fielding one comes in contact with the solid actuality of English life as most people of his age experienced it. Tom Jones is the first English novel in which an era truly saw itself mirrored. There were readers who doubted Pamela's sincerity and Squire B.'s reform. As a dramatist and journalist, Fielding wrote Joseph Andrews (1742) to voice his dissatisfaction with the contemporary novels.

Joseph Andrews is a parody of *Pamela*. Its hero is supposed to be the brother of Pamela, a servant

in the household of Lady Booby, whom Fielding makes an aunt of Richardson's Squire B. Joseph is chaste, handsome, and gifted with all graces and all virtues. Through his adventures and misadventures, Joseph allows Fielding to laugh at Richardson's moral world. But the element of parody soon disappears, and Fielding develops and illustrates a moral code of his own which reveals another code of the moral sensibility: Joseph's virtue is tempted by his widowed mistress, Lady Booby, and when he repulses her, she dismisses him from her service.

Fielding's main purpose is to develop his own view on the difference between the real and the supposed virtue, between true goodness and public esteem. For Richardson, virtue and reputation go together; for Fielding, they rarely go together because virtue is a matter of innate disposition and intention rather than of public demonstration. In the preface to his novel, Fielding explains that "the only source of the true ridiculous is affectation." The exposure of affectation is the source of the comic in Fielding whose originality lies in his satirical exposure of the difference between what his characters really are and what they pretend to be. In this regard, he has learned much from Swift, Pope, and Dryden.

Richardson is content to show his awareness of what Pamela is really doing and what she thinks she is doing. In her letters there is clear evidence of self-deception. But for Fielding these ambiguities and contradictions are the essence of the novel and the true stuff of comedy. Fielding involves his characters in a great variety of adventures, but Richardson concentrates on emotions and sensibilities of a small group of people.

Tom Jones, a Foundling (1749), Fielding's masterpiece, consists of 18 books, each preceded by an introductory chapter in the nature of an essay on some theme more or less connected with the story. Tom Jones is a foundling, discovered one night in the bed of the wealthy and benevolent Mr. Allworthy, a country gentleman. He becomes the baby's guardian and gives him a home, later shared by Blifil, Mr. Allworthy's nephew and heir, who is mean-spirited and resents Tom. As he grows up, Tom gains the favors of Molly, the gamekeeper's daughter, but falls in love with Sophia Western, the

Squire's daughter, who is intended for Blifil. Sophia detests Blifil and wants to marry Tom. Molly claims that she is pregnant, and Tom is prepared to marry her, but it becomes clear that Molly has been free in her favors and Tom is under no obligation. But Blifil's malice succeeds and Mr. Allworthy closes his house to Tom who sets out without having any plan.

Tom encounters Sophia who has run away from her father who insisted on her marriage with Blifil, and now he is going to London to shelter with a relative. Tom finds a pocket book belonging to Sophia and follows her to London in order to return it. In London, Tom drifts into an affair with Lady Bellaston who tries to procure Sophia for her friend Lord Fellamar. Sophia discovers Tom's relationship with Lady Bellaston and rejects him. Tom is forced into a duel and apparently kills his opponent. He is going to be arrested and imprisoned, but the opponent is not dead and it becomes clear that Tom is the son of Mr. Allworthy's sister and as such he is Mr. Allworthy's proper heir. Sophia forgives Tom and they get married.

Tom Jones, like *Joseph Andrews*, is a novel both comic and moral. Tom is a lusty, passionate young man; he is also very generous and easily moved by others' sufferings. "He was besides active, genteel, gay, and good-humored, and he had a flow of animal spirits which enlivened every conversation where he was present."

Tom Jones is often called a comic epic in prose. The comic and mock elements serve an important artistic purpose. It enables Fielding to make certain points about the English society as it is.

In *The History of the Life of the Late Mr. Jonathan Wild the Great*, the life of a notorious highwayman is told from the point of view of a narrator who agrees with the ideals implicit in the life of unscrupulous egotism. Here Fielding's moral feeling is conveyed by a purer kind of irony. *Amelia* (1751), Fielding's last novel, is different in tone from his previous novels; moral gravity, not comic violence or irony, sets the mood.

The immediate aim of Fielding's novels is the reform of the manners of the age, and they are the most powerful artistic expression of the social conscience of the age. Fielding sees himself as a

satirist and moralist. He is a didactic writer who says: "I describe, not men, but manners: not an individual but a species." But he always describes the species in terms of the individual. The source of the vitality of his characters lies in his mind and style. His style is direct, unaffected, the product of a mind stored with the knowledge of men and books, often quoting from the classics and from Shakespeare. His characters are real to him and become real for us. His Tom Jones is a new kind of hero, the unheroic hero, and the honesty of the picture of Tom is impressive. Tom Jones is the first novel that portrays the true character development, the convincing portrayal of round characters.

Tobias George Smollett (1721-1771), Fielding's younger contemporary, was content to work in the picaresque tradition and to take the hero through a series of violent adventures on land and sea. Thus, he could render some aspects of the social life of his time with vigorous realism. He was a Scot who went to London to seek his literary fortune. He quarreled with almost everybody and vented his anger in his writings. As a surgeon's mate in a war ship, Smollett acquired experience of the horror and brutality of life.

In his first novel *Roderick Random* (1748), Smollett follows the outline of his own life, but he has loaded the story with innumerable invented incidents and episodes that are violent and cruel. His hero is a young Scot who, after the disappearance and supposed death of his father, is left unprovided for and goes to London to embark on a series of adventures by land and sea. Eventually he discovers his father, marries his beloved Narcissa, returns to Scotland and lives happily. The plot is episodic but the incidents follow one another with breathless haste.

Smollett lacks Fielding's pervasive humanity and comic touch. It is true that his pictures of the brutalities of life are prompted by moral indignation, but there is no subtlety or complexity either of moral or psychological pattern or structure. In his preface, he explains that he has tried to show his hero "struggling with every difficulty to which a friendless orphan is exposed from his want of experience, as well as from the selfishness, envy, malice and base indifference of mankind."

The Adventures of Peregrine Pickle (1751), Smollett's longest novel, consists of various violent

incidents. *The Adventures of Ferdinand, Count Fathom* is the history of a scoundrel, written in the style of Fielding's *Jonathan Wild*, though Smollett accuses Fielding of stealing from him. The *Expedition of Humphry Clinker* (1771), Smollett's last novel, was written in relaxation in Italy where he was mellower in mood than during most of his life. The tone is never malicious or bitter as in the earlier novels. The form is still picaresque. His principal characters are traveling through England and Scotland. The novel is continued by means of letters, and the characters are defined by their different reactions to the adventures they encounter during their travels.

Although Smollett is not a great novelist, he made some contribution to the development of novel: (1) he wrote the novel of the sea and shipboard life; (2) he is the writer of eccentric characters and the first caricaturist in English novel, to whom Dickens admitted his indebtedness; (3) he is a precise observer of the senses, especially the brutal and violent, while his photographic naturalism surpasses Fielding's; and (4) he anticipates the Gothic novel.

Laurence Sterne (1713-1768) is a more original novelist. His *Tristram Shandy*, in nine volumes (1759-1767), reveals a wholly new concept of form in fiction as well as a kind of comedy different from Fielding's comic epic and Smollett's didactic humors in *Humphry Clinker*. Told in the first person, *Tristram Shandy* is a patchwork of anecdotes, digressions, jests, parodies, and dialogues. The punctuation consists of dashes and other eccentricities, including blank pages. Comments on characters vary in length from several pages to a single sentence. The author's own views are conveyed partly in his own person and partly in the person of Yorick, a sentimental and jesting person.

Sterne had learned from Locke, his favorite philosopher, that the consciousness of every individual is conditioned by his private train of association. Thus, every man lives in a world of his own. Every man is the prisoner of his private inner world. Only affections can bridge the gulf that lies between individuals' consciousness. Thus, according to Sterne one must be sentimental to escape from the prison of the private self. **Uncle Toby** with his private obsession is a memorable character.

In *A Sentimental Journey Through France and Italy* (1768), Sterne is essentially a man of feeling, describing the character and emotions of people he happens to meet. "Feeling here means something more than the expression of emotions and sensibilities; it is the ability to feel oneself into someone else's situation and to be moved by the emotions of others." Smollett also expresses his own feelings, but they are feelings of anger. Sterne believes that every object is discolored and distorted by Smollett's anger and spleen, and he gives the reader nothing but an account of his own miserable feelings.

The imitators of *Tristram Shandy* did not have the genius of Sterne, but the cult of feeling in fiction was established. 18th-century philosophers believe that virtue is related to sensibility. Thus, sentimentality (the deliberate cultivation of feelings and the venting of emotions on even the slightest object) had a certain philosophical foundation. Sterne's belief in the good heart and in generosity as the highest of virtues is in a sense, sentimental or related to sentimentality. Uncle Toby is a sentimental character.

The hero of *The Vicar of Wakefield* (1766) by **Oliver Goldsmith** (1728-1774) is a sentimental character. It is a deliberately simple-minded novel about innocence and worldliness. Dr. Primrose, the vicar of Wake-field, is a man who combines learning with innocence. His greatest happiness is found by the domestic hearth with his wife and children. He is led by the activities of the worldly and the vicious from one misfortune to another. His fortune is lost, his eldest daughter is apparently seduced and ruined by the local squire; he is deceived in numerous ways until he finds himself in the jail with his eldest daughter apparently dead and his eldest son a fellow prisoner. To all these misfortunes the worthy Vicar responds with resignation and fortitude. But the novel ends happily: the lost fortune is restored, the ruined daughter is found to be alive and really married to the squire after all, the younger daughter marries a wealthy baronet, and the eldest son marries his beloved.

In spite of exhibitions of feeling, *The Vicar of Wakefield* is an artistic novel told in the first person. The Vicar's differences of opinion with his wife over matters of dress and social ambition are

comic, but Jane Austen had a much deeper insight into the nature and behavior of motherly worldliness on behalf of a daughter than Goldsmith ever had.

The greatest practitioner of the cult of feeling was the Scottish novelist **Henry Mackenzie** (1745-1831) whose novel *The Man of Feeling* (1771) is the purest example of its kind. It is in many ways an absurd novel, but it is important in the history of sentimentalism. Mackenzie's second novel, *The Man of the World* (1773), is similarly sentimental and moral. In 1770's, many sentimental novels were written, novels such as *The Tears of Sensibility*, *The Sufferings of Innocence*, *The Benevolent Man*, *The Tender Father*, etc.

Growing interest in the 'Gothic' and in the emotional excitement affected the novel. The 'Gothic novel' is the product of the interest in the medieval picturesque horror. Horace Walpole (1717-1797) with his Gothic house at Strawberry Hill was the pioneer of such novels. *The Castle of Otranto* (1765), the first example of the Gothic novel or the novel of terror, is a piece of nonsense. The events related are supposed to have occurred in the 12th century and Walpole talks of his "attempt to blend the two kinds of romance, the ancient, and the modern."

The Castle of Otranto begins with the enormous magic helmet shaded with black feathers. It kills young Prince Conrad on his wedding day. A portrait steps out of its frame and tells the story of a usurping tyrant, prince of Otranto, who murders his daughter and finally retires to a monastery.

Walpole introduced the fake medievalism imitated by many writers, especially women who combined Gothic sentimentalism with the cult of feeling. **Mrs. Radcliffe** (1764-1823) was the most successful practitioner of the Gothic novel. She draws the highest excitement from supernatural incidents, which are finally found to be produced by natural causes. Her most popular novels are *The Mysteries of Udolpho* (1778) and *The Italian* (1797).

If women took an active part in producing the novel of terror, they were even more active in producing the novel of social and domestic life in which the chief interest is the delineation of manners. **Fanny Burney** (1752-1840) with her *Evelina* (1778) was a successful novelist of manners.

It is the story of a girl entering the world of fashion. She is at times frustrated and humiliated before she finds her happy ending. Such a plot gives an opportunity for satirical observation of social pretension, and exposing the hypocrisy, snobbery, and cruelty, which govern the behavior of men and women.

Miss Maria Edgeworth (1767-1849) wrote of the Irish social scene. Most of her novels are written with a frankly didactic purpose. *Castle Rackrent* (1800) gives a vivid picture of the decayed Irish gentry. Most novelists of manners have learned a lot from Jane Austen, the greatest novelist of manners.

Jane Austen (1775-1817), the greatest novelist of manners, was the daughter of a Hampshire rector. She lived in a middle-class country society' in which she became familiar with the world of social pretension and ambition, of balls and visits, of marrying and giving in marriage, of the hopes and fears of genteel people of moderate means. The world, which her novels present to us, is an 18th-century world in its manners. Her pictures of life belong to the time before the Industrial Revolution could spoil the beauty of her countryside. Through her delicate and highly finished art and through her insight into the relation between social convention and individual temperament, she turned such a society into a microcosm of life.

Throughout Jane Austen's writing career the Napoleonic wars were going on, romantic poems such as Blake's *Songs of Innocence and of Experience* and *Lyrical Ballads* were published, and she had heard about the French Revolution and Romantic Movement, but due to her own sense of order and control, she keeps all of them out of her novels in which soldiers appear only as attractions for girls, not as warriors. She chooses the subject with which she is quite familiar. It is inappropriate for a girl living in the countryside to expand the subject matter of her novel to include wars and foreign affairs of which she had no deep knowledge. Jane Austen's penetrating vision of man, her polished and controlled wit, and her moral apprehension of the nature of human relationships, which went into producing some of the greatest novels, made her aware that a writer's proper subject matter is based

on personal observation and deep knowledge. She had perhaps read Samuel Johnson's *Rasselas* in which the poet Imlac says: "I could never describe what I had not seen; I could not hope to move those with delight or terror, whose interests and opinions I did not understand." It would have been unrealistic as well as artistically inappropriate for Jane Austen to have expanded her subject to include the discussion of the world affairs of which she had little knowledge. She knew exactly what her powers were, and what material they were fitted to deal with. She found it more artistic to evade sentimentality and the scenes of passion, but she does not exclude feelings. The exquisite operation of reason, intelligence and judgment has been appealing to many writers but not favored by the romantics who dislike unimaginative reality. Some critics remind us of Horace Walpole's famous dictum: "This world is a comedy to those that think, a tragedy to those that feel." Thus, they conclude that Jane Austen's novels are comedies, and cannot appeal to those who consider thought inferior to feeling. But this is not the whole truth. Jane Austen, like E. M. Forster, attempts to reconcile the claims of the head and those of the heart. In fact, she makes the conflict a central issue in her novels. This conflict is very strong in *Persuasion*, which is actually a love story.

The tiny stage of Jane Austen's novels is a microcosm of some larger moral universe. She is a critical observer of humanity and human beings who finally realize their own mistakes and correct themselves. She gives her characters the opportunity to settle the issue among themselves and realize their own potentiality. Most of her heroines go through the process of awakening. They painfully discover that they have made mistakes both about themselves and about the world in which they live. They realize that the cause of deception lay within, that they have been practicing deceptions on themselves.

Northanger Abbey, Jane Austen's shortest novel, makes fun of the prevailing Gothic novels, especially those of Ann Radcliffe. It is a decent story of Catherine Morland, a rather ordinary girl who is good-hearted and rather simple. She spends some weeks in Bath as the guest of Mr. and Mrs. Allen. In Bath she makes various friends including Henry and Eleanor, the son and daughter of the

eccentric General Tilney. Henry Tilney is a rich and intellectually superior young man who is attracted by Catherine's simple good-heartedness. She also falls in love with Henry. General Tilney, who imagines that Catherine is rich and therefore a good match for Henry, invites her to the Tilneys' home, the Northanger Abbey, where she humiliates herself by expecting gruesome secrets and horror she had learned from Mrs. Radcliffe's novels. When she is ordered out of the house by the General, she returns home. She is followed by Henry who explains that his father, mistakenly believing her to be penniless, had tried to keep her away from his son. After learning the truth, the General gives his blessing to Henry's marriage to Catherine.

The plot thus summarized may look dull; but the novel is lively and combines wit with a profound sense of the daily life in the social world Jane Austen knew so well. The irony is sometimes a little crude, but it is always carefully balanced and well directed, while a tone of affectionate understanding runs along with irony. The romantic expectations of Catherine are slightly ridiculous, but the real life is interesting in being ordinary and Catherine's dream world is easily pushed aside by the greater interest of reality. Her love of Henry is not the passionate love of romantic novelists, but it is true love reflected in the state of her mind.

Sense and Sensibility is also directed against the contemporary novels' fashionable taste, against the enthusiasm for picturesque beauty and sentimentality. Marianne, the heroine, is a lover of the picturesque and a believer in sensibility. She falls passionately in love with John Willoughby, an attractive but unprincipled young man, who suddenly departs for London. He writes her an insolent letter, informing her of his approaching marriage to a rich heiress. She cannot hide her grief because of her extreme sensibility. Finally she finds a more realistic happiness with Colonel Brandon, her old admirer and a serious man of five-and-thirty.

While Marianne stands for 'sensibility', her sister, Elinor, stands for 'sense'. Elinor has the power to control her feelings, and her deep sense of the privacy of personal emotion helps her through all difficulties to the man she loves and, therefore, she acts as a foil to her younger sister.

It is in *Sense and Sensibility* that Jane Austen's precise style, the beautifully poised sentences and paragraphs, and the skillful marshaling of dialogue and incident attract the reader's attention. There are few novelists in English who can achieve so much meaning with a single descriptive sentence. Through her style, Jane Austen can give the reader the sense of a solidly based social world, a world in which the adjustment of personal relationships is the most important and interesting problem. The character of Marianne is beautifully drawn with a fine combination of affectionate sympathy and gentle mockery. Although she goes to extreme in her sensibility, Jane Austen educates her gently but firmly. In fact, all her heroines are thus educated by life. It is part of their education that genteel but moneyless young ladies, who depend on their good looks to secure a desirable marriage, must always be careful of equally moneyless gallants who have nothing to offer but gallantry, which usually accompanies cowardice, selfishness, and lack of moral principle. The firmness with which Jane Austen manages this kind of education is a tribute to the unsentimental realism at the core of her art. She is firm but not tragic; she is an affectionately ironic observer of the relations between society and individual personality. She, like Shakespeare, hates to depict human beings other than she found them.

Pride and Prejudice is the gayest and by far the most popular of all Jane Austen's novels. The reason for its popularity, to quote Jane Austen, is that it "is rather too light, and bright, and sparkling; it wants shade." The speed and skill with which Jane Austen moves into the story are remarkable.

Structurally, *Pride and Prejudice* shows the highest degree of craftsmanship: Mr. and Mrs. Bennet live with their five daughters at Longbourn. In the absence of a male heir, the property will pass by entail to a cousin, William Collins. Charles Bingley, a rich Bachelor, takes a house near Longbourn, and brings there his two sisters and his rich friend, FitzWilliam Darcy. Bingley and Jane, the eldest Bennet girl, fall mutually in love. Darcy, though attracted to Elizabeth Bennet, offends her by his insolent behavior. Darcy and Bingley's sisters, who are disgusted with the behavior of Mrs. Bennet and her younger daughters, cause the separation of Bingley and Jane.

Mr. Collins proposes to Elizabeth and he is rejected. He proposes to Charlotte Lucas who accepts him, and they marry. Staying with them, Elizabeth is again thrown into contact with Darcy. Strongly attracted to Elizabeth in spite of himself, Darcy proposes to her in terms that do not conceal his pride. Elizabeth indignantly rejects him. On a trip to Pemberley, Darcy's place, with her uncle and aunt, Elizabeth is surprised to come across Darcy who welcomes the visitors, showing his greatly improved manners. News reaches Elizabeth that her sister Lydia has eloped with Wickham, son of the steward of Darcy's property. By Darcy's help the fugitives are traced, their marriage is brought about, and they are suitably provided for. The attachment between Bingley and Jane is renewed and leads to their engagement. In spite of the insolent intervention of Lady Catherine, Darcy and Elizabeth are engaged.

The plot of *Pride and Prejudice*, like that of the Greek tragedy, continues to unfold with new and arresting developments, each arising naturally out of the preceding action and leading naturally to the conclusion. The novel begins with the Bennets and their interest in the new tenants of Netherfield, Bingley and others. Helped by Jane's illness, Jane and Bingley, Elizabeth and Darcy come together, leading to character revelation. The Ball at Netherfield helps to center the action and reveal Elizabeth's dislike of Darcy and Wickham's true character. We become familiar with the characters through their conversations and the author's remarks." the beautiful and kindhearted Jane, witty and high-spirited Elizabeth, proud Darcy, charming Bingley, gallant Wickham, scheming Miss Bingley, foolish Mrs. Bennet and her offensive husband. The arrival of Mr. Collins, a highly comic figure, his proposal to Elizabeth who rejects him, and his marriage to Charlotte remind us of the problem of social security in an age when a girl's social security could be gained only through marriage. In spite of being an intelligent girl, Charlotte marries the grotesque Mr. Collins because it is her last chance, and she takes it, knowing that the social security he offers is worth tolerating an intolerable husband. Elizabeth is shocked, but Jane Austen takes some pain to make her readers feel Charlotte's choice of the lesser of the two evils. Elizabeth is not aware of the pressures acting upon Charlotte. Charlotte is twenty-seven, unmarried, not pretty, not well-to-do, living in a society that treats a penniless old maid

as a burden upon her family. Elizabeth is ignorant of economic anxiety and she is inexperienced enough to judge only in terms of personality, wondering how Collins' folly and Charlotte's intelligence can go together.

The second meeting of Elizabeth and Darcy marks the turning point in the relationship of the two because Elizabeth's rejecting him is followed by Darcy's letter of explanation, suggesting the movement of Darcy away from pride to an awareness of genuine values alien to his class. Darcy and Elizabeth represent the two extremes, which must be modified if happiness is to be achieved.

The elopement of Lydia with Wickham gives the plot an effective new-twist. Elizabeth fears that the elopement may alienate Darcy from the Bennet family, but it gives Darcy an opportunity of showing his love for Elizabeth by using his influence to make Wickham marry Lydia. The incident shows, at the same time, the misfortune waiting for the indiscreet marriage-seekers. A reckless or stupid playing of one's cards might lead a girl to her final degeneration. However, Elizabeth and Darcy gain self-knowledge and discover each other in their loss of pride and prejudice. Thus, class-consciousness is removed. Jane Austen accepts the class structure of her own society, but she hates any claims for superiority based on noble birth or social snobbery.

The characters of Mr. and Mrs. Bennet show Jane Austen's use of comic characterization to reveal the tragic aspect of their marital situation. Mr. Bennet had been captured by a pretty face, and his marriage tied him to a foolish and vulgar woman for the rest of his life. He was forced into an unnatural isolation in his study, and abdicating his role as a father and a husband.

Mansfield Park is a more complex novel with more light and shade. Sir Thomas Bertram of Mansfield Park has two sons, Tom and Edmund, and two daughters, Maria and Julia. Lady Bertram, a selfish and indolent woman, has two sisters, Mrs. Norris and Mrs. Price who has a large family of young children. In order to help her sister, the Bertrams undertake the charge of Fanny Price, a girl of nine. By her honesty and modest disposition, Fanny becomes an indispensable part of the household. When Sir Thomas leaves for the West Indies and the family discipline is relaxed, Fanny refuses to

take part in the flirtation of her cousins. She rejects the proposal of the attractive but unprincipled Henry Crawford in spite of the displeasure of Sir Thomas. Loving her cousin Edmund, Fanny grieves to see him fascinated by the worldly-minded Mary Crawford. A series of elopements opens Edmund's eyes who has now taken orders. He turns for comfort to Fanny, falls in love with her, and marries her.

The heroine of *Mansfield Park*, Fanny Price, lacks Elizabeth Bonnet's wit. Unlike *Pride and Prejudice* in which wit and virtue go together, in *Mansfield Park* wit appears at the end to be on the side of evil. Fanny Price, who was brought up as a poor relation among her rich cousins, is kind and humble without being witty. The wit of the novel is in the texture of the narrative rather than in the dialogue of the hero and heroine. She is the most passive of all Jane Austen's heroines. Fanny is passive in terms of the plot because decisive actions are all taken by others, but in terms of the moral pattern of the novel she is the most active. In spite of her timidity and shyness, her opinions, attitudes, and reactions provide the moral norm throughout the novel. She is not a saint or a martyr, but she is morally the strongest character in all Jane Austen's novels. Her refusal to marry the charming Henry Crawford, who has captivated everyone else in the novel, seems a negative action, but it is a decisive one in the working out of the whole pattern of the novel because true virtue is tolerant and gentle in behavior but quite firm in moral decision.

Emma (1816), has more affinity with *Pride and Prejudice* than with *Mansfield Park*. Emma Woodhouse, the heroine, is quite the opposite of Fanny Price. Jane Austen once said that she feared that nobody but herself would like the heroine, suggesting that she had deliberately subdued the high-spirited comedy of manners practiced in her earlier novels to offer instead a study in character development and education. In a slow and painful process, Emma changes from a vain and self-satisfied girl, who is blind and insensitive to the feelings of others, to a mature girl who cares for and sympathizes with others.

Emma is a rich and clever girl of twenty-one. She is beautiful, clever, and complacent, "with a comfortable home and happy disposition, seemed to unite some of the best blessings of existence: and

had lived nearly twenty-one years in the world with very little to distress or vex her." Her confidence in her own understanding of people and her well-meaning desire to manipulate the lives of her social inferiors as well as some of her equals get her involved in a number of delusions, the destruction of which shocks her and helps her gain self-awareness. The plot shows the process of her awakening.

Emma, a clever and very self-satisfied young girl, is the daughter of the amiable and hypochondriacal old Mr. Woodhouse and the mistress of the house. She takes under her wing Harriet Smith, a pretty but foolish girl of seventeen. Emma assumes that the marriage of her governess, Miss Taylor, is largely due to her skill as a matchmaker. Emma's active mind set to work on schemes for Harriet's advancement. She attempts to manipulate Harriet into what she calls a good marriage. A young farmer named Robert Martin proposes to Harriet, but Emma sees to it and Harriet turns him down. Emma tries instead to effect a match for Harriet with Mr. Elton, a young clergyman who despises Harriet and has set his eyes on Emma herself.

Emma half fancies herself in love with Frank Churchill, who has now appeared on the scene. Harriet becomes interested in George Knightley's unaffected warmth and intelligence. The realization that Harriet might supplant her in Knightley's affections, together with the discovery that Frank Churchill is engaged to Jane Fairfax, forces Emma to examine her own conduct and resolve to behave better. Knightley proposes to her and they marry. Harriet, left to decide for herself, marries Robert Martin.

The story is mainly occupied with the humiliations to which Emma is subjected as a result of her silly attempts to advance Harriet. Emma lacks the charm of Elizabeth Bennet. Her self-deceptions make her sometimes an almost comic figure, but she never loses the reader's or the author's sympathy. She is treated with affectionate irony, not with the author's cruel irony reserved for folly and affectation. Emma is not vicious: she is only spoiled by good fortune. Her vanity and self-satisfaction make her fall in all traps. She decides to arrange a suitable marriage for Harriet, 'the natural daughter of somebody'. Her plan for Harriet makes Mr. Elton misunderstand her and propose to Emma herself

who is annoyed by the proposal. In her second attempt to marry Harriet off, Emma tries to get Harriet interested in Frank Churchill. Harriet misunderstands Emma's hints and falls in love with Mr. Knightley whom Emma will allow nobody to marry but herself. Mr. Knightley is 17 years older than Emma, but he is wealthy, grave, generous, kind to his tenants, and intolerant of deceit, cruelty, and intervention. Possessed with self-knowledge, Emma is at last able to see Mr. Knightley as the man she truly loves.

Persuasion (1818), Jane Austen's last novel, is admired by Virginia Woolf. It expresses and evokes genuine feelings. It is the most complex, the most romantic, and the most argumentative of all Jane Austen's novels. It becomes philosophical when we come to the nature of advice and persuasion, which turn out to be good or evil according to the consequences.

"Vanity is the beginning and end of Sir Walter Elliot's character." He has three daughters: Elizabeth, who shares his vanity and at the age of twenty-eight has found no one quite good enough to marry; Mary who has married Charles Musgrove; and the admirable but neglected Anne, "who was nobody with either father or sister; her word had no weight ... she was only Anne." Unable to keep up a style of living appropriate to his status, Sir Walter is forced to let Kellynch Hall to Admiral and Mrs. Croft. Thus, Captain Frederick Wentworth, Mrs. Croft's brother, is brought to the scene. Anne still loves him; she loved and admired him, but refused to marry him eight years ago when she yielded to the persuasion of her godmother and friend, the excellent but cautious Lady Russell.

Now Anne is at once disappointed and relieved when Wentworth treats her with 'cold civility' and appears to care for her no longer. He is looking for a wife who is determined and does not yield to the persuasion of others. He finds such a wife in the person of Louisa Musgrove who is or pretends to be full of determination, but contrary to his advice, she jumps over the steps of the Cobb to show her determination; she falls and suffers a severe head injury. Anne handles the whole situation very skillfully when everybody is distressed and embarrassed.

Anne visits her father in Bath. Wentworth also appears in Bath, where he hears Anne's comment

on the quality of love, declaring that a woman's love is more enduring than a man's, especially where the object seems lost for ever. Wentworth understands her remark to refer to her own experience. He proposes to her and he is accepted.

If Captain Wentworth were killed in the battle, Lady Russell could claim to be right in persuading Anne not to yield to an uncertain future. Circumstances conspire to bring Wentworth, now a naval commander with some fortune, back on the scene, but both of them are educated and prepared for mutual understanding by various adventures. Anne, like Fanny Price, is a thoughtful character. She has 'an elegance of mind and sweetness of character'. She is highly intelligent, strong-minded when she wants to be, and capable of knowing people. Her intelligence and good will are qualities needed in a character to whom Jane Austen would give her total respect.

Jane Austen hates Sir Walter's snobbery that has made him vain and silly. While she follows the traditional plot pattern of the unromantic nature of daily life and has no illusions about people being divided into morally black and white, she tells the romantic story of Anne Elliot and the true married love illustrated by Admiral and Mrs. Croft who are unromantic but affectionate. Anne "had been forced into prudence in her youth, she learned romance as she grew older."

There is one question repeatedly raised by *Persuasion*: what are human emotions and what are they really worth? Both Anne Elliot and Captain Wentworth are concerned with the true state of their own feelings. What is Anne going to feel when she meets her rejected lover for the first time after eight years? It is a moment that she and the reader await with trepidation, but it comes and goes with surprising insignificance: "a thousand feelings rushed on Anne, of which this was the most consoling, that it would soon be over. And it was soon over." He treats her with 'cold civility' and is gone. This is the anticlimax, and it is meant to be. To Jane Austen, dwelling on the actual profession of love seems to be a false romanticism; instead, she dwells on the developments of character and action that lead to such professions.

In *Persuasion*, Jane Austen turns more to reflection than to dialogue to give us a knowledge of

her characters. Anne Eliot's feelings and frame of mind are nearer to those of Jane Austen who seems a little bored because she has grown too familiar with the ways of her world. She discovers that the world is much larger, more mysterious and more romantic than she had supposed. We feel that what she says of Anne is true of herself: "She had been forced into prudence in her youth, she learned romance as she grew older—the natural sequel of an unnatural beginning." She dwells frequently upon the beauty and melancholy of nature; she talks of the "influence so sweet and sad of autumnal months in the country." Her attitude toward life has actually changed. She sees life through the eyes of Anne who has gained insight through suffering and has sympathy for others. Thus, her remarks depend less on facts and more on feeling than usual, suggesting that Jane Austen had once loved and gone through a similar experience.

Chapter 10

The Movement Away From Neo-Classicism and the Age of Sensibility

Although the first half of the eighteenth century is called 'the triumph of Neo-Classicism, this era witnessed breaks from the Neo-Classical principles that would later develop into Romanticism. Such writings were sometimes welcomed by the age. **James Thomson's** *Seasons* (1730) was popular from the date of its publication and proved to be the poetic bestseller of the century. These more emotional writers offered only a welcome variation from the Neo-Classic norm.

Poetry related to man's love of nature was not something new when Thomson (1700-1748) wrote his *Seasons*. Chaucer, Spenser, Shakespeare, Milton, and even Pope had talked about the beauty of nature, though in Pope it is Queen Anne who imposes order upon Windsor Forest and his heroic couplets cannot express the subtle mood of nature so well as the blank verse of Milton. Many poets had expressed the traditional English love of country life and the beauty of nature. But Thomson popularized a new mode of interpreting nature and all her moods that raised nature to a philosophy and a religion. He was influenced by the literary tradition that reinforced a true love of the natural scenery, acquired from the Scottish lowlands where he was born. Though educated for the Scottish ministry at Edinburgh, he migrated in 1725 to London where he achieved success with the four poems of *The Seasons*, which he regarded as a return to old traditions.

Until supplanted by Wordsworth, Thomson was known as the preeminent English poet of nature. His four poems show both literary and philosophical influences. In his Preface to 'Winter', Thomson

urges that "poetry once more be restored to her ancient truth and purity," that 'the works of Nature' are the most elevating subject for philosophical reflection and moral sentiment. Thomson was a professed Deist who saw in the phenomena of nature a direct revelation of the attributes of God. He celebrates the marvelous system of creation and 'the secret hand of Providence' which had framed it from chaos. What is new in Thomson is his indebtedness to Shaftesbury in the blending of his deism and scientific demonstration with the elevation of the soul by a contemplation of natural beauty, a process that awakens and cultivates the moral sense.

Due to Thomson and his influence, the belief in Nature as a moral influence on human heart became a commonplace of the literature of sensibility. Such exalted communion with Nature led to a withdrawal from the busy world of men, and solitude or solitary retirement became attractive. In such a sweetly sad and gentle mood the instincts of compassion are released and the soul is refined to that harmony of the affections, which is the essence of the virtuous state.

Thomson is famous for his descriptive details. Forest, river, sky, plains, mountains, meadows, valleys, flowers, and animals are all presented with an equal eye in varying aspects. He sympathizes with the whole Nature. He observes and loves details in external nature. It is plenitude rather than the order of nature that attracts his attention. While he has the curiosity of a scientist, his picture of man in the primitive state of the Golden Age, and the benevolent aspect of Nature are full of bliss. This is what is called Physico-theology.

A group of eighteenth-century poets related to the so-called '**Graveyard School**' wrote long, gloomy poems on death and immortality. The 'graveyard' poetry is related to the early stages of English Romantic Movement, reflecting the tendency to cultivate melancholy for its own sake; they try to get the atmosphere of 'pleasing gloom'. The greatest and the most famous poem produced by this school is Gray's *Elegy in the Country Churchyard* (1751).

Thomas Warton (1728-1790) attracted attention with a poem, *The Pleasures of Melancholy* (1747). He and his brother **Joseph Warton** returned to the poetic ideals and the imaginative style of

the Elizabethan age. Their main requisite of the poet was a spontaneity of creative imagination. In Joseph Warton's *The Enthusiast*, Shakespeare is taken by imagination to a cave, suggesting the concept of the artist as genius and Rousseau's theory of education according to Nature. By revolting against the classical doctrine of the superior authority of judgement and taste over imagination, the Wartons and their generation stimulated a revival of interest in the great Renaissance poets.

The Wartons originated nothing in their few poems; they only recapitulate all the elements developed in the poetry of sensibility. The idea of the noble savage which created a desire for a return to nature, the Religion of Nature implanted in the heart of the savage, the idealization of primitive life, the essential goodness of human nature, and Rousseau's criticism of civilization were not new; they were all anticipated in the tradition of pastoral poetry. These poets habitually contrasted the simple truthfulness of the child of Nature with the crafty selfishness of man debased by artificial civilization.

William Collins (1721-1759) and **Thomas Gray** (1716-1777) were accomplished scholars but not dedicated poets. They were sensitive to the new tendencies of their age and interested in the great poetry of Greeks, Romans, and Elizabethans. Of all the poets who responded to the new sensibility, Collins and Gray are the most classical in form and spirit.

The life of **William Collins** was short and tragic. He became an intimate friend of Joseph Warton and went to London with great hopes of literary career but, to quote Samuel Johnson, he had "many projects in his head and very little money in his pocket." His problem was indolence and fastidiousness, which slowed down his habit of composition. Finally his health failed due to melancholia and he died after ten years of suffering and solitude.

At seventeen Collins wrote his *Persian Eclogues*, giving voice to pastoral commonplaces. His *Epistle Addressed to Sir Thomas Hammer* (1743) in heroic couplets surveys the history of poetry, leading up to the praise of Shakespeare. In 1746, Collins and Joseph Warton each published a slender volume of odes of which Warton's went into a second edition while that of Collins remained unsold.

Collins' odes called *Odes on Several Descriptive and Allegoric Subjects* are mainly the meditations of an artist on his art. 'On the Poetical Character', for example, is a Platonic celebration of the divine nature of poetic inspiration.

Thomas Gray, a professor of history, was by nature a scholar and a recluse, though his graceful and humorous letters reveal a warm and sympathetic nature. He was more interested in reading than in writing. He resembled Collins in literary principles, but he excelled Collins both in the quality of his work and in popular appeal. His poetry is less literary in subject matter, more directly concerned with ordinary emotions. His early poems are mainly Neo-Classical, but he moves to romantic themes and expressions.

The melancholy of Gray was not a painful disease; it was restrained and elevated by an ethical spirit not different from the Christian humility. He laboriously revised and improved his poems to make them as perfect as possible. His *Elegy Written in a Country Churchyard* shows Gray as an artist of the Virginian type in his extreme conciseness of expression. It resembles Warton's *The Pleasures of Melancholy* in some of the imagery of its opening stanzas, but goes to a much higher level of reflection on the realities of life.

It is true that the eighteenth-century romantic tendencies paved the way for the appearance of Wordsworth and other romantic poets, but these tendencies are not exactly the same as those of the romantics. Gray's *Elegy* is one of the greatest poems in English, but it is not romantic in the true sense of the term: the emotions are evoked by an actual event. It is melancholy and reflective, as the poet muses upon the conditions of rural life, human potential, and mortality.

Gray and the like were strongly aware of the conflict and unrest within themselves; yet the poetic language of their age offered no adequate means of self-expression. In his letter to West, Gray says, "The language of the age is never the language of poetry." What he desires is "the true lyric style, with all its flight of fancy." The *Elegy* is written with the most perfect of good manners which cannot make a great romantic poem. In his earlier poems he struggles to express his personal conflicts,

despair and frustrations within the Neo-Classical poetic conventions and he fails, but in the *Elegy* he finds the answer to his problem by writing an elegy and following Milton's *Lycidas* in which Milton gives voice to his own emotions. By identifying himself with the deceased friend West, Gray sets his own disappointments and frustrated hopes in a wider setting of which they are a part. But Gray appeals to resignation, not to the revolutionary spirit of Romanticism that sees no need for resignation and hiding or disguising personal emotions and experiences.

By writing of some barbarous cultures in which the passions seem to be strong and less inhibited in expression, Gray hopes to supply the want of passion in his poetry. Wordsworth has perhaps Gray in mind when he says, "The earlier poets ... wrote from passion excited by real events." A calm disillusionment with society and real events finds supreme expression in the *Elegy*. He is, however, an earlier and less adventurous explorer of the path that Wordsworth was to follow.

The cult of melancholy became an integral part of the novel of terror. A fresh interest developed in the ballad, in the folk literature, and in the medieval literature of Northern Europe. New poetical styles replaced the old, and the first volume of poems by Blake, the most radical and revolutionary poet, was published before the death of Samuel Johnson. Similar forces were at work in France and Germany and they inspired a group of brilliant young men who were passing through a period of Storm and Stress. The currents of the age were setting in the direction of the Romantic Movement.

Northrop Frye believes that in the **Age of Sensibility**, the period between the Augustans and the Romantics, the emphasis of literature is on 'process' rather than on 'product', and contemporary poetry is deeply concerned with the problems and techniques of the age of sensibility which is usually approached as a period of reaction against Pope and anticipation of Wordsworth, though no poet has ever regarded a later poet's work as the fulfillment of his own.

The theme of the 'Return to Nature' emerged clearly in the literature of sensibility. Although the word 'nature' has different meanings in different periods and to different writers, it came to mean natural genius as opposed to art and labor. The ethical basis for the literature of sensibility was a

belief in the natural goodness of man. All the novelties—the sentimental novel and drama, the poetry of nature as an ethical influence, the cult of 'sweet melancholy', and solitary retirement—aimed to ennoble the heart and refine the taste by awakening sensibility. Since the natural goodness of man was assumed to be latent in human nature, writers attempted both in subject matter and style to free that natural goodness from the bonds of convention and apply it to free and spontaneous activity. Spontaneous genius came to be considered as not only natural but also a divine force acting through nature. No other age has believed so naively in the power of natural, uneducated poets through whose souls the voice of Nature is heard.

Since this kind of genius is not subject to any law but its own, it was expected to produce a kind of literature that is natural either by its wild irregularity or by its homely simplicity. This kind of production, standing for Nature, is certainly opposed to the finished artistry of the Augustans, standing for Art.

This kind of opposition between Nature and Art was associated with a protest against urban life and civilization that were considered as a departure from the natural. The new sensibility was interested in the idealization of the natural condition of the primitive man, the praise of the noble savage. This kind of return to Nature was strongly supported by Jean-Jacques Rousseau who firmly believes that Nature had originally made man good, free, and happy, but civilization reduced him to crime, misery, and slavery. Therefore, improvement is possible only by returning to the simplicity and innocence of a more primitive mode of life and education according to Nature. Thus, Nature became the promise of a new freedom of the human personality, imagination, and emotions.

The growing spirit of democracy and the political agitation leading to the French Revolution had their effect upon literature. Of course, English writers before 1800 were more moderate and hesitant in the expression of the different moods of revolutionary romanticism than their contemporaries in France and Germany. Although, with the exception of Cowper, Burns, and Blake, the period had no other talented poet, they prepared the ground for the achievement of the next generation of poets.

The revival of the old ballads and medievalism, like the love of nature, contributed to the rise of romantic tendencies. The three volumes *Reliques of Ancient Poetry*, published in 1765 by Thomas Percy, marked an epoch in the history of English poetry. It not only popularized the ballad form and helped it remain an important literary genre, but also introduced ballad's simplicity of style that had deep effect on changing the taste of both readers and writers. Even Wordsworth admitted his indebtedness to the *Reliques*.

The revival of interest in medieval life and in 'Gothic' art contributed to the rise of romantic tendencies. Mystery and terror, already familiar excitements to the readers of the poetry of melancholy and the Graveyard School, were provided in more abundant measure by the Gothic novels or romances with their medieval settings of terror. They remind us of Coleridge's demand that the subject matter of poetry should be supernatural or, at least, romantic. Mrs. Radcliffe's virtuous heroines are sentimental and melancholy. Her best characters are her deep and dark villains who are superhuman in their terrible experience of crime and passion. Her followers, unlike her, do not explain away the mysteries as mere misunderstanding of normal phenomena.

The growing emotional intensity manifest in the literature of the age of sensibility had its religious counterpart in the awakening of the Evangelical revival. It appeared as a reaction against the rationalism of the Enlightenment and a return to the emotional and intuitive religious experience. The supporters of the revival claimed that religion was felt in the individual soul as a powerful experience. They talked of the grace of God being felt in the heart, not in the mind, of the believer.

So many Anglicans, who always suspected the religious enthusiasm of the Dissenters, considered 'the pretending to extraordinary revelations' as a horrid thing'. But the impassioned preaching of the ministers of the revival stirred the heart of people and won a multitude of followers.

John and Charles Wesley, the founders and leaders of the Evangelical Movement, were Anglican priests who were forced by the hostility of the Established Church into organizing the independent sect of **Methodism** which flourished among the lower-class English people, and not only

brought them solace in their sorrows and difficulties, but gave them personal worth that influenced their social and political ideals and led them to the demand for democracy.

William Cowper (1731-1800), whose name is pronounced /cooper/, struggled, in the latter part of his life, with fits of madness and melancholia. He suffered from an obsession that the grace of God was withheld from him and that his eternal damnation was already decreed. His friendship with Mrs. Mary Unwin at Olney led to the publication of *Olney Hymns* (1779) written by both of them. It was Mrs. Unwin who encouraged him to secular poetical efforts that led to the composition of eight satires in heroic couplets, but he was by nature too gentle to become a great satirist.

The Task (1785), a blank-verse poem in six books, is the great achievement of Cowper who wrote it under the encouragement of Lady Austen. Cowper describes the quiet delights of the English countryside and those of cultivated social and domestic life. *The Task* is a series of accurate and delightful sketches of village and rural life. Cowper has discovered a new way of making poetry out of the simple truth of commonplace life. His style, though influenced by Milton, is familiar and conversational, and his poetry is not too exalted for human nature's daily food. His verse is not all-descriptive; sometimes he uses his literary talents in the causes of religion and virtue.

Cowper hates the civilization of modern cities: "God made the country, but man made the town." His taste has been formed the nature poets: "No bard could please me but his lyre was turned / To Nature's praises." He is reminiscent of Wordsworth when he talks of learning without books in the solitude of Nature where "the heart / May give a useful lessons to the head."

as a young poet, Coleridge was inspired by Cowper who, says Coleridge, "combined natural thoughts with natural diction." **Robert Burns** (1759-1796) discovered the great possibilities of a more natural and spontaneous style. Seven years after his death, Wordsworth stood beside his grave and paid his tribute to the poet

Whose light I hailed when first it shone
And showed my youth

How verse may build a princely throne

On humble truth

Robert Burns, the Scottish peasant poet, was a highly educated man and the inheritor of an ancient tradition of vernacular song and poetry. He had his roots deep in the soil of Scotland from which he drew his strength. Without his love and respect for his own people he could never have won their hearts and become their acknowledged national poet.

The familiarity of Burns's subject matter and his inheritance of a living tradition of Scottish poetry were the causes of the immediate success of his poetry among all classes. Burns is not an original genius to shape the taste of his people; he has only assimilated the Scottish traditions and made them his own. The only novelty in his poetry is its remarkable felicity and vigor. In spite of his romantic tendencies, he is a realist and satirist. Some of his most effective poems such as 'Holy Willie's Prayer', and 'The Holy Fair' tear the mask off religious hypocrisy. With fidelity and vividness he portrays the lovely as well as the unlovely aspects of Scottish life and character. The truthfulness of his poetry reflects the independence of Burns the man. He understands the democratic spirit, and his poetry is modern in its assertion of the essential worth of man regardless of rank or wealth. It voices the aspirations that were awakened by the French and American revolutions which kindled the political liberalism in him. According to Wordsworth, Burns is part of the literary revolution of his age.

In spite of his gifts, his accurate observation, his power of satire, his liberal mind, and his descriptive power, Burns is above all a lyricist. His poetry achieves that free and natural expression of the emotional life favored by the literature of sensibility. He admires Thomson, but his own nature poetry is the simple observation of the Scottish farmer. Since his genius is social, he prefers human themes and avoids writing odes on solitude and retirement. His strong native feelings and his spontaneous style are typical qualities of the literature of sensibility. His lyrical power is admirable; his patriotism is emotional; his love lyrics are based on tender passions.

PART III

ROMANTIC PERIOD

Chapter 11

The Triumph of Romantic Revolt

The age-old feeling of romance which had pulsed so strongly during the Elizabethan Age and which had gone underground during the time of the Augustans welled up again with a new intensity in the opening decades of the nineteenth century. Having grown tired of Augustan dogmatism —of being told that the only place worth living in was London, the only life worth leading was that of high society, and the only authors worth reading were those who addressed themselves to London society in a certain manner and on certain subjects—Englishmen in the early nineteenth century threw off Augustan restraint in favor of a more daring and imaginative approach to both literature and life.

Oddly enough the Age of Reason contained the seeds of its own destruction. Having boasted that their social and literary achievements were the best because they were based on reason—the kind of reason that lay behind the scientific achievements of Newton—the Augustans could only sit back in bewilderment when men began using reason to expose the absurdities inherent in Augustan life itself. To the men of the early nineteenth century it was absurd to think, as had the Augustans, that a man of immense wealth and noble position was necessarily superior to a small businessman, a factory worker, or a farmer. It was equally absurd to regard the neoclassical writings of Pope and Johnson as superior to the less "civilized" works of Shakespeare or Robert Burns. In spite of all the claims of the Augustans to scientific reasonableness, it began to be apparent that they had merely used the prestige of scientific reasoning to buttress a basically snobbish way of life.

The French Revolution

The Collapse of fashionable eighteenth-century society was even more spectacular in France than

it was in England. In France power was still in the hands of an absolute monarch and an overprivileged, dissolute aristocracy. For years the object of smoldering popular hatred, this Old French regime came tumbling down in a series of fiery and bloody events that began with the storming of the Bastille prison in 1789, and that ended with the rise of Napoleon and his final defeat by a coalition of nations at the Battle of Waterloo in 1815.

English history in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries is largely the story of England's involvement—either direct or indirect—with the French Revolution. For a time almost every important British man of letters responded warmly to the cry of the French people for "Liberty, Equality, Fraternity." William Wordsworth later declared:

Bliss was it in that dawn to be alive,
But to be young was very heaven!

When Napoleon set out on his conquest of Europe, early democratic ardors cooled, and from 1795 to 1815 England was allied with other nations in an all-out war against France. By the close of the year 1815 Napoleon was in final exile on the remote British island of St. Helena and the victorious allies had met in Vienna and had agreed on a massive reconstruction of the map of Europe.

The Spread of Democracy

Although the Napoleonic Wars had stifled the more ardent cries of "Liberty, Equality, Fraternity," one of the most significant aspects of nineteenth-century English life was the slow but steady application of the principles of democracy. Although England emerged from the eighteenth century a parliamentary state in which the Crown was largely a decorative post, the English Parliament was far from a truly representative body. The privileged peers in the House of Lords had almost equal power with the House of Commons, which in turn was elected by less than one sixth of the adult male population. No working-class people and only the wealthiest of the middle class had the right to vote. Particularly unfair was the fact that in the mushrooming factory towns of the North representation was practically nonexistent. After years of popular agitation Parliament finally passed the First

Reform Bill of 1832. This bill extended the franchise to virtually all the middle class; it did not enfranchise the working class, which had to wait until the end of the century to benefit from the rising democratic tide.

The Need for Social Change

The working class in England lived under deplorable conditions. As the Industrial Revolution gathered force, towns became cities; more and more villagers, forced by economic necessity to seek work in the growing factories, huddled together in filthy slums. Men, women, and children worked from sunrise to sunset for paltry wages. No child able to pull a cart in the suffocating coal mines or to sweep a floor in the textile factories was considered too young to work. For the children of the poor, religious training, medical care, and education were practically nonexistent.

Most Englishmen were apparently unconcerned by the plight of the workers, but among those who clearly saw the need for reform and who resolutely set out to bring it about were three young reformers -George Whitefield and John and Charles Wesley. As early as 1729 they had organized a little band of Oxford students' for the practice of religion. Members of the group were dubbed *Methodists* because they resolved to conduct their lives and religious study by "rule and method." Although the three leaders never broke away from the Church of England, they created a great new religious movement whose message was the love and forgiveness of God. In the noisy, crowded factory towns of the North of England, in the filthy alleys of London, and even in the American colonies across the , Atlantic, they sought out both the lonely and the wrongdoer to tell them of the wonders of "the new heaven and the new earth." Indirectly they awakened the church and the government to their responsibilities. Sunday schools were organized. Hospitals were built. Great movements were begun to reform the prisons, to free the slaves, and to regulate the conditions of child labor. Gradually English society began to awaken to its obligation to the miserable and the helpless.

Romanticism

The effects of revolution abroad, the demand for a more democratic government, and a growing awareness of social injustice at home were all reflected in a new spirit that over a period of years affected practically every aspect of English life. The years characterized by this new attitude are known as the Age of Romanticism. Simplicity and naturalness rather than artificiality characterized this new era. To the Age of Reason nature had meant the well-laid-out formal garden with its neatly clipped hedges and patterned flower beds. Now there was a resurgence of interest in wild and lonely stretches of forest or mountain. The beautifully proportioned formal homes of the eighteenth century had been inspired by the columned buildings of classical Greece and the domes of ancient Rome; but the architects of the Romantic Age tried to recapture with bristling spires, arched windows, high vaulted ceilings, and general Gothic "gloomth" the mysterious atmosphere of the Middle Ages. In dress, the elaborate silks and satins of the Augustan Age were giving way to plain, woolens and cotton cloth. Buckled knee breeches were being replaced by plain pantaloons Powdered hair was seen less and less. Only judges, members of the clergy, and a few other professional persons continued to wear wigs. Over against the Augustan ideal of the elegant gentleman who never behaved unreasonably and who was never more content than when he could reduce life to a few clear rules and regulations stood the new romantic hero who valued freedom above all things and who longed for the unattainable.

The Romantic Revolt in England was part of a movement that affected all the countries of the Western World. France, Italy, and the German states were shaken by it, and even in the far-off United States its influence was felt. The forms of romanticism were so many and varied that it is difficult to speak of the movement as a whole. It did align itself with the humanitarian spirit of the democratic revolutionaries, but, as you will see from your study of nineteenth-century literature, romantics were not always democrats and democrats were not always romantics. The only really safe thing to say is that romanticism represents a revolt against reason as the only and the supreme guide in all areas of

living and rejects the idea that life can be reduced to a few scientific formulas.

The Romantic Revolt in Literature

It is in literature that we can best see the emergence and growth of the romantic spirit in England. In the eighteenth century William Blake had listened not to reason but to intuition. Robert Burns had written of the joys and sorrows of humble village folk. Thomas Gray had rediscovered the beauties of nature. All of these strains —the belief in intuition, the emphasis on emotion rather than reason, the interest in humble life, and the rediscovery of the outdoor world —became progressively important as the Romantic Movement took form and became the dominant-literary expression of the early nineteenth century.

Alexander Pope and the other poets of the Age of Reason showed little interest in the outdoor world. When they wrote of nature at all, they treated it artificially. In the nineteenth century William Wordsworth turned to contemplation of the unfathomable beauties of wild, untrammelled nature; and various aspects of man's relation to nature echo through the work of the other romantic poets. The people who appeared in the typical poetry of the eighteenth century belonged to the fashionable world, but Wordsworth, like Burns before him, wrote of humble life. Throughout the Augustan Age interest centered in the ancient classics of Greece and Rome, from which Pope and other leading writers drew up strict "rules" and standards as guides for their own writing. However, a few authors turned to other aspects of the past. Among them was Bishop Thomas Percy, who, in 1765, published *Reliques of Ancient English Poetry*, a collection of ballads dating back to medieval times. These forgotten evidences of England's past became extremely popular with the romantics. They relished the medieval atmosphere, the sense of mystery and the supernatural, the elemental themes of courage and valor, hatred and revenge, love and death. Sir Walter Scott, John Keats, and Samuel Taylor Coleridge all wrote ballads and all tried to recapture in other ways the mysterious atmosphere of the Middle Ages. But whether the romantics wrote odes to nature, sang lyrics of humble life, or gave themselves

up to visions of far-off climes and distant times, they expressed emotions and wrote to create an emotional effect.

To some people romanticism with its emphasis on emotion seems a flight from reason and a cowardly attempt to escape from unpleasant reality. Others see it as an attempt to go beyond reality into the deeper, less obvious, and more elusive levels of human existence. Good and evil, beauty and deformity, tenderness and savagery, joy and death—these and other disturbing states are not entered in the notebook of the scientist or the ledger of the businessman, but they lie hidden behind his every word and gesture. It is this level of reality that the romantic seeks to explore and, if he is an artist, to uncover.

Chapter 12

Romanticism: Definition, Points of View, and Poetic Theory

Romanticism is a comprehensive term standing for a large number of tendencies in the European literature, art, and culture in the late 18th and early 19th centuries. Although Romanticism manifested itself everywhere as a shift in sensibility and pulled away from philosophical rationalism and Neo-Classicism, it was not a unified movement with a clearly agreed agenda: its emphases varied widely according to time, place, and individual writer. In the late eighteenth century, Romanticism described anything in art that was irregular or lawless. None of the Romantic poets thought of his own poetry as Romantic; it was the later criticism that considered the publication of the *Lyrical Ballads* as the herald of the Romantic Revival. English Romantic poets exploited and intensified the Romantic feelings that existed before their time.

Students often consider Romanticism as a movement beginning with the publication of *Lyrical Ballads* in 1798 and ending in 1832. Although the movement started in Germany in 1770s with the early writings of **Herder**, **Schiller**, and **Goethe**, and it was nourished by the American and French Revolutions, it is as old as **Homer** whose *Odyssey* is often considered as a Romantic epic. Shakespeare, Spenser, Sidney and many others exhibit many Romantic qualities. Imagination is a great Romantic value, and Shakespeare, Homer, and Spenser are among the most imaginative poets of the world.

Imagination in the Middle Ages meant memory, the servant of reason. By Shakespeare's time imagination had acquired exactly its modern meaning. In *Midsummer Night's Dream*, Shakespeare

says:

The lunatic, the lover and the poet
Are of imagination all compact...
The poet's eye, in a fine frenzy rolling,
Does glance from heaven to earth, from earth to heaven;
And as imagination bodies forth
The forms of things unknown, the poet's pen
Turns them to shapes, and gives the airy nothing
A local habitation and a name.

Neo-Classical poets believe that imagination and genius should be curbed by reason because they are allied to madness. They deny the divine nature attributed to it by the Romantic poets.

The term Romanticism is often used as the antithesis of Classicism and Neo-Classicism. It is also opposed to Realism and Naturalism that were later developments. But students of literature should keep it in mind that the contrast between Romanticism and Classicism is often exaggerated mainly because literary histories have neglected the fact that English Classicism and Neo-Classicism were derived from Roman Classicism, while Greek Classicism is more imaginative. Greeks emphasized nature in the sense of genius; Romans favored art in the sense of craftsmanship, elegance, and polish.

It is not difficult to work out some definition of Romanticism, but no definition can do justice to our understanding of English Romantics, because they do not share the same sensibility; they had no code to which they all would subscribe; their reaction to the poetics of Pope and Dryden was neither systematic nor complete. Not only Romanticism but also all other schools can be traced in Wordsworth, Blake, and Byron. Blake and Byron are satirists with Neo-Classical tendencies. In its simplest definition, Romanticism is the disposition to seek for an ideal world within and beyond the actual, the world that suits the needs of the heart. Romanticism transcends reality and sees the infinite within the finite. Even such a simple definition presents us with many paradoxes: we find that some

of the Romantics make more use of the actual than their predecessors did, and they are more realistic, or they think that imagination depends on sense impression. In some of their satirical poems, they are more objective than even Pope and Dryden. Therefore, we have to be cautious that no definition of Romanticism can be applicable to all Romantic poets or all their poems.

Classicism stands for certain ideas and attitudes such as objectivity, stability, restraint, restricted scope, dominance of reason, sense of form unity of design and aim, clarity, logical organization, order, universality, perfection, moderation, decorum, respect for tradition, adherence to rules and conventions, imitation, and the like. Romantics reject almost all such values. Instead, they favor subjectivity, change, freedom (in thought, form, design and subject matter), imagination and intuition, emotion and feeling, symbolism and myth, individualism, imperfection and the philosophy of becoming, rejection of literary tradition and conventions, invention and originality, spontaneity, genius, primitivism, love of outside nature, medievalism, mysticism, and the like.

Although the English Romantic Movement started in the latter part of the 18th century, it was not till the publication of *Lyrical Ballads* that its characteristics became prominent and self-conscious.

English Romantic poets abandoned heroic couplet in favor of blank verse, Spenserian stanza, love lyric, nature lyric, reflective lyric and different experimental verse forms. They rejected personification and conventional poetic diction in favor of a fresher language, bolder figures of speech, myths and symbols.

We witness in different Romantics different shifts of emphasis with regard to the characteristics of Romanticism. Most of them share the enthusiasm for the wild, irregular, or grotesque in nature and art, and for the uncivilized and the natural. Goldsmith idealizes rural life; Wordsworth considers nature as a guide, a source of inspiration and solace; Cowper has sympathy with animal life; Gray cares for sentimental melancholy; Richardson loves emotional psychology in fiction; Burns and Byron show interest in human rights; Percy and Scott imitate popular ballads, and they are interested in Celtic and Scandinavian mythology; Blake blames the church for nourishing superstitious beliefs,

and the government for tyranny; Shelley is fond of Platonic idealism and political radicalism; Keats portrays the rise to the ideal and the sudden fall to the real, distinguishing between the poet who creates and the man who suffers; and Coleridge loves the subject matter that is 'supernatural or, at least, romantic'.

The six great English Romantic poets —**Blake, Wordsworth, Coleridge, Byron, Keats, and Shelley**— do not hold exactly the same views of art and poetry. Although Allen Poe follows Coleridge, American Romantics— **Bryant, Emerson, Lowell, Thoreau, Whittier, Hawthorne, and Melville**— have their own particular views. The six English Romantic poets belong to two distinct generations; they differ sharply in their theory and practice, hold conflicting views, and in some cases dislike one another. The Romanticism of each Romantic poet is particular and it is not proper to generalize, but, viewed in philosophical terms, Romanticism does have a somehow definite meaning for the student of literature: the term designates a literary and philosophical theory that sees the individual at the very center of all life and all experience. Romanticism places man at the center of art, and makes literature an expression of man's unique feelings, particular attitudes, and experiences. It values the creative function of imagination and considers art as a formulation of the intuitive and imaginative perceptions that speak a nobler truth than that of fact and logic. It sees in Nature a revelation of truth. Nature is the 'living garment of God', who has manifested Himself in man and Nature. Romanticism employs the commonplace, the natural and the simple materials, but it seeks to find the ideal by transcending the actual. However, students-should be aware that they can hardly find a single poem or poet that can exhibit all these characteristics.

Romanticism existed in a narrow sense from the very beginning, and it is still with us. The last third of the nineteenth century substituted a soberer mood for the one that prevailed earlier in the century. The earlier twentieth century, both in England and America, reacted sharply against the Romantic, especially the sentimental spirit in literature, but we must remember that much of the Victorian literature is romantic, and the vitality of Romanticism is evidenced by the great volume of

Romantic writing produced in the twentieth century.

Students of literature have little problem with other literary schools, while Romanticism very often bewilders them because literary histories and even great critics have given different and even contradictory definitions of the term. It is strange that a poet like **Goethe**, who was once a romantic poet, once said that the Classics are healthy and the Romantics are sick. But many critics have reacted by saying that if Keats is sick, we all desire to be sick.

Romanticism is a philosophy of becoming, not that of being. The eighteenth-century world is like a clock; God winds it up and it works. One conceives of the universe as a perfectly ordered machine, but the Romantic universe is a living organism that is subject to change and growth. Therefore, change becomes a positive value, it is man's opportunity to strive to be original and grow.

Classical poetry is an imitation of human nature expressed with complete objectivity; Romantic poetry is the product of the poet's creative imagination; to quote Wordsworth, "poetry is a spontaneous overflow of powerful feelings." When Alexander Pope decided to write a philosophical poem, he wrote *The Essay on Man* to talk about man's universal nature. When Wordsworth wrote *The Prelude*, he called it *The Growth of a Poet's Mind*, meaning the growth of his own mind. Thus, the emphasis shifts from social man to the individual man, when he is alone with his own heart or alone with Nature. Therefore, those who feel that man is most himself in solitude will naturally turn to the poetry of the Romantic age, but those who feel that man is most himself in society will turn to the poetry of other ages.

Romantic poets have none of Samuel Johnson's respect for 'general nature', 'universal nature' or 'grandeur of generality'. Blake says, "To generalize is to be an Idiot. To Particularize is alone the distinction of Merit."

In *The Mirror and the Lamp*, M. H. Abrams talks about the relation between poetry, the poet, and the audience. From the beginning through the eighteenth century, a work of art is an objective means to an end. It is ordered towards and answers the demands of an audience, not the poet, and it instructs

by pleasing. Abrams calls it '**pragmatic theory**' because of its practical and utilitarian purpose. Abrams also talks about '**objective theory**' and orientation in the twentieth century when the emphasis is shifted to the work of art without any regard to utility; it is the poem that is important, not the poet or audience. What is important for our purpose is the '**expressive theory**' by which he means that with the appearance of the Romantic Movement the focus of critical interest shifted from the audience to the artist. A Romantic work of art is essentially the internal made external; it is the poet's self-expression; it is the product of the poet's thoughts and feelings; it pleases the poet as well as the reader; and it gives the reader insight into the mind and heart of the poet himself. Romantic poets turn away from literary types like epic and tragedy, which demand objectivity; instead, they favor lyric poetry that can convey the poet's thoughts and emotions.

The most distinguished characteristic that differentiates the Romantic poets from the poets of the previous age is their view of imagination and the importance they attached to it. For the Romantics, imagination is so fundamental that without it poetry is impossible. English philosophy in the eighteenth century is dominated by the philosophy of John Locke, who holds that the perception of the mind is wholly passive. Locke is the target of Romantic poets, especially Blake and Coleridge, who insist that imagination is the most vital activity of the mind, it is divine and the source of spiritual energy. Therefore, when they exercise it, they take part in the creative activity of God.

Romantic poets believe that only imagination can reveal the truth and give them insight into the life of things. When it is at work, it sees things to which reason is blind. To Coleridge, an imaginative mind is 'the image of the Creator'.

The word poet means prophet to Greeks and to most Romantic poets who rely on vision through which they desire to grasp the ultimate truths. Blake and Coleridge are visionary poets. The poet at the end of '**Kubla Khan**' appears as a prophet-poet who lives in poetic ecstasy and has drunk the milk of paradise. It is in such remote and strange experiences, which are beyond the senses, that Romantics write poetry. The world of senses for them is only the instrument, which sets their visionary powers

in action.

Without inspiration poetry is not possible. Blake calls himself 'God's secretary'. Imagination and inspiration are sacred. Romantics find their initial inspiration in Nature, in which God has manifested Himself. They take their symbols from Nature and use them to interpret the unseen. Wordsworth's true home is in Nature, that of Blake and Coleridge is in vision, in which they give full liberty to their creative imagination and transform sense-data through it. Imagination for all of them uncovers the reality masked by visible things. Nature or the familiar world used as a symbol gives them hints that must be taken, pursued, and developed. To quote Blake,

To see a World in a Grain of Sand
And a Heaven in a Wild Flower,
Hold Infinity in the palm of your hand
And Eternity in an hour.

It is through visible things that Blake reaches the transcendent state that he calls 'eternity'. Any visible thing symbolizes some hidden truth. Blake is a visionary who says of himself: "I am in God's presence night and day, / And He never turns his face away." Of all Romantics, Blake is the most rigorous in his conception of imagination. He strongly declares: "One Power alone makes a Poet: Imagination, The Divine Vision." To Keats, imagination is a power that reveals some truth through creation. To Coleridge, imagination is a shaping power, and Shelley calls poetry 'the expression of imagination' and believes that the poet is a seer gifted with an insight into the nature of reality.

In spite of their belief in the creative power of imagination, Romantic poets have different views of genius, artistic education, subject matter, style, the aim of poetry, and the nature of poetry and the poet. These will be dealt with in the chapter on literary criticism.

Chapter 13

The Essayists and Other Prose Writers in the Romantic Period

In the early 19th century, when short story had not gained any significance yet to be considered as a literary type, periodicals (reviews and magazines) encouraged the extensive writing of essays. The function of the review was to survey, comment, and evaluate politics, literature, science, and art; that of the magazine was to give information on variety of subjects and print fanciful prose and verse. While most reviews supported the Whigs, magazines were without party affiliations and tried to instruct and entertain.

The first decade of the 19th century inaugurated the golden age of English periodicals that have proved to be more scholarly than those of the 18th century. The 18th-century periodicals were limited to a short period of several years, and the essays of each were written only by one man who was poorly paid. In 1802, three young men (Francis Jeffrey, an advocate; Henry Brougham, a barrister who became Lord Chancellor; and Sydney Smith, an Anglican clergyman) who were living in Edinburgh and were conservative in taste and liberal in political outlook, founded *The Edinburgh Review and critical journal* (1802-1829) to support the Whigs in the advocacy of reform. Its reviews and essays were written by men of vigorous mind and independent judgement. The contributors wrote from conviction, not of necessity. They wrote (reviews that were notable essays. Very high pay secured the services of great writers like Sir Walter Scott, Hazlitt, Macaulay, Carlyle, and Dr. Thomas Arnold.

Francis Jeffrey acted as the chief editor until 1829. He imposed his own views on readers who desired guidance. He was loyal to the Classical tradition and, therefore, disliked the new Romantic

literature. Later in his life he admitted that his early judgements of Romantic poets were at fault. Miss colleague Henry Brougham was admired for his courageous endeavors in the cause of political, social, and educational reforms, and his gifts as a statesman and orator. Sydney Smith was the mainstay of the journal in its championship of reforms. His powers as a satirist and advocate of reform were of great help in the emancipation of Catholics and the elevation of female education.

The Quarterly Review, founded in 1809, very soon rivaled the *Edinburgh Review* in authority and circulation, but it was never so uniformly brilliant in style. Sir Walter Scott wrote for it, but Southey was its greatest contributor. In 1817, Blackwood started the publication of Beachwood's *Edinburgh Magazine*. The main contributors were poets and novelists. It was not attached to any political party; it offered entertainment and published verse and fiction.

The brilliant but short-lived *London Magazine* (1820-1829) was edited by John Scott who secured the services of notable writers like Lamb, Hazlitt, and De Quincey. It was liberal in politics and its literary sympathies went with the Romantics. Its serious rival was the *New Monthly Magazine*. The *Fraser's Magazine* was very influential and managed to combine amusement with the serious advocacy of many reforms. The *Westminster Review*, founded in 1824, was the organ of the philosophic radicals. It published the criticism of both Whigs and Tories. Many novels of the Victorian novelists were published serially in these periodicals.

The appearance and expansion of periodicals created a large market for the professional writers of essays. The great essayists, with the single exception of Hazlitt, were not radicals and, thus, they enjoyed more popular approval than the Romantic poets, spoke to a wider audience, and nourished Romantic viewpoints. But Walter Savage Landor, the poet and prose writer, followed the Classical tradition of letters and did not favor the Romantic tendencies.

Charles Lamb (1775-1834), unlike Romantics, was indifferent to nature while he was the friend of great poets who were lovers of nature. London was his home and delight throughout his life. He told Wordsworth that he would not exchange *Fleet Street* for any mountain. He was educated at

Christ's Hospital, where he formed a lifelong friendship with his schoolmate Coleridge, through whom he later met Wordsworth, whom he regarded as the greatest of living poets.

The poems and plays of Charles Lamb have never impressed anybody, and he is now known as an essayist. His fame came with *Tales from Shakespeare* (1807). Though only his name appears on the title page, he wrote only the six tragedies and his sister Mary the fourteen comedies. What is significant about these tales is the skill with which Shakespeare's language is retained in simplified narrative form. The style matches the subject so perfectly that the tales look like original ones. The charming book was addressed to children, but it was appealing to the adult readers at the time when Romantic poet had raised Shakespeare to his modern position of supreme national poet.

In 1808, Lamb published *The Adventures of Ulysses* that depends too much on Chapman's *Odyssey*. In the same year Lamb published the *Specimen of the English Dramatic Poets Who Lived About the Time of Shakespeare* which is an excellent anthology in spite of its inadequate appreciation of Marlow's genius. Many passages in the anthology are illuminated with brief comments that are of great critical value.

In 1809, Lamb's *Mrs. Leicester's School* appeared. It contains ten delicate and tender tales of childhood, three by Charles and seven by Mary, in which memories are interwoven with fiction. These beautiful stories are supposedly related by the 'young ladies' of the school and are set down by their teacher. This interesting book of tales was soon followed by *Poems for Children* (1809), mainly by Mary. These poems are interesting for their humor and pathos, and the collection is the best book that the Lambs published together.

Lamb's letters to Coleridge, Wordsworth, and other friends are among Lamb's most valuable writings. They are full of critical comments on literature. From 1820 to 1825 Lamb contributed essays signed 'Elia' to *The London Magazine*. These essays are Romantic in color and warmth. They have close affinity to the 17th-century prose, for Lamb has imitated the style and mood of Robert Burton with great fidelity. Lamb has followed Burton's curiosity and delight in strange learning. Lamb's

elaborate treatment of small things are reminiscent of Sir Thomas Browne.

Lamb is the master of simple and direct prose style whenever his subject demands such a style. Very often he follows the elaborate harmonies of pre-Augustan prose. Like all Romantics, Lamb is self-revelatory, but he has nothing of Wordsworth's 'egotistical sublime'. Experience has made him too clear-sighted to take himself or anybody else too seriously. The admission of his own weaknesses, follies, and prejudices provide humorous warnings to his readers.

Lamb's affection for children, which is rooted in the memories of his own childhood, and odd characters and situations, recollected from his own youth, are the material of so many of his essays. The prevailing mood is pathos, but Lamb is a humorist. Whenever he is on the verge of sentimentality, he checks himself with laughter. Thus, he accomplishes many of his individual effects by recognizing the nearness of laughter to tears. To him human life consists of the contrast and affinity of these two moods.

Lamb's fame is based on his essays; he is called 'the prince of English essayists'. His essays are concerned not so much with thought as with poetic emotion. He projects his own personality in every line and takes his readers into his fullest confidence. His essays are lyrics in prose.

Lamb's Romanticism is no escape from life or from London. He is no worshipper of Nature. His Romanticism depends on sentimentalizing his own past experience, memory, and personality. In religion, Lamb sympathizes with the Unitarians; in politics, he is a radical with many reservations. In his writings, he never claims to be a teacher or a prophet. He loves his fellow-men and asks for nothing more than their affection.

William Hazlitt (1778-1830) is in many ways the opposite of Lamb. His peculiar temperament made him quarrel with all his friends except Lamb. He was often contemptuous, sometimes malignant. His enemies ridiculed his solitude and misery, but he was not miserable. In fact, at the time of his death he said that he had lived a happy life. He railed against people and institutions but not against life. His prejudices sometimes blind him to merit. His jealousy of rank affects his low

estimate of Shelley, and his hostility to some lord ruined his sympathy with Lord Byron's liberalism.

In spite of his hot temper, Hazlitt's honest conviction was never seduced by the consideration of worldly interest. He was no man's hireling. He dislikes Burke's politics, but praises him as a writer. He regards Wordsworth as a turncoat but called him the greatest poet of the age. He would kneel to Sir Walter Scott, the novelist, but he would not shake hands with the Tory Sir Walter Scott. For all his egotism, he was passionately devoted to the rights and liberties of mankind. This devotion to freedom binds together all his work.

Hazlitt's ambition was to become a painter, but friends, Coleridge and Wordsworth, shaped his course toward literature. Intercourse with Coleridge turned his mind to philosophy, and in 1805 he wrote *An Essay on the Principles of Human Action* that reflects his catholic sympathies as a critic of art and literature.

His marriage in 1808 made him seek a livelihood as a journalist and lecturer. His theatrical criticisms, written after 1813, were collected in *A View of the English Stage* (1818), which shows Hazlitt's interest not for scholarship but for the plays, for actors, and for the audience. His knowledge of the practical problems of the stage led him to lectures on the *Characters of Shakespeare's Plays* (1817), in which Hazlitt ignores historical and philosophical research and shares with the readers the enjoyment of Shakespeare's profound and varied views of human life. He does not care for obscurities; he is receptive, making the reader believe that a character is what the reader senses. He establishes the realization that "it is we who are Hamlet." He interprets Shakespeare's bad characters sympathetically, and introduces psychological approach to Shakespeare.

Hazlitt's short essays published in *The Examiner* were collected in *The Round Table* (1817) that includes papers on Milton. It was followed by three other books: *Lectures on the English Poets* (1818), *Lectures on the English Comic Writers* (1819), and *Lectures on the Dramatic Literature of the Age of Elizabeth* (1820). These books carry on the work began by Lamb. Except for Chaucer, Hazlitt has little sympathy with the medieval literature, but he is well grounded on the entire line of English

literature since Sidney. He speaks enthusiastically of the poets he likes and skips those he dislikes. His viewpoint is strongly Romantic and anti-Augustan. He admires Restoration drama and considers Congreve the greatest comic genius of English drama.

Table-Talk (1821-1822) ranges over literature and life, and contains some of the best essays of Hazlitt such as 'On Going a Journey' and 'On the Fear of Death'. It also contains 'The Epistle to William Clifford' in which Hazlitt pours out the vials of his spleen and hatred upon the Tory editor who had treated him insolently.

When Hazlitt was at the top of his powers, he got involved in an unhappy and sordid love affair. He madly fell in love with Sarah Walker, the daughter of his landlord and a hypocrite. This shameful love affair, which led him to divorce his wife, is recorded in *Liber Amoris* (Book of Love, 1823) that is a frank self-analysis. In 1824, Hazlitt set out upon a Continental tour with his second wife. His impressions, contributed to *The Morning Chronicle*, are collected in *Notes on a Journey Through France and Italy* (1826).

Hazlitt's finest writings belong to a few years before 1827 when his second marriage terminated. In *The Spirit of the Age, or Contemporary Portraits* (1825) he is at his best in the criticism of his contemporaries, for he is rarely betrayed by his prejudices. The picture of his closest friend, Lamb, is one of the most dignified and balanced tributes ever paid to an intimate literary acquaintance. It is the best portrait in the book, which consists of twenty-five portraits of the personal character and writings of his contemporaries. *The Plain Speaker; or Opinions on Books, Men and Things* has a wider range and is written more serenely. The last few years of his life were wasted upon *The Life of Napoleon* (1828-1830) that is a failure.

Hazlitt's contemporaries blamed him for living a life of self-torture, but he himself thought that he had lived a happy life. His enemies sneered at his want of education and at the narrow limits of his reading. He was honest enough to admit the truth of these charges. As a young man his reading was undisciplined; in later life he came to dislike reading and, like Lamb, relied mainly on memories and

impressions of former years. Passionate retrospection is a prevalent note in his essays. The danger is that his early admiration of some of writers and painters provided him with the touchstones in his moral and intellectual criticism of art.

His function as a critic, says Hazlitt, is "to feel what is good and give reasons for the faith that is in me." His enemies talk about discords in his nature, but the discords in his nature are resolved into harmony through his love of literature, painting, and natural scenery that rejoice him, and he wishes to share his enjoyment with his readers, not to keep it to himself. His criticism depends upon what Keats calls his 'depth of taste'. That is why his criticism is very often Romantic. He openly says, "I say what I think; I think what I feel I cannot help receiving certain impressions from things; and I have sufficient courage to declare what they are." He looks for 'gusto' and, like Lamb, utilizes the method of the impressionistic response to literary criticism.

Hazlitt is more Romantic and emotional than Lamb. The serenity and unity we feel and witness while reading Lamb's writings is alien to Hazlitt's. Each essay starts with an idea, but no conclusion is reached. He makes an extensive use of comparisons and contrasts-In the terseness and clarity of his prose style; he is a link between the 18th century lucidity and the force and conciseness of Macaulay. Yet as a stylist he commands a wider range, and is often charged with Romantic emotionality as in the 'Farewell to Essay-Writing'.

When Thomas De Quincey (1785-1859) began to write for a living, he wrote on an immense variety of subjects. He came of a well-to-do family, but since he was impractical in worldly affairs, he soon squandered his little fortune and fell into the hands of money-lenders. He ran away from school, wandered in Wales, and went to London where he found himself homeless and penniless. In 1804, he first had recourse to opium for the relief of toothache, and opium-eating stayed with him for the rest of his life. He came to terms with his guardians and became an Oxford student for five years, but he left the university without a degree. Then, he started writing essays for periodicals. Of his 215 essays, published in periodicals, have survived. Of his three books, *Klosterheim* (1832), a tedious

novel of the Thirty Years' War, and *Logic of Political Economy* (1844) are negligible. His best and memorable book *The Confessions of English Opium-Eater* (1822) was published in the London Magazine. It attracted wide attention and made him famous. He published an enlarged edition of it in 1856 and added beautiful passages to it.

De Quincey was an intimate friend of Lamb, Wordsworth, and Coleridge. He recognized Wordsworth's genius and admired his love of novelty. His vast learning and all-embracing curiosity enabled him to turn any material to his own purpose. He stimulated and helped to supply the demand for translations from the German Romanticism. He interpreted Kant, but had no interest in the later development of German idealism. The series of biographies of *The Caesar* are more Classical because he has restrained his tendency to discursiveness.

De Quincey wrote constantly on English literature, interweaving biography and criticism. He is in the company of self-revelatory Romantics. Like Lamb he shaped his recollections into the form of art. His greatness lies in presenting actuality through his adventures into the world of dreams. His main fault as a writer is his discursiveness. He uses his most elaborate style for the record of meditations and of dreams. His memorable works have endured for their remarkable style, for the impassioned poetic prose culminating in the ornate style best known in *Sir Thomas Browne*. He employs every rhetorical device to achieve majestic harmony and splendor in words. He usually produces periodic sentences, common in emotive writing, to hold the reader in suspense. Allusions, apostrophes, personifications and other rhetorical figures weave the rich tapestry of emotion and sensation. Much of his prose can be printed as free verse, for it falls into regular scansion, especially anapestic.

Some of De Quincey's essays are still of great help to the students of "literature. The essay 'Knocking at the Gate in Macbeth' is highly perceptive as Romantic criticism. The essay's concern is with the powerful emotional impact-upon the reader or viewer. He believes that the knocking at the gate provides the necessary relief of tension and marks the return from the world of murder to the world of reality.

Literary Reminiscences is a title given to a series of De Quincey's essays that contain anecdotes about some poets. They include amusing stories like Wordsworth's using a dirty butter knife to open the pages of a book. The essay called 'Literature of Knowledge and Literature of Power' is a famous distinction between writings that offer factual information and knowledge and the kind of literature that move the reader emotionally.

In his later years, De Quincey wrote his greatest sustained writing that demonstrated to the mid-19th century the dimensions of prose that make it a fit rival for all the qualities of poetry and music.

Walter Savage Landor (1775-1864) entered Trinity College, Oxford (after his education at Rugby), where he became imbued with the current Republicanism. His violent temper, which was his lifelong handicap, caused him to shoot at the window of a Tory student, and thereby got himself suspended. He lived for years in Florence, where he died. In his later years, he was a close friend of Robert and Elizabeth Browning, who also lived in Florence.

Landor's significant poetry runs in strange cross-current against the Romantic tendencies of his time and against his own explosive temperament. He wrote 'Hellenics', a term that he coined to denote short narrative poems derived from ancient Greek history and mythology. He also wrote short epigrammatic poems as well as his old-age poems of meditation and resignation.

Landor's prose far exceeds his verse in quantity. His continuing reputation is mainly based on his prose. He himself says, "poetry was always my amusement, prose my study and business."

Imaginary Conversations is Landor's masterpiece, written between 1824 to 1853. Landor printed a total of 152 imaginary conversations that can be called a new literary type and an imitation of Platonic dialogues. They are presented entirely in dialogue with no narrative and no stage directions. The characters speaking are real persons, except for a few legendary or mythological characters. The conversation generally focuses on a moment of powerful emotion just preceding climactic action. The purpose is not the creation of dramatic conflict but the revelation of character and ideas.

For his conversations Landor ranges through all western history from Peleus and Thetis (parents

of Achilles) to his own day (Southey and Landor). He usually creates dignity, but he is sometimes wickedly funny or savagely brutal. Landor himself loves the conversation between 'Dante and Beatrice'. In each conversation usually two people are involved, though occasionally additional figures are introduced into the conversation. The dialogues are completely imaginary with no quotations.

Landor seeks fidelity to the spirit of the era depicted and the known personality traits, but he makes no attempt to hide his own prejudices. His anti-clerical and anti-tyranny sentiments are indirectly and strongly expressed. Landor, like Lamb and De Quincey, shows that prose can be as imaginative and potent as verse. By his self-created genre of imaginary conversations, Landor has added considerable dimensions to English prose.

Pericles and Aspasia (1836) is Landor's longest and most ambitious work. Its purpose is to portray the Golden Age of Athens through letters, chiefly those exchanged between two intellectual ladies, Aspasia and Cleone. The first thirty letters, which relate the first meetings and the first love between Pericles and Aspasia, are Landor's masterpieces. The concluding letter of the dying Pericles to Aspasia suggests the magnificent ending of a great age.

Chapter 14

English Novel in the Romantic Period

Virginia Woolf considers *Persuasion*, Jane Austen's last novel, as a Romantic novel in which the writer expresses his own emotions through Anne Elliot. But few people consider Jane Austen as a Romantic novelist.

Romantic novel is a type of novel marked by strong interest in action; it presents episodes often based on love and adventure. The term Romantic owes its origin to the early type of story by medieval romances, but with the march of time other elements have been added. In its modern meaning, a Romantic novel signifies the type of novel that is more properly fictional than legendary, because it is woven so largely from the imagination of the author, and it is read more as a means of escape from life than of familiarity with the actualities of life.

Charlotte Brontë complains that Jane Austen is neither a Romantic novelist nor touched by the Romantic Movement. This does not mean that Austen is ignorant of the power of feeling or that she despises it. Anne Elliot finds it difficult to control her emotions, and Jane Austen is no longer relying on prudence and she does not care for some Romantic tendencies such as sentimentalism and medievalism. Jane Austen's influence is diffused and indirect, and the achievements of other novelists are measured by her power.

Sir Walter Scott (1771-1832) published his early novels anonymously, fearing that turning to novel may ruin his already achieved reputation as a poet. His contemporaries ranked him with Shakespeare, and Wilkie Collins called him 'the God Almighty of novelists'. But the 20th-century readers dislike some of the qualities that 19th-century readers admired. Modern critics scorn Scott's hasty writing, unskillfully handled plots, self-conscious style, shallow characters, and wrong

historical interpretations. Some critics prefer to call him the writer of romances, not a novelist. Yet, Scott has his own particular greatness. He is a historical novelist that portrays man in his public and social setting.

Scott is much more interested in creating characters than in composing a formal work. He is a great writer of fiction without being a great novelist. He puts a romantic hero and a romantic heroine at the center of his novel, but he fails to deal with romantic love. Unlike great Romantic poets, passion is alien to Scott. He writes as a common-sense professional man whose values are those of a traditionally settled society. He, like Fielding and Austen, accepts the world, and he faces life without illusion just as Chaucer did. Like Chaucer, he conveys a feeling of being at home in his world. He tries to grasp the meaning of movements in history. His minor characters are portrayed realistically to provide a background of actual living conditions. His central character, who is treated romantically, is a fictitious and uncomplicated man of feeling.

Scott's Waverley novels, which brought him fame and fortune, began with *Waverley* in 1814 and continued with *Rob Roy* (1817), *Heart of Midlothian* (1818), and several other novels. Many of his novels take the form of a kind of pilgrim's progress: the character, who makes the journey (into the highlands of Scotland), gets involved in the passions and activities of the Scott and, then, returns to where he came from. The character becomes a disinterested observer whose function is merely to observe, react and withdraw. Such characters are not heroes in the ordinary sense of the word; they are symbolic observers. Their love affairs are of no significance; they only indicate the nature of the observer's final withdrawal from the seductive scenes of heroic and nationalist passion. *Rob Roy* says that the wild and heroic life may be all very well for himself but not for his children, who have to come to terms with the New World. The grand old causes are now lost causes; the old heroic action is now useless and silly.

It is difficult to find a consistent theme in any novel by Scott. Even in *Ivanhoe*, which seems to be his best novel, it only seems that the theme is the compromise between heroic ideals and the present

reality. Here Scott depicts a world sick with irrational racial and religious hatred. It is this moral sickness, rather than political and cultural differences, that divides England and keeps it weak.

Scott wrote twenty of his novels over a period of eleven years and, therefore, he was a hasty and careless writer. His prose is tedious to modern readers; he often bores us with long sentences of which too many make no grammatical sense. Frequent digressions interrupt his action continually. His heroes and heroines lack depth and interest, and his moral issues seem superficial and unreal.

Scott's novels fall into four groups: the novels of the 17th-century and 18th-century Scotland, novels of Scotland in Scott's own day, novels of Renaissance and medieval Britain, and historical novels with foreign settings. Modern studies of Scott's novels emphasize his realistic character portrayals of lower-class people and his imaginative grasp of social and political forces. In this regard his novels related to Scotland in the 17th and 18th century are his best, because he talks about people whom he understands and appreciates.

Waverley, or 'Tis Sixty Years Since, Scott's first novel, has established the pattern for the modern historical novel. Captain Edward Waverley is sent by his uncle to intercede with the clan head, Fergus Mac Ivor, but he falls in love with Flora Mac Ivor, the chieftain's daughter. He is wounded by a stag. He is proclaimed a deserter and arrested for treason, but he is rescued by Highlanders. After some heroic deeds, Waverley marries Rose Bradwardine. The historical background is authentic, the hero is fictitious, uncomplicated and romantic, and the minor characters are portrayed realistically.

Heart of Midlothian (1818) is now considered as the finest of Scott's novels and Jeanie Deans as his best-realized character. The story opens with the Porteous riot of 1736. The Heart of Midlothian is the Talbooth prison. Porteous, the commander of the city guard, is acquitted after the trial for opening fire on people. Common people, led by Robertson, storm the prison, drag Porteous from prison and lynch him. Robertson loves Effie Deans, who is imprisoned on charge of murdering her child. Effie refuses to escape because she knows that she is innocent. At her trial Jeanie tells the truth and Effie is sentenced to death. Jeanie goes to London and gains audience with Queen Caroline who is moved by

Jeanie's honesty and pardons Effie. Robertson marries Effie, who finds out that her son is alive, not murdered. Robertson is the real father of Effie's son, but he is unknowingly killed by his own son when he tries to retrieve him from the robber band.

Ivanhoe (1819) is the most popular novel by Scott. It is the first novel set in medieval times, in England during the reign of Richard I, 1189-1199. Here Scott goes to a distant past and gives it life, but his novel makes his readers misunderstand English history. Scott emphasizes the hostility between Saxons and Normans in England of the late 12th century, but such hostility was never so sharp as Scott imagines, and that negligible hostility existed all through the western society. Only John and Richard are historic personalities, but the actions and characters ascribed to them are disputable. Robin Hood is wholly unhistorical. Yet his character is not in line with the one portrayed in ballads. Ivanhoe, a medieval man, thinks and acts as a genteel contemporary of Scott. *Ivanhoe* is a great imaginative recreation, and we should remember that it is art, not history.

Scott is the greatest novelist of the Romantic period. His contemporary novelists are no longer appealing to modern readers. For novel in its true sense we have to wait for the rise of great novelists in the Victorian age.

PART IV

THE VICTORIAN AGE

Chapter 15

Social, Religious, and Poetic Background to the Victorian Age

Annabelle and Caroline in their crinolines and ringlets sit beside a cozy fire with an edition of Thomas Bowdler's *Shakespeare* carefully expurgated for family reading. A bustling, high-bodiced matron glances up from some religious tract to survey her accumulation of overstuffed chairs, bric-a-brac, wax flowers, plaster busts, iron statuettes, glass ducks, and Land-seer's painting of a dog. Enter father, the proud, prompt, methodical, sensible, enormously wealthy Captain of Industry, who glories in the thought that the sun never sets on the British Empire, who opposes any effort on the part of the government to regulate the business world, and who regards poverty solely as a consequence of improvidence, shiftlessness, immorality, and laziness. This exaggerated picture of the Victorian sitting room with its useless and prudish women and its smug men of business is, like all exaggerations, partly true and partly false. Many Victorians were so satisfied with their own comfortable positions that they could not see the poverty of others; and many were shocked and horrified by even minor infractions of the straight-laced code of respectability that they had set up; but, as you will see from your study of this chapter, other Victorians revolted against the typical trends of the time or quietly directed their attention elsewhere. Far from exhibiting a single style, the time spanned by the reign of Queen Victoria (1837-1901) was one of the most varied and diverse periods in the history of English life and letters.

In Victorian England those who wished to be thought respectable adhered to the regulations of a strict code. Sundays were observed not only by church attendance but also by almost puritanic

prohibitions against amusements, even against reading anything but the Bible or tracts published by the Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge (known, in brief, as the SPCK) or similar groups.

The qualities of the model man and, especially, of the model female were described in other semireligious publications. Women were expected to be frail, fainting, proper creatures, the quintessence of uselessness and prudery (according to modern standards). Hannah More, a leader in the Sunday School movement and the most popular writer of books to teach propriety, offered advice upon the subject of earning a living, if the female was reduced to such circumstances. Under these unfortunate conditions she might teach, do social work, deliver Bibles and religious tracts, perhaps work in a milliner's shop or an undertaker's establishment, or fill other positions in which "she could protect her feminine sensibilities."

For the model male the code prescribed equally rigid rules and prohibitions. Gambling, swearing, drunkenness, sometimes even smoking, automatically removed a man from the ranks of the respectable. Many of the older forms of entertainment had fallen into disrepute. Ranelagh (see page 247) with its gambling pavilion had been closed in 1803. The old spectacles of public hangings and floggings had been abolished. Taverns were closed on Sundays and coffee houses were giving way to public reading rooms and clubs. Dr. Samuel Johnson would have called it a dull world.

The Supreme symbol of respectability was the queen who gave her name to the age. Victoria had spent a sheltered childhood at Kensington Palace with her mother and her governess, both of whom had trained her in accordance with the prevailing code. She must read the Bible and works of Hannah More as well as sermons and religious tracts; she must attend Divine Service on Sunday; and she must diligently practice all the virtues prescribed for the model female. "I will be good," Victoria had said when, at the age of twelve, she was told that some day she would be Queen of England.

Victoria was eighteen when, in 1837, upon the death of her weak and incompetent old uncle William IV, she ascended the throne. Within three years she married Prince Albert of Saxe-Coburg. Her love for this quiet, scholarly, German-born prince and for her nine children endeared the Queen

to her subjects, with whom she appeared to be in complete harmony. The climax of her reign came in 1897 with a Diamond Jubilee to celebrate the sixtieth anniversary of her coming to the throne. Four years later she died. So well attuned had she been throughout her long life to the ideas and ideals of the century in which she lived that the term Victorian has come to stand not only for a period of time but also for a particular outlook on life.

On May 1, 1851, Victoria opened the first world's fair —the "Great Exhibition of the Works of Industry of all Nations"— at the mammoth Crystal Palace in London, thereby announcing that the Industrial Revolution had come of age. Ushered in by the spinning jenny of Hargreaves in 1764, the improved spinning machines of Arkwright in 1779, and the power loom of Cartwright in 1784, the Industrial Revolution gathered force as the nineteenth century progressed, working profound changes on both the face and personality of the English nation. Sleepy villages, town criers, sailing vessels, and hand looms gave way within a hundred years to factory towns, cheap newspapers, railroads and steamships, and machines for mass production —all the mechanical paraphernalia that lie behind the enormous efficiency and prosperity of the modern Western world. The position in English society that had been held since the Middle Ages by the landed aristocracy gradually diminished in importance as the middle-class industrialists increased in numbers and in wealth; and the rural peasantry decreased while the wage-earning workers of the towns multiplied.

Foremost among the problems of the Victorian Age was that of coping with the seven deadly sins of the Industrial Revolution—filthy, dangerous factories; inhumanly long hours of work; child labor; exploitation of women workers; low wages; slums; and frequent unemployment. For many years these were the fiendish facts of life for workers in the growing industries. The dismal debut of this class onto the scene of history stands preserved in many Victorian writings, particularly the novels of Charles Dickens, who described the industrial center in *Hard Times* as

. . . a town of red brick, or of brick that would have been red if the smoke and ashes had allowed it; but as matters stood it was a town of unnatural red and black, like the painted face of a savage. It

was a town of machinery and tall chimneys, out of which inter-minable Serpents of smoke trailed themselves for over and ever, and never got uncoiled. It had a black canal in it, and a river that ran purple with ill-smelling dye, and vast piles of buildings full of windows where there was a rattling and trembling all day long, and where the piston of the steam-engine worked monotonously up and down, like the head of an elephant in a state of melancholy madness.

The responses to the problems of the Industrial Revolution were many and varied. The Captains of Industry, who owned the mines and the factories, supported a policy of *laissez faire*, or no regulation of trade and industry by government. John Stuart Mill and other famous economists believed that in general *laissez faire* was a good policy, but that it was wrong to ignore completely the plight of the working classes. Mill advocated legislation that would improve factory conditions and give the workers the right to vote. The Socialists went further than Mill, supporting not merely government regulation of factories but gradual government ownership of the industries themselves. Karl Marx and his followers called for immediate and, if necessary, violent seizure of the entire industrial complex.

True to their age-old tradition of slow but steady change, the English adopted the moderate position of people like John Stuart Mill. Throughout the Victorian era the Whig or Liberal party and the Tory or Conservative party vied with one another to see who would get credit for improving the social, economic, and political status not only of workers but of people in general. Of the vast number of different reforms passed by the Victorian Parliaments, the two outstanding bills were those of 1867 and 1884-1885, the first extending the franchise to urban workers, the second enfranchising workers in agricultural districts. By 1911, the year in which the House of Lords was deprived of all power except a delaying veto, England had become a modern democracy in which the people, through their representatives in the House of Commons, were politically sovereign.

In 1859 the biologist Charles Darwin published his *Origin of Species*, a book that was to produce a revolution in thought as radical and far-reaching as that brought about in the seventeenth century by

the scientific discoveries of Galileo and Newton. In spite of the work of Charles Lyell (1797-1875) and other geologists demonstrating the great age of the earth, most people in mid-nineteenth century accepted literally the account of Creation given in the Bible, according to which all forms of life had appeared on earth about six thousand years ago in the space of a single week. Darwin went beyond his predecessors. After years of studying the work of earlier scientists and of collecting and analyzing his own biological data, he not only agreed with earlier conclusions about the age of the earth but also concluded that instead of all forms of life appearing at once complex forms had evolved from simpler ones during a great struggle for existence in which only the fittest survived. Although many people eventually came to see that there was no real conflict between the teachings of religion and the findings of the new biology, Darwin's work had the initial effect of throwing many individuals into doubts about their religious beliefs. Some people remained in a state of doubt. Others passed from doubt to despair. Still others reacted by renouncing science in favor of faith or giving up faith in favor of science.

Like the theories of Newton, Darwin's ideas were picked up by many nonscientists. The Captains of Industry, for example, were happy to hear that they were engaged in a struggle for existence with the members of the working class—a struggle in which the rich and hardworking were fit to survive and the poor and lazy were doomed to perish. The advocates of British imperialism felt that the struggle for existence was not so much between classes as it was between nations. To these people Britain was the nation fittest for survival, for the British flag had been carried into almost every part of the habitable world and was actually flying over a territory five times the size of all Europe. With such weighty problems as the Industrial Revolution and variety Darwin's theory of evolution to disturb them, it is no wonder that the Victorians abandoned the romantic vision attained by people like Coleridge and Shelley to concentrate on the more sober and practical aspects of life. They were supremely conscious of factories to build and run, machines to improve and invent, legislation to pass, and the world of science to explore; and to do all this well one had to have a pretty hard-headed

and realistic outlook. Nevertheless, romantic themes, particularly an interest in nature and in medievalism, did persist into the Victorian era. Writers like Thomas Carlyle saw in the Middle Ages a model on which contemporary life should pattern itself, while Alfred Lord Tennyson, William Morris, and others retold for a Victorian audience the legends of King Arthur and his Round Table.

The variety of attitudes and activities that make up the Victorian Age is almost as bewildering as the array of what-nots found in the Victorian sitting room, the sweep of gingerbread decorations ornamenting the Victorian house, or the vistas of stone statesmen and soldiers frowning down on Victorian squares and parks. Realism and romanticism, poverty-stricken workers and progressive legislation, hope and despair, faith and doubt—these are but a few of the aspects of the highly diverse age that immediately precedes our own even more complex times.

In the midst of the irreducible variety of the later nineteenth century stood the figure of the Queen, who, like her predecessor Elizabeth, gave her name to an age. But while the aristocratic and Renaissance Queen Elizabeth had made merry with dancing, drinking, and singing and had ruled her country with an iron hand, Victoria practiced the pious and decorous arts of the housewife, leaving the affairs of the nation to such able ministers as Gladstone and Disraeli. In 1876 Disraeli bestowed upon Victoria the title of Empress of India, thus uniting in the person of the Queen both respectability and imperial might. Middle-class merchants and shopkeepers and tradesmen looking fondly on their beloved Queen might well ponder how far their class had come since the Middle Ages. From medieval guildsmen to Renaissance merchants, from Renaissance merchants to eighteenth- and nineteenth-century prime ministers and industrialists—the success of this long climb was testified to by the fact that Queen Victoria was a thoroughly middle-class monarch. In her home and in England at large there reigned a sense of pious respectability and of worldwide commercial leadership.

Victorian Age

Queen Victoria came to the throne of England in 1837, and she gave her name to the period that lasted till her death in 1901. But the new era actually began with the passage of the first Reform Bill in 1832 and closed at the end of the Boer War in 1902. This period of seventy years is often divided into three phases of national life, but literary histories find it more convenient to recognize only two divisions of equal length: Early Victorian period and Late Victorian period. The Early Victorian period extends from the Reform Bill of 1832 (coinciding with the death of Sir Walter Scott and the publication of Tennyson's first volume of poems) to the publication of Browning's *The Ring and the Book* and Morris's *The Earthly Paradise*. Of these thirty-six years the first fourteen were tilled with unrest, alarm, and misery as opposed to the growing prosperity of the succeeding twenty-two years, when industrialism, free trade, progress, and reform made England 'the workshop of the world'.

The Late Victorian period includes three decades of commercial and industrial rivalries, imperial expansion, and increasing political, social, economic, and spiritual anxieties. In literary history, it extends from the beginning of Aesthetic Revival with Pater's first essays in 1868 to the death of Ruskin in 1900 and that of Herbert Spencer in 1903.

Victorian England was an age of anxiety and flux. Social, political, and religious institutions were challenged. Man's relationships to his church, class, and government came under a new scrutiny. The Oxford Movement, Wesleyanism, Reform Bills, Chartism, Utilitarianism, the Impact of Science, and, above all, the Industrial Revolution made new intellectual and emotional demands upon the Victorians. In theory, the Industrial Revolution was a magnificent success, but it led to unbelievable social problems. Never before had an age been forced to re-evaluate so thoroughly the very root of its existence. It was the complex social, moral, and political problems of the Victorian age that produced a large number of many-sided men of letters.

The re-evaluation of old values, which began with the French Revolution and was emphasized by

Blake, took place in the Victorian age. Higher criticism of the Bible questioned the deity of Christ; poets and novelists attacked the middle-class narrow morality, complacency, materialism, and moral tyranny. It was in the Victorian age that men of letters began to respond vigorously to social problems. They played a more meaningful and responsible social and cultural role than does the writer of our own day. In fact, life and art were interwoven. Dickens, Tennyson, Arnold, and many others were great social critics.

The Victorian age is the age of paradox. Victorians are very often blamed and sometimes praised. We are told that they were a blind, complacent people who were torn by doubt, were spiritually bewildered and lost in a troubled universe. We are also told that they were very religious; they were idealists, who cared for a vision of the world beyond. We are told that they were materialists, who were absorbed in the present without being conscious of abstract eternal values. They were nostalgic of the past, but they were careless of culture and tradition. We are told that they were sentimental humanitarians that were politically prejudiced. Intellectually and emotionally, they believed in progress, denied the original sin, and affirmed the death of the Devil; yet, by temperament, they were Manichaeans to whom life was a battle between the forces of the good and the power of darkness. While Victorians professed manliness, they yielded to feminine standards. Some critics accuse Victorians of moral hypocrisy, some accuse them of sentimentalism, and others accuse them of social snobbery. Thus Victorianism remains obscure, and most of such charges represent personal reactions rather than objective analysis.

It is said that Victorians emancipated woman from age-old bondage, but they robbed her of a vital place in society. The peculiar province of a woman in the Victorian age is to stay home, and do her best to keep her husband and children healthy. Women's education had its grotesque aspects: they were taught to do exquisite embroidery, but not to make their own dresses. In short, women had no vital role outside home, while feminist movement was going on.

Some Victorians called their own times the **age of transition**. Matthew Arnold says that the old

world is dead and the new world is powerless to be born. When John Stuart Mill says that people "have outgrown old institutions and old doctrines, and have not yet acquired new ones," he casts the reader into the midst of the Victorian vortex. The Victorians were complacent yet troubled, materialists yet idealists; their literature was didactic yet escapist. An age of transition, which demands revolutionary changes, has a dual aspect: destruction and reconstruction. An old order is questioned, attacked or discarded, and a new order is being proposed or started.

The British Association for Advancement of Science was founded in 1831 with the two purposes of increasing public interest in useful knowledge and of inspiring scientific discovery. Sir Charles Lyell's *Principles of Geology* destroyed many Biblical beliefs. Darwin's *Origin of Species* raised new questions. Scientists realized that the world is much older than 4000 years, stated by the Bible. Thus, doubt was harmful to the Christian faith.

George Eliot read Charles Hennell's *An Inquiry Concerning the Origin of Christianity* (1838), and consequently abandoned all her belief in the doctrines of Christianity. In 1844, she translated *Leben Jesu (The Life of Christ)* by D. F. Strauss, a German rationalist, who talks about the 'Christ Myth' and considers Christianity as a historical product. It was through the study of human history that George Eliot and many of her contemporaries could no longer accept the Bible and the Church as sources of authority. They abandoned the Christian faith while they emphasized morality.

Tractarians, who started the Oxford Movement and revived the Catholic Church, attracted the attention of people by relying on the tradition of the Catholic Church, rather than on the Bible, as a religious authority. Those who did not abandon Christianity went through religious crises and experienced intense moments of 'honest doubt'. For them three ways were open: complete indifference to the impact of science on older views of life and faith, accepting the authority of the Roman Catholic Church, or an attempt to adapt Christian argument to new challenges. John Henry Newman describes the Roman Catholic Church as 'a port after a rough sea'. But, for many people, a great chasm seemed to have been opened between God and Nature. The conflict between science and

Christianity continued, but Newman denied any such conflict.

Aesthetic Sensibility and the Role of the Artist

The Victorian society was somehow unpoetic, but writers were determined to regain their traditional role. In fact, the cultural crises of the age determined the role of the artist, though they faced a hostile *Zeitgeist* (Time-Spirit), convinced that the spirit of the times was hostile to artistic creativity. The Victorian prose writers, and the poets' prose works explain the role of the artist very clearly. Victorian poetry and novel have similar views that are conveyed through their criticism of the vices of the society.

In 1840, when **Thomas Carlyle** was at the height of his fame, he delivered six lectures called *On Heroes, Hero-Worship, and the Heroic in History*. He declares, "Universal history ... is at bottom the history of the Great Men who ... were the leaders of men, ... the creators of whatsoever the general mass of men contrived to do or to attain." He concludes that the whole world's history is the history of these men and their thoughts. One lecture devoted to 'The Hero as Poet' deals with Dante and Shakespeare, and the lecture devoted to 'The Hero as Man of Letters' deals with Samuel Johnson, Rousseau, and Robert Burns.

Carlyle uses the term poet to mean prophet: "The true Poet is ever, as of old, the Seer, whose eye has been gifted to discern the godlike Mystery of God's Universe, and decipher some new lines of its celestial writing." The poet's powers of imagination give him insight into ultimate truths, accompanied by moral commitment. The poet has to transmit his prophetic vision to his age.

Recent scholarship has demonstrated that Carlyle is by no means the only Victorian writer that addresses his audience as a prophet does. It is the writer's duty to mould the character and form the opinion of his age. Almost all eminent Victorian writers were aware of their public responsibilities. Tennyson quarrels with himself and with his age, and he speaks the thoughts and misgivings of his own age. Dickens tries to awaken the conscience of his age. Ruskin's five volumes of *Modern*

Painters established the moral esthetic to which his contemporaries so largely subscribed. To Ruskin, the greatness of any work of art depends on its ethical significance, on its power to provide 'noble grounds for noble emotions'. His intention is to paint pictures that suggest great thought and kindle all that is the noblest and the best in humanity. It was this view of art that made him turn from painting to architecture because, as a moral discipline, painting is of limited validity. He examines architectural styles for the moral values they exhibit. He says, "Every form of noble architecture is in some way an embodiment of the Polity, Life, History, and Religious faith of nations." However, Ruskin recommends art as an agent of social regeneration. In *Unto This Last*, he promotes social reform.

Matthew Arnold turned to literary criticism to show his moral preoccupations. He declares that literature must offer a 'criticism of life'. By drawing on the best things that have been thought and said in the world, the writer can make a 'noble and profound application of ideas to life'. He tells Clough, "Modern poetry can only subsist by its contents: by becoming a complete *magister vitae* [guide to life] as the poetry of the ancients did: by including as theirs did, religion with poetry." In *Culture and Anarchy*, Arnold recommends "culture as the great help out of our present difficult-ties," produced by the materialized and vulgarized English habits of mind and ways of life.

The later writings of these writers are gloomy. They felt that their goals were not achieved. These Victorian sages discovered that they were voices crying in the wilderness of a soulless age that did not honor them and refused to heed their message. That was perhaps one of the reasons why a new type of artist, who was altogether different from the typical Victorian man of letters, appeared on the scene. Dante Gabriel Rossetti, the poet and painter, became the champion of 'art for art's sake'. Swinburne followed the lead of Charles Baudelaire, the great French poet, whose aesthetic theories were an expression of ideas first expressed by Edgar Allen Poe in the 'Poetic Principle' (1848). Baudelaire declares that "if the poet has set himself a moral goal, he has diminished his poetic force... . Poetry cannot ... associate itself with knowledge or morality; its orbit is not truth, its object

is itself."

Walter Pater formulated the theoretical principles of art for art's sake and assumed the leadership of the so-called Aesthetic Movement. Yet, English aestheticism is still seen as a natural development from the English Romantic literature. English aesthetes either repeated John Keats's "Beauty is truth, truth beauty" or elevated beauty above truth.

Aestheticism reflects a conviction that the enjoyment of beauty can, by itself, give value and meaning to life. To Walter Pater, it means the idea of treating life in the spirit of art. Aestheticism can be treated in three applications: as a view of art, corresponding to art for art's sake; as a view of life (contemplative aestheticism), corresponding to treating experience in the spirit of art as material for aesthetic enjoyment; and as a tendency in poetry and painting not only away from moral didacticism but away from any sense on the artist's part that he is called upon to speak either for or to his age.

As a view of art, aestheticism represents an attempt to separate art from life to the point of saying that art has no reference to life and no moral implications. Art is valued only according to the aesthetic pleasure that it affords. Pater declares that art "gives nothing but the highest quality to your moments," and "art aspires to the condition of music." Archibald MacLeish says, "a poem should not mean but be." Pater refers to this kind of art as 'pure art' that is opposed to 'great art' that teaches, delights, and comments on life.

Oscar Wilde and some other young disciples of Walter Pater perverted Pater's doctrine of art for art's sake, but writers like Henry James, Joseph Conrad, and William Butler Yeats assimilated the elements of enduring value in the doctrine of art for art's sake. Meanwhile, the opposing doctrine of art for society's sake never lost its power and appeal. It continued to find new advocates, whether among socialists, such as William Morris and Bernard Shaw, or among popular story-tellers and poets like Rudyard Kipling. However, aestheticism and commitment were two literary tendencies that continued throughout the Victorian age.

Most eminent Victorian writers were at odds with their age. The tone of unrest pervades so many

works that are considered as typical of that age. That is why the Victorian writer thinks of repudiating his own society and taking refuge from the spirit of the times in the better ordered realm of interior consciousness. We often face the conflict between the poet and his society, between the poet's aesthetic sensibility and the demands of the society, between the poet's concept of the role of the artist and the role imposed on him by the Victorian age, between the public conscience and the private conscience of the artist. Victorian literature is meaningful only when it is read in the light of this conflict.

Most Victorian writers thought of themselves as men of letters in the full meaning of the term. Victorian literature is predominantly a literature of ideas, especially those ideas that are directly related to the daily concerns of the reading public. Of course, the great emphasis laid on the writer's responsibility to get into close correspondence with his audience, made most original thinkers turn to subjects of the broadest human import, instead of transient social concerns, which attracted the 'attention of the novelists. Yet, great novelists faced the intolerable difficulties of reconciling popular appeal with artistic integrity.

The works of the great Victorian poets (Tennyson, Browning, and Arnold) record a gradual, but radical shift in the relationship of the artist to his public. The great Romantic poets were sometimes blamed for a divorce between the artist and society, but they did not think of themselves as abdicating the poet's traditional right to speak for or to his age, though they accepted isolation as a necessary consequence of their revolutionary program. Victorian poets were very sensitive to their generations' reluctance to pay attention to what they were saying.

The great Victorian poets did not sacrifice their artistic validity to the demands of the middle-class morality. We often hear of the poet's dilemma and the so-called Victorian compromise; that is, how to reconcile the poet's literary sensibility with the social demands. The ill success of their first volumes of poems and the hostile critics awakened Tennyson, Browning, and Arnold to a realization that, under the existing conditions, originality could not secure artistic success. They came to think of

holding in balance their own private insight and the tendencies of a materialized society.

Friends like Hallam, Elizabeth Baarret, and Clough as well as hostile critics made Tennyson, Browning, and Arnold realize that they should take a broader view of their responsibilities as men of letters. They never forgot the tyranny that the age exercised over its artists, and they turned to dramatic modes, which gave them the opportunity to object to unreasonable social demands. Tennyson and Arnold would have agreed with Browning that “artistry being battle with the age / It lives in!” The battle with the age represents their belief in the instrumentality of literature as a social force.

As young poets, Tennyson, Browning, and Arnold reveal their emotional and intellectual tendencies, and they face social disapproval. Subsequently, from the desire to gain a wide audience for their poems and play an influential part in the life of the times, they show a willingness to make concessions to the literary fashions to which they are temperamentally out of sympathy. But they develop remarkable techniques that can convey their private insights.

Chapter 16

Victorian Novel

Victorian age is the great age of English novel. This is partly because of the rise of middle classes, and partly because of the increase of the reading public. Novel is the best literary type to present a picture of the actual life against a stable background of social and moral values. The Victorian novel reader wanted to be entertained with a minimum of literary conventions, to have as little suspension of disbelief as possible. But the great Victorian novelists often created complexes of symbolic meaning. The novels of Dickens are full of symbolic images suggesting such notions as the desperate isolation of the individual. Thus, there is a gap between the demands of art and the expectations of readers.

For the early Victorian novelists the sense of identity with their times is very important, and it is the source of their strength as well as their weaknesses. It does not mean that they were uncritical of their age; rather, their criticism is much less radical than Balzac and Dostoyevsky. France had suffered a steep descent from the heroic age; glory had departed and the descent was the descent into vulgarity, into everything that can be epitomized in the word bourgeois. In Russia, novel became a weapon against despotism, and propaganda for progressive ideas. It was the main vehicle of the criticism of society, of morals, of the Russian attitude to the west, of man's relation to God and to his fellows.

The French and Russian novels had a profound effect on some English novelists, but the great Victorian novelists were not so much touched by foreign influence. They accepted the society in which they lived, and when they criticized it, they did it as some of their readers were doing. They voiced their readers' doubts and fears. These great novelists were conscious of the tensions and

contradictions of their times, of the existence of what Disraeli called the two nations. They were quite aware of the evils of their age, and they accepted the idea of respectability. The taboo on the frank expression of sex became dominant and it was enforced by the idea of respectability. Fielding was banished and Tom Jones was kept out of the reach of women and children.

The idea of respectability, which permeates the Victorian Novel, needs some explanation. In the middle of the eighteenth century, the word 'respectable' was applied to persons worthy of respect for their moral excellence. Later, the meaning changed, and it was applied to people of good social standing with some moral qualities. A further shift of meaning occurred, and the word was applied to anyone who was honest and decent in behavior, and clean in habit, regardless of social position. This last meaning captured all classes of society. The respectable artisan was respectable in the same way as the queen was. The idea swept over England in the shape of the Evangelical Movement, and Jane Austen's novels reinforced it.

In the eighteenth century, the abuse of power was limited to man's tyranny over man. It was used in this sense by Smollett and Fielding. In the nineteenth century, the tyranny of man over man was displaced by the much more complex tyranny of economic forces that could be avoided through the cultivation of the virtues of industry, thrift, and self-control on which the idea of respectability was based. Behind the notion was the full force of public opinion, the opinion of the middle classes and that of the skilled working classes. The reading public consisted mainly of the respectable people for whom the great Victorian novelists wrote. They addressed the whole of the literate public. Their intuition was right only when they interpreted that reading public in the middle-class terms, for the working-class readers also aspired to the middle-class status.

Benjamin Disraeli (1804-1881) was an intimate friend of Queen Victoria and twice the prime minister of England. He wrote his first novel, *Vivian Grey*, when he was only twenty-two. The theme is the incursion into politics of a young adventurer who knows that a man must have blood, genius, or a million if he wants to enter into a high society. It does not mean that Disraeli is a realistic novelist;

very often his imagination takes him away from the actual life. His heroes are always larger than life and unbelievably talented. They are either of the finest Norman blood or millionaires.

Most of Disraeli's novels are political ones, the only true political novels in English. His characters and actions come alive only through politics. He combines Romantic imagination with genius for the necessary compromises and the calculation of the realism of ordinary politics. *Sybil, or the Two Nations* (1844) talks about the English society as the two nations of the rich and the poor. The novel depicts the condition prevailing in England among the working classes, and the agitation that led to the Chartist riots. The novel presents Disraeli's political and social program based on a conception of a society with the classes bound together by mutual ties of loyalty and responsibility.

Charles Dickens (1812-1870) is often considered as the greatest Victorian novelist as well as a great entertainer. His novels were first issued serially, generally in monthly parts. The serial publication explains many of the structural deficiencies of his novels, because every installment had to come to a climax of suspense, and action and excitement had to be maintained at all costs.

The nature of Dickens' genius was such that he had to identify himself with his public, and be an expression of the conscience of his own age. He revealed to his readers what they thought and felt on the great social problems that confronted them or, rather, they discovered what they thought and felt after reading him.

Dickens first attracted his readers by making them laugh. He wrote *The Pickwick Papers* (1836-1837) in which Pickwick, the benevolent, unworldly, and idealistic master, and Sam Weller, the realistic servant, are involved in so many incidents or adventures. Dickens is here a pure humorist who introduces 480 characters whose language is excellent in comic invention and lyrical quality. Even the tragic incidents like Pickwick's trial for the assumed promise, and his confinement in the Fleet are humorous. Yet, the world of *Pickwick Papers* is an innocent world, the world of fairy tales in which there is no moral judgment.

Pickwick Papers represent only one side of Dickens: to make readers laugh. *Oliver Twist* (1837-

1838) represents another side of him: to make readers cry. There is laughter, but it is very different in aim and kind from that of *Pickwick Papers*, because it deals with the fate of the innocent in a corrupt society.

Oliver Twist, like most of the later novels of Dickens, suggests a Manichean world, in which the good seems passive and the evil is concrete. Dickens is more convinced of the reality of evil than that of good. The reality of good characters, like Mr. Brownlow, seems remote, but the reality of Sikes and Fagin is never doubted. Dickens' way of character creation is different from that of the realistic novelist; he is after a different kind of reality. Smollett is his favorite novelist and Ben Jonson his favorite dramatist. It seems that he catches and renders characters in the way that children see grown-ups, unobscured by association. Dickens is after the child's view of characters. The childlike vision of human beings conditioned his view of the world, and made it at times the crude and brutal world of his own childhood. His adherence to the childlike vision is not surprising, for he was exposed to the full horrors of London life. His being sent out at the age of twelve to work at Warren's blacking factory left a wound in him that never healed. He had the feeling that his parents had banished him as a chimney sweeper. He had a deep sense of being abandoned, not because of working among the laboring poor, but because of emotional bewilderment. His blacking factory experience explains why we find at the center of his novels the figure of a helpless or lost child like Oliver Twist and Pip. Of course, Dickens blames the age. He attacks the social system in all its complexity that prevents the flow of generous impulse between man and man, that prevents the exercise of natural kindness and trust.

In order to understand Dickens the novelist, one must understand Dickens the man, for some childhood and domestic traumas haunted him and influenced his novels. His father's imprisonment at Marshalsea, the debtors' prison; his frustrated hopes of growing up to be a learned and distinguished man by working at his cousin's blacking factory even when his family was no longer in need; the humiliation of having a grandfather who was a domestic servant, and a maternal grandmother who

embezzled over 5,500 pounds were all traumas which so affected him that his whole career was an attempt to digest them, to explain them to himself, to justify himself in relation to them, and to give a picture of the world in which such things could happen. Even in *Pickwick Papers* one sees the autobiographical connections as well as themes that were to dominate his later novels, themes such as cruel parents, children learning viciousness, the destructiveness of revenge to both the victim and the avenger, moral bankruptcy, and social injustice.

Oliver Twist is the story of an innocent boy whose parentage is left unknown because of the inheritance. He is brought up under cruel conditions. He falls into the hands of a gang of thieves headed by the old Jew Fagin. He is rescued by Mr. Brownlow, but he is kidnapped by the gang. He is wounded by gunshot when Sikes takes him to a burgling expedition. His identity is revealed after years of pain and suffering.

Dickens is preoccupied with prison and prisoners. He expresses his feelings toward a social system in which the oppressed lower classes are punished severely for minor offenses. In *Hard Times* (1854) and *A Tale of Two Cities* (1859) there is a threat if the British upper classes do not deal with the problem of providing for the health and education of people, they will fall victim to the brutal mob whom Dickens both sympathizes with and fears.

Dickens has the feeling that the complacent, moralizing middle classes are losing virtues and gaining vices; they are trying to cover up their vices of avarice and harsh exploitation of the working classes. *Dombey and Son* and *Bleak House* express themes related to the middle-class thirst for wealth and power. To Mr. Dombey money is a god capable of doing anything.

In his later novels, Dickens organizes his stories as wholes, and to introduce characters as symbols. Symbolism permeates his mature novels. Fog in *Bleak House* represents the Chancery that stands for destructive institutions that show the decaying process of England. Characters from the top to the bottom of the social scale are selfish, brutally indifferent, and isolated. The simple and the good are destroyed, and in the end the entire social system must collapse, carrying with it not only the

oppressed but the oppressors. This tie between the highest and the lowest in English society provides the main moral of *Bleak House*.

The later novels, beginning with *Little Dorrit* (1855), are intelligible in the light of Dickens's life. At this time he appeared to have all that he desired: wealth, family, and fame, but in reality things were not well. He feared that his creative powers were failing, and he was unhappy. His wife gave him ten children but no companionship. He had given his heart in a strange way to his wife's sister, Mary, whom he idealized. He was caught between two social classes, but it was beneficial to his art, because it enabled him to dramatize effectively the contrasts and interrelations existing between the two. But it ended for him with disappointment and disillusionment reflected in *Little Dorrit* and *Great Expectations*, which show greater gloom than his previous novels. Both are more realistic to the extent that the comic element in them seems mechanical and boring. Both novels show, above all, a greater psychological interest than any previous novel. Dickens has learned to present the thoughts, feelings, and even changes within his characters. The early Dickens bases his work on the external-duality of good and evil that makes up melodrama. The chief complication he introduces in his early novels is to make the evil turn good. This dualism runs through all his novels and comes to be linked with characters. He needs to dramatize this dualism in himself in an effort to end his loneliness.

After *Great Expectations* came *Our Mutual Friend* that shows Dickens's utter despair with the prosperous middle class, a despair voiced through the humorless, disagreeable portrayals of his characters. In a sense, he is turning from the middle class back to the aristocracy.

In the unfinished *Mystery of Edwin Drood* (1869), Dickens seems to leave the biting social criticism of his other novels. He has shifted to the study of good and evil in conflict within one man, Jasper. He has shifted from a study of dualism in society to a study of it in a man who is like himself. Dickens traces the development of Jasper's split personality, a tracing that he intended to end with Jasper confronting himself in his prison cell. But Dickens died before his final dramatizing of himself.

George Orwell's essay 'Charles Dickens' answers one question: Where does Dickens stand socially, morally, and politically? Orwell believes that Dickens attacked everyone, but antagonized no one. Consequently, Catholics would baptize him; Marxists claim him as a bloodthirsty revolutionary; and conservatives of all kinds want him in their clubs. Dickens' real subject, according to Orwell, is the London commercial bourgeoisie, while he has no portraits of the agricultural workers. To Orwell, Dickens is not really a revolutionary writer; he does not attack the system as such. His subject is human nature and his criticism of the society is exclusively moral. Dickens, according to Orwell, believes that changing laws or the system of governments will not help unless human beings experience a change of heart. Orwell sums up Dickens's vision in Dickens' own words: "If men would behave decently, the world would be decent."

Orwell believes that Dickens, more than others, can be explained by his social origin: he belongs to the small urban bourgeoisie that limits his range; he neither deals with the aristocracy nor with the agricultural worker and the industrial laborer. His origin also defines his lack of political interest and military preoccupation. Problems that really matter are not to be solved by strife but by Puritan conscience of the lower middle class. Dickens, says Orwell, is the champion of the oppressed masses, but he is really out of touch with them, while he seems to be aware of the criminal poor. Though he understands the social and economic causes of crime, he considers the criminal poor as social outcasts. Dickens has great compassion for the decent laboring poor, but his younger heroes are usually little gentlemen who move through the lower society and are not really a part of it.

Dickens, says Orwell, describes people and places, but not processes. He cares for moral progress, not for the material hope for the future. The greatness of Dickens, says Orwell, lies in his art: his imaginative detail, his humor, his creation of unforgettable characters. He is able to appeal both to Ordinary people and to the intellectual. He is remembered because he is a moralist; he is always preaching a sermon; he is a combination of fierce morality and imaginative force; he is 'The Generously Angry Man'.

Most novels of Dickens contain specific attacks on specific abuses, some of which may no longer be considered as universal, but Dickens has the power to stir the sympathy that demands reform. The abuses attacked are great, inhuman social forces by which the weak or the vulnerable people are crushed. Dickens depicts a world of hypocrisy, pride, folly, and violence in which men can survive and help others survive only as individuals caring for individuals.

The significance of Dickens' characters lies in what happens to them, not in what they do, especially with regard to the two-dimensional (flat) characters like Oliver Twist and early Pip. Characters in literary art have four kinds of meaning: Psychological, social, ethical, and spiritual. Most authors allow their characters only one of these kinds of meaning. Dickens, like Shakespeare, often succeeds or fails by attempting all. Moreover, literature can create characters that are both human and artificial. Criticism fails if, in reading Dickens, chooses one or the other of these ways to meaning. Psychologically, the Dickens character gives form to some feeling within or around the author. Socially, the Dickens character exhibits some phase of the tyranny of institutions over individuals. Ethically, the Dickens character acts out the traditional wisdom of the Bible. Spiritually, the Dickens character shows the world infected by disease, violence or oppression. The Dickens character may be allegorical. The victims of a social evil may stand for a class of social victims, just as the doer of that evil may stand for the institution he acts for. The good and bad deeds people do to one another in Dickens may stand for ethical parables. Characters may become Vices and Virtues and their lives a kind of morality play.

To **John Forster**, Dickens' friend and biographer, Dickens is "one of the greatest humorists England has produced," and Orwell sees "behind the page' the face of a man laughing, with a touch of anger in his laughter." Dickens' humor is part of his whole method and his choice of material. His artistic method has much to do with his style, his special form of self-expression in prose fiction. There are places where style becomes the end as well the means. Dickens' characteristic style, as seen in *Great Expectations*, is organic at its strongest, and poetic at its richest. Organically the style grows

out of the imaginative moment it renders. Poetically it takes upon itself as much added meaning and effect as it can, becoming, in Ezra Pound's phrase, "language charged with meaning to the utmost possible degree." The special style of his first-person narrators develops from David Copperfield's traditional autobiographical manner to be perfected in the eloquence of Pip's revelation, "that sense of a mind speaking to itself with no one there to listen," as Graham Greene calls it.

Dickens creates situation out of pure description such as the first three paragraphs of *Great Expectations*. Often a situation becomes dramatic, preparing the reader for a confrontation, a conflict, a revelation, or a resolution, as does the scene of Magwitch's return at the end of the second stage of Pip's expectations. Dickens moves the reader's emotions by means of situation.

Action in Dickens becomes at least representative, at most symbolic. This symbolic action has been recognized by earlier critics as part of Dickens' poetry, and by recent critics as part of his creation of allegory or myth. Dickens' critics see both Dickens and Shakespeare as great poets whose art transcend reality through the charm of imaginative style and subject matter. They set Pip beside Hamlet, Jaggers beside Prospero, Dorrit beside Lear, and feel something some sense of the tragic dilemma of life.

Great Expectations

Dickens is both Victorian and modern in his-treatment of life. *Great Expectations* is a splendid example in depicting the universality of Dickens' subject matter. The questions of wealth, social status, and human aspiration have always been interesting topics in literature.

Great Expectations offers two different kinds of attitude toward money in society: the attitude of those, like Joe, who believe in the dignity of work and earning money not for its own sake; and the attitude of some characters, like Pip, who seek money for its own sake and would rather earn it passively. Joe's forge is the reminder of both the connection between skill and wealth, and the dignity and necessity of work but Pip does not recognize it, for he is blinded by his love of easy money and

gentility.

The right attitude toward money is illustrated by Joe's conduct: he refuses to think of Pip and money as participants of the same nature, hates the idea of cash payment as the chief bond between man and man, and thus rejects Jaggers's offer of money as compensation for surrendering Pip: "But if you think as money can make compensation to me for the loss of the little child, what comes to forge, and ever the most of friends."

It seems that except Joe nearly everybody in the novel treats money as an independent self-created entity, worthy of reverence. Thus, the admiration of money and its power seems as a universal blight affecting men in different ways: through the power of money Miss Havisham is enabled to train Estella in a way that she may have her revenge, and both Pip and Estella are obedient to the power of her money. Magwilch in his reckless generosity imagines that money can bring gentlemanly qualities to others, and buy a London gentleman and whatever he desires, even love. This blight of the love of money and gentility is more deeply rooted in those who do not know the dignity of work. Pip assumes that money has the power to make a gentleman out of him and give him Estella. To Jaggers, Estella marries for money, and Wemmick is for 'portable property'.

Wealth in *Great Expectations* is naturally evil; it is the 'wretched gold and silver chains' only when the advantages of it ignore human considerations. It is the love of money, not money itself, which is the root of evil in society, for money, if rightly used and if worldly-mindedness is allowed to be crushed, can do people good: Pip ceases to be an ignorant boy through Magwitch's generosity, and the 900 pounds that he receives from Miss Havisham help him and Herbert a lot. In each of these cases money does people good, for its love is replaced by gratitude and the desire for forgiveness. At the end of the novel it is Joe's money that saves Pip.

The minor characters in *Great Expectations*, with the single exception of Matthew Pocket, attach too much importance to money and the rich people. Mrs. Joe is as worldly-minded as Pumblechook; the relatives of Miss Havisham are greedy, and she knows that all their expressions of affection are

false, and that they are after her money, which they hope to inherit at her death. It is only Joe who, when the captured Magwitch says that he has eaten 'your pie', refuses the suggested comparison between human need and the property right.

The most important concern of *Great Expectations* is with (he destructive effect of the material upon the spiritual. Miss Havisham's wealth enables her to exclude herself from all healing influences, and live in seclusion far from the light of humanity. Only because of the disloyalty of a villain, Compeyson, she turns in upon herself and deteriorates in darkness. She has been surrounded by the lovers of money: Compeyson practiced on her "affection ... got great sum of money from her ... her relations were poor and scheming ... it was a conspiracy between them and they shared the profits."

Pip's great expectations of wealth and gentility ruin his innocence and his love of Joe. His worldly behavior is the result of the destructive effect of the material upon the ethical and the spiritual. Pip lives in a society in which he is made aware of his poverty. That is why the social significance of snobbery and wealth is created in him. There are many examples of the destructive effects of the love of position and wealth in the novel. Pip's reaction to Joe's visit to London is an evidence of his being corrupted by such love. He confesses, "If I could have kept him away by paying money, I certainly would have paid money." As soon as he hears of the possibility of the fulfillment of his expectations, the feeling of isolation from Joe sweeps on him: "I was lost in the mazes of my future fortunes, and I could not retrace the bypaths we had trodden together."

A society, divided into the two nations of the rich and the poor, is responsible for the creation of aspirations such as the love of gentility. Any poor boy, who lives a miserable life and is tortured even by his own sister, desires release through social position. Therefore, Pip can be blamed, not for his aspiration, but for his vanity. What haunts Pip from childhood is money as a key to gentility: "All those wretched hankering after money and gentility ... had disturbed my boyhood." As soon as he comes to know Miss Havisham, he connects his dreams with reality and he no longer desires to be thought of as a common boy. He tells Bidly. "I want to be a gentleman," and in order to be one, he

expects Miss Havisham's help, not to work, but to earn easy money.

Pip's love of gentility isolates him from his childhood environment. The lower-class community does not exclude him; he excludes himself. The problem of estrangement in the Victorian society is often attributed to class distinction. Pip accepts his own alienation and knows that there no longer exists any channel of communication between him and Joe. His vain love of gentility prompts him to overestimate and misjudge himself and misvalue those around him. He becomes totally blind to human affections and dreams of nothing but gentility on which, he believes, social superiority is based. We cannot go too far in blaming him, for he lives in a morally corrupt society in which gentility is based on wealth and position that are divisive forces, destructive to individual integrity. But he should be blamed for ignoring gentlemanly qualities while desiring to be a gentleman. That is why Dickens pulls him down the chain of his imagined values. It is a shock to Pip's sense of gentility to find out that his benefactor is a convict, a member of the lower-class society. His relation with Magwitch dramatizes his dream of unearned wealth that finds reality in Magwitch's action and words: "I lived rough that you should live smooth; I worked hard that you should be above work." But because of his false pride and empty snobbery, Pip feels that Magwitch's money is tainting his gentility. He even hopes that part of his money may have come from Miss Havisham. What worries him is not the fact of having abandoned his old friends for money and gentility; what ' worries him is only the way it has been done, that Miss Havisham has done nothing for him, and his gentility is tainted by his social fear of Magwitch.

Much is made of the taint of the convict's money, for to use a convict's money is quite embarrassing to Pip's sense of gentility, while even if Pip is considered to be a gentleman, he is made one through the convict's money. However as Pip comes to himself, he loses part of his vanity and sympathizes with the convict. The idea that the convict's money is dirty' is forgotten, and even an effort is made to save it.

The climax of Pip's regeneration comes when he stops thinking of gentility, reconciles with his

former lower-class society by sitting close to Magwitch, who is in his death-bed, and by going to Joe with the confession of indebtedness and the decision to marry Bidy who has already married Joe.

The Brontë Sisters: Charlotte, Emily, and Anne

In the early Victorian period when novel established itself as the dominant literary type, many writers turned to fiction. While the majority of Victorian novelists continued to handle the problems of man in society and moral situations, some novelists expressed private passions and explored the personal emotions that could find expression in lyrical poetry. The Bronte sisters are such novelists.

Charlotte Brontë (1816-1855) wrote four novels. *The Professor* is a muted version of passages in her own life and emotional history. *Shirley* (1849) is rather dull; it brings in many characters based on people in and about her own village of Haworth, though personal passion is dominant. *Villette* (1853) deals with her emotional life; it is based on her fierce and finally suppressed passion for her Brussels' teacher, M. Heger. The novel is a kind of symbolic rendering of this part of her emotional history. We find the same feverish note in *Jane Eyre* (1847), her best novel, which depicts her passions, dreams, and frustrations. Some parts of it are straight autobiography, and the rest of it is a kind of wish-fulfillment that few Victorian women had the courage to translate into fiction.

Jane Eyre is a poor orphan left to the care of her aunt, who consigns her to Lowood Asylum, a charitable institution, where after some miserable years she becomes a teacher. She becomes a governess at Thornfield Hall to the little daughter of Mr. Rochester, whom she finally marries.

Jane Eyre derives its power from its subjectivity. It is a moving story of lonely and proud childhood with a pupil-master theme, suggesting the triumph of imaginative dream over reality. It moves at high speed, and its emotional temperature never drops. It is the product of imagination and passions. When Jane and Mr. Rochester confront each other, emotions are given full scope.

The essential subject of Charlotte and Anne Brontë is the soul of woman, cramped by loneliness, poverty, and social insignificance, but supported by a consciousness of her intelligence, her true

gentility, and the dynamic force of a superior spirit. The actual status of these women, as governesses and teachers, and the causes of their humiliation are reflected in the novels of both sisters.

Emily Brontë's *Wuthering Heights* is an excellent work of art, a masterpiece, and one of the best world novels. Its realistic and symbolic aspects are so wonderfully interfused that the reader is unconscious of any gap. It is the work of a novelist who cut herself deliberately from normal human intercourse and lived throughout her short life in a private world of imaginary passion. It is a work of art derived from the workings of a lonely imagination; the work of a novelist who did not want to learn anything from other novelists. Its unity, its totality is amazing; the whole novel, like a lyric poem, is intensely unified. Different critics have interpreted it differently because it is the statement of the conclusions derived from her experience; it symbolizes the findings of her intuition into the nature of things.

Wuthering Heights is an imaginative story. Its central figure is **Heathcliff**, a gipsy waif of unknown parentage, picked up by Mr. Earnshaw in the streets of Liverpool and brought home and reared by him as one of his own children. After the elder Earnshaw's death, Heathcliff is bullied and humiliated by Hindley, Earnshaw's son. Heathcliff, who has a passionate and ferocious nature, falls passionately in love with Catherine, Earnshaw's daughter. Overhearing her say that it would degrade her to marry him, he leaves the house. Returning three years later, he finds Catherine married to the insignificant Edgar Linton, who is welcomed by Hindley because he is rich. Heathcliff's vindictive nature and his violent love for Catherine bring her to her grave at the birth of her daughter, Cathy. He marries Isabella, Edgar's sister, whom he does not love, and he cruelly mistreats her. He gets Hindley and his son Hareton completely in his power, brutalizing the son for Hindley's mistreatment of himself when a child. His attempt to destroy the houses of Earnshaw and Linton fails, and at his death Hareton and Cathy are left to be happy together.

Of the two places in the novel, *Wuthering Heights* symbolizes the principle of energy and storm, while Thrushcross Grange in the valley below stands for the principle of calm. Although these two

principles seek to destroy each other, they ultimately make a harmony. They stand for the two houses and their occupants who live in two different worlds. They could live peacefully together if Heathcliff had not been brought to Wuthering Heights. As a result of the frustration of his passionate love, he becomes a revenger, but it is not a novel of revenge, for Heathcliff and Catherine are like two rivers that should flow into each other, but their courses are diverted. Harmony will be restored when they are united in death that is the liberation of the spirit.

Emily Brontë's reality is a spiritual reality, and her world is a spiritual world with no distinction between the natural and the supernatural. Thus, after their deaths, their souls join and harmony prevails. Emily Brontë's world is dominated by spiritual values and reality. Her reality is not a sociological one like that of Jane Austen or Dickens; it is not a psychological reality like that of George Eliot or James. The truth of characters is the spiritual truth; the dead and the living exist side by side in perfect communication, and the spirit of the place permeates the novel from the beginning to the end, and impinges on the lives of all characters.

The atmosphere of the heights is dominated by suffering; one soul in torment can find relief only in the reproduction of its agony in those around it. The tormented victim becomes in his turn the agent of torture. Heathcliff says, "The tyrant grinds down his slaves and they don't turn against him; they crush those beneath them" (chap. 11). The desire for revenge is willed into actuality, but there is no peace in eternal vengeance. Isabella says, "treachery and violence are spears pointed at ends; they wound those who resort to them worse than their enemies." (chap.17). However, according to Emily Brontë, it is through suffering that evil is eventually purged, and happiness is made possible.

William M. Thackeray (1811-1863) is a quite different novelist. He has a keen eye for social pretension, for all hypocrisies that social man learns to cover his true intentions. Whenever he succeeds to control his indignation and gaze with steady irony on the follies and villainies of the social scene, he produces social satire. He looks at the society as it really is, and exposes the hypocrisies, vanities, snobberies, and all kinds of selfishness that lie behind the charming masks of

the socially successful. The life of a great man is seen through the pitiless eyes of a valet, and the successes of an unscrupulous man are narrated by himself in a moral tone.

Thackeray's preoccupation with snobs leads him at times to a completely unrealistic appraisal of the nature of social life and the relation between personal and social morality. This is strange from one who considers himself as a realist and the exposé of truth about men. *Vanity Fair* (1847-1848) is the culmination of his satirical writings. It is the study of the way in which the demands of the society operates on human character and vice versa.

Thackeray, like most Victorians, gets involved in the contradiction of being edifying and at the same time telling the whole truth about man in society. Becky Sharp, the heroine of *Vanity Fair*, is born poor and of humble birth. She must use her wits to gain worldly success. Thackeray suggests that if she had been born in better circumstances, she would have been a happy and virtuous wife and mother. Thackeray considers Becky as a victim of the society and, thus, his criticism of the society becomes in effect the defense of its victims. Becky plays her cards brilliantly, and she makes a place for herself through her wit and adaptability. We cannot but admire her liveliness and her being the most gifted and the most interesting character in the novel. Yet she is an adventuress, and Thackeray contrives a scene in which she is exposed as a prostitute.

Vanity Fair is concerned with the parallel careers of two strongly contrasted characters: Rebecca (Becky) Sharp, who is clever, unscrupulous, and courageous; and Amilia Sedley, who is a pretty, gentle, and unintelligent girl, whose father is a rich man of business. The pair are brought together at Miss Pinkerton's academy. We follow Becky through her attempt to capture the fat Joe Sedley (Amilia's brother). She is employed as a governess at the house of the dirty, cynical, old Sir Pitt Crawley. She captivates both him and his rich sister, Miss Crawley. The Baronet on the death of his wife proposes to her, but it becomes clear that Becky has secretly married Rawdon, Sir Pitt's second son and the favorite of Miss Crawley. Sir Pitt and his sister become furious, and Rawdon loses his aunt's inheritance.

Amilia's father is ruined and her intended marriage with the young officer, George Osborne, is forbidden by George's purse-proud father. Amilia is brokenhearted at the desertion of George, a worthless person whom she blindly loves. Captain Dobbin, George's fellow-officer and her honest and unselfish worshipper, persuades George, and the marriage takes place, but old Osborne disinherits his son. Then follows the campaign of Waterloo, and the chief actors are brought together at Brussels, where George, before his death in the battle, engages in an intrigue with Becky. The rest of the novel deals with the way Becky wins her way in the highest society, first in Paris and then in London.

Amilia, plunged in grief by the loss of her husband, lives a life of poverty, and Dobbin secretly helps her. After ten years Dobbin returns home from India, but the memory of Amilia's husband still stands between her and Dobbin. It is only after Becky has revealed to her George's infidelity that Amilia agrees to marry the devoted Dobbin.

Becky's repeated exposures are made to contribute to her deterioration, but the exposures are made by snobs on wholly immoral grounds. Thackeray seems to be confused between the judge and the criminal. It is strange that Thackeray's virtuous characters are simpletons like Amilia and Dobbin. It seems that to be morally safe, one must be stupid. Thus, innocence equates with ignorance.

Thackeray's other novels are not so popular as *Vanity Fair*. *The History of Pandemis* is episodic. *The History of Henry Esmond* is his most perfectly integrated novel, focused on appearance and reality.

George Eliot

No novelist from Defoe to Thackeray can be called a novelist of great philosophical powers. They are content to follow the pattern of thought of their own days and to handle ideas only obliquely and symbolically. Their job is to construct moving, edifying and / or entertaining stories, not to exhibit new ideas.

George Eliot (Marian Evans, 1819-1880) is the First novelist who moves in the vanguard of

thought and learning. She adds a new scope and dignity to the English novel, and makes it intellectually respectable. She relies on three words: God, Immortality, and Duty. She finds the first one inconceivable, the second one unbelievable, and the third one absolute. It is this idea that becomes the source of her strength, and is transmuted into the terms of her characters' 'doing and suffering'.

George Eliot is concerned with the moral problems of her characters as related to their environment. She is familiar with the varied social context in which people live, and she uses her knowledge in creating characters who move naturally in their daily occupations. She reports the discussion of the problems of Dr. Lydgate (in *Middlemarch*) accurately, and she gives the exact subject of Mr. Casaubon's research and its background. The agricultural activity of the Poysers in *Adam Bede* is presented fully and convincingly. These pictures of men at work are bound up with moral problems.

Adam Bede is George Eliot's first fully developed realistic novel with an element of pastoral idealism in the character of the hero. It is a story of virtue and vice confronting each other in a society where the dignity of labor and the simple virtues of faith and love can redeem life and bring peace and order. The marriage of Adam and Dinah at the end moves the story from the probable to the symbolic. But there is enough earthliness in the novel that we find ourselves, not in the Garden of Eden, but in the modern world, after the Fall.

It is in *Adam Bede* that George Eliot's philosophy of determinism, in the sense of moral responsibility, and realism in the sense of truthfulness is fully expressed: "It is for this rare, precious quality of truthfulness that I delight in many Dutch paintings" (chap. 17). This truthfulness makes it a realistic novel bordering on naturalism: "Consequences are un pitying. Our deeds carry their terrible consequences ... that are hardly ever confined to ourselves." "A man cannot very well steal a bank-note unless the bank-note lies within convenient reach; but he won't make us think him an honest man because he begins to howl at the bank-note for falling in his way" (chap. 16). The bank-note's

presence is only one of the causes of the theft, but its presence is not a compulsion to make a man steal it; he can ignore it, and he is morally responsible for the theft.

The Mill on the Floss (1860) is a more complicated novel. Again the moral problems are illustrated by the relation between characters, the relations which grow naturally out of the characters' daily life and work. *Silas Marner* (1861) is a simpler novel that has something of the tone of a fairy tale. A baby is left at the door of the lonely weaver, Silas, after his gold coins have been taken away from him. Once he was driven out of the religious community to which he belonged by a false charge of theft, and he took refuge in the agricultural village of Reveloe. His only consolation now is the pile of gold that is stolen by Dunstan, the squire's reprobate son who disappears. The elder brother's wife of low birth carries her child one New Year's Eve to Reveloe, intending to force her way to the squire's house, but she dies in the snow. Her child, Eppie, finds her way into Silas's cottage and restores Silas's happiness. Finally, Dunstan's body with Silas's gold is revealed, and Godfrey claims his daughter. Eppie refuses to leave Silas. Thus, love of man triumphs and love of gold is crushed.

Middlemarch (1871-1872), George Eliot's masterpiece and her most successful and comprehensive novel, is a novel of moral discovery, a novel in which each one of the important characters comes to learn the truth about himself or herself as a result of what happens to him or her. The characters are both real and symbolic, and the plot is carefully organized.

Middlemarch concentrates on the blighted marriage of the wealthy, young, and Puritanical idealist, Dorothea Brook, to the middle-aged pedant, Dr Edward Casaubon, who labors fruitlessly on his project, *A Key to All Mythologies*. After his death, Dorothea marries Will Ladislaw, her former husband's cousin. Another story in the novel traces the career of the idealistic Dr. Lydgate, a devotee of scientific progress and the new medicine, who errs disastrously in marrying the local mayor's daughter, Rosamund Vinvy, whose foolish social ambitions ruin his life.

The major characters in *Middlemarch* emphasize George Eliot's view that practical virtues rather than doctrinal orthodoxy are what really matter. She investigates human aspirations, especially the

aspirations to serve and to be good. Dorothea Brooke is considered as a St. Theresa who is born in the wrong place and the wrong time. Her advantages of social position, wealth, and independence are the causes of her undoing. Her zeal for self-sacrifice and her lust to serve the highest are the pride of self-righteousness and spiritual arrogance. Thus, she is self-deceived. Her passion for the ideal transfigures Mr. Casaubon whom she marries and is bitterly disillusioned. Casaubon suggests futility, and, like Dorothea, he is a tragic figure.

Daniel Deronda, George Eliot's last novel, has psychological subtlety and moral power. It is a novel in which the spoilt beauty of Harleth helps her to gain moral virtue through suffering. However, George Eliot's personality shines through all her novels, and she has enlarged the scope of the novel. She is a Victorian sage whose moral vision is effectively communicated through her realistic novels.

George Meredith (1828-1909) is psychologically more ambitious than George Eliot, but he never succeeded to give complete artistic realization to his moral and psychological insights. His principal interests lie in problems of self-awareness, the relation between natural and artificial factors in building up personality, and the character and behavior of women in the world of men. *The Ordeal of Richard Feverel* (1859) is a study of self-deception. *The Egoist* (1879) probes and presents the vanity and self-delusion of the hero, especially in his relations with women. In *Diana of the Crossways* (1885), *The Amazing Marriage* (1895) and his other novels Meredith continues his investigation of egotism in particular relation to male weakness and female strength. Meredith is a feminist who speaks out for full female emancipation. His women characters are drawn with strength and sympathy.

Thomas Hardy

Thomas Hardy (1840-1909) directs his irony at the very conditions of human existence. Setting his characters in Wessex, the southern corner of England, he sees them as elemental figures who struggle against a background of indifferent nature. These characters act out their generally tragic

dramas with a dignity imposed on them by the single fact of their "having to endure human lot.

Hardy is neither a philosophical novelist nor a psychologist. His view of man is neither consistent nor profound, but his vision of life is genuine.

Hardy is a serious and sober novelist, but, unlike other Victorian novelists, he is careless of didactic moralizing. His prose style is simple and candid, notable for his almost scientific precision of statement.

Hardy's *Under the Greenwood Tree* (1872) concerns the love of Dick Dewey for the flighty but charming Fancy Day. It is a tale of rustic life and love with all its vanities as well as its idealism. The passions and emotions of the young lovers are symbolic of human condition. The novel's happy ending is not a promise of permanent felicity because Hardy ends the novel before sending the lovers into the larger picture of the march of life. There are suggestions that the lovers are no exception to the human lot.

Far From Madding Crowd (1874) is a story of love and murder. Gabriel Oak, the shepherd, serves the capricious Bathsheba. Sergeant Troy wins Bathsheba's love and marries her and then ill-treats her. Troy is murdered by Farmer Boldwood who loves Bathsheba. Boldwood becomes a lunatic. Gabriel and Bathsheba are at last united. The novel looks closely at the nature and consequence of human emotions. Selfishness from the outside world invades the pastoral scene. Selfishness, misfortune, and coincidence make this story violent, and entangle it in the web of fate. The novel is significant for the moments of sudden insight into the way vanity, desire, and passion work.

The scene of *The Return of the Native* (1878) is the gloomy Egdon Heath. Damon Wildeve is loved by the gentle, unselfish Thomasin Yeobright and the selfish, capricious Eustacia Vye. After playing fast and loose with them, Wildeve marries Thomasin, who rejects her humble adorer, Diggory Venn. Her cousin, Clym Yeobright, a diamond merchant in Paris, comes to Egdon with the intention of becoming a schoolmaster in his native land. He falls in love with Eustacia and they marry. To Eustacia's despair, his sight fails and he becomes a furze-cutter on the heath. Eustacia becomes the

cause of estrangement between Clym and his mother who dies. Clym also discovers that Eustacia's relation with Wildeve has not ceased. This lead to a violent scene between Clym and Eustacia, followed by her flight with Wildeve in the course of which they are drowned. Thomasin finally marries Diggory Venn.

The novel depicts the consequences of the unbridled passion that paralyzes man's reason, leaves him defenseless, and makes him a victim of his passionate nature. The novel, like Greek tragedy, emphasizes the tragic flaws of the characters. They are misled by their excessive passions, pride, and idealism. They disregard the consequences of their disastrous flaws, and try to shift the responsibility of their flaws to fate. In fact, Hardy's pessimism and his insistence on the harsh punishment of human flaws make his novels look like Greek tragedies.

In *The Return of the Native*, Egdon Heath represents both the indifferent world of nature and the stage on which human tragedy is enacted. It sets the tone of the sad story of the trapped human passions. Fulfillment for one character is frustration for another. Characters are active or passive according to their natures, but actions never have their expected or intended consequences. Tragedies occur, hopes are crushed, and expectations are cruelly disappointed. Self-knowledge comes through sad and bitter experiences, but life still goes on and it is reduced to a doom that is never ended. Thus, the novel becomes a microcosm of human tragedy. It presents a combination of the earthliness and visionary truth that is Hardy's most impressive quality.

The Mayor of Casterbridge (1886), Hardy's masterpiece, shows a greater mastery of his material than found in his other novels. The story is like a Greek tragedy: Michael Henchard, an out-of-work hay-tresser, make a mistake and suffers as a result, but his suffering is so much that he becomes pathetic. Hardy always goes too far in punishing his characters and relying on their pathos. Henchard's rise to prosperity is not described, but his fall is painfully traced, so that the whole novel becomes the stages of his fall.

Henchard, when drunk at Weydon Prior fair, sells his wife, Susan, and child, Elizabeth-Jane, for

five guineas to a sailor, Newson. Returning to his senses, he takes a solemn vow not to touch intoxicants for 21 years. He becomes rich, respected, prosperous grain merchant, and the mayor of Casterbridge. After 18 years Susan, believing her sailor-husband drowned at sea, comes with her daughter to seek out Henchard. He receives them "suddenly and arranges to court and marry her anew so that respectability may be maintained. Henchard is led to believe that Elizabeth-Jane is his own daughter, whereas she is Newson's daughter. Donald Farfrae, Henchard's capable assistant and an upstart opportunist, becomes his rival. Susan dies, and through her note he realizes that Elizabeth-Jane is not his own daughter. Henchard is gradually ruined. The story of the sale of his wife is revealed, and he takes to drink. Elizabeth-Jane is his only comfort, but Newson returns and claims his daughter. Henchard becomes lonelier when Elizabeth-Jane leaves her and marries Farfrae. He dies wretchedly in a hut on Egdon Heath.

Henchard's original flaw together with a complex combination of factors constitutes a symbolic map of the human condition. The past is half visible behind the present; nature, civilization, and human character work on one another continually. Nature is indifferent, and characters regard Nature as something that can be controlled only by submitting to it. Civilization is seen in its simplest form, and man feels that he is at the mercy of Nature. There is a limit to man's control over Nature, and Farfrae feels that he is less controlled by Nature than Henchard. Henchard himself is almost a natural force in being at the mercy of his instinct and emotions, without self-knowledge and without understanding the external world.

The Mayor of Casterbridge follows the pattern of the Greek tragedy. Henchard has something of the willfulness of Oedipus and Lear, something of their dignity even in his weakness and in the manner of his self-destruction. The novel is a genuine tragedy, and it is Hardy's most perfectly organized novel. It enacts the indignation of moral order. Henchard, like Oedipus and Lear, is forced to discover in suffering and sorrow the actuality of the moral power he had so recklessly ignored. His crime and punishment are described in allegorical terms. He suggests the passionate extremities of

Oedipus; Farfrae, like Creon, stands for the appeal to reason and compromise. Both of them suggest the conflict between passion and reason. Henchard is similar to Mark Antony, and Farfrae in his shrewdness resembles Octavius Caesar. The fate that controls the world of *The Mayor of Casterbridge* resembles the ideal justice and wisdom that preside over the tragedies of Sophocles and Shakespeare.

Tess of D'Urbervilles (1891) is often regarded as Hardy's tragic masterpiece. It is certainly his most ambitious novel. Tess Durbeyfield is the daughter of a poor, foolish villager of Blackmoor Vale who learns that he is the descendent of the ancient family of the D'Urbervilles. Tess is seduced by Alec, and gives birth to a child who dies. When Tess is working as a dairymaid on a large farm, she becomes engaged to Angel Clare, a clergyman's son. On their wedding night she confesses to him the affair with Alec. Consequently, he abandons her. Misfortune and hardship come upon her and her family. She kills Alec; she is arrested, tried, and hanged. Justice is done, and the president of the immortals ends his sport with Tess.

Tess is a 'simple, sensuous, and passionate' girl who has never been able to come to terms with the world as she finds it. *Tess* is a great novel, but not a great tragedy. It produces in the reader a feeling of anger, frustration, and resentment, a feeling that is alien to a great tragedy. The same is true of *Jude the Obscure* (1896), Hardy's last novel.

Jude, a poor country boy with visions of academic glory, escapes from his native village. In spite of his self-education in the classics, he never achieves entry to the university. In the Preface to the first edition of the novel, Hardy explains his intention:

For a novel ... which attempts to deal unaffectedly with the fret and fever, derision and disaster, that may press in the wake of strongest passion ... to tell ... of a deadly war between flesh and spirit, and to point to the tragedy of unfulfilled aims, I am not aware that there is anything in the handling to which exception can be taken.

The conflict between flesh and spirit is a theme worked out in the relation between instinct and reason.

Jude the Obscure is about the inevitable frustrations of the human condition, not an attack against the marriage law or the refusal of Oxford colleges to admit rustics. In his 1912 postscript, Hardy calls the novel “a tragedy ... not without a hope that certain cathartic, Aristotelian qualities might be found therein.”

In the 19th century, side by side with the novel as social, political, and religious criticism, novel as entertainment flourished. **Anthony Trollope** (1815-1882) is among the novelists who aimed at entertainment. Trollope's *Barchester Towers*, *Doctor Thorn*, and four other novels are among his Barchester series, dealing with life and love in a small cathedral city against the background of ecclesiastical politics, and the hopes, fears, and intrigues of a society dominated by its clerical elements. In *Phineas Finn* and *The Prime Minister*, Trollope has a keen sense of the relation between politics and daily life. Although he wrote more than 50 novels, he is not a great novelist. He has only the imagination, the craftsmanship, and the knowledge of men and affairs to create a world for the reader to retire to. It is this quality in his novels that accounts for the cult of Trollope, which began as an escapist movement during the Second World War and after.

Samuel Butler (1835-1902), the Bishop of Lichfield, is a severe critic of the Victorian moral system. He is a satirist who wages war against the Victorian hypocrisies and conventions. *Erewhon* (1872) is a satire on the Victorian concepts of society, duty, morality, and religion. *The Way of All Flesh* (1903) is an autobiographical novel that attacks the despotism of the Victorian family life, and the cruelty and as well the inadequacy of the Victorian education. It is a powerful novel, a great satirical force that is more responsible than any other book for the early twentieth-century revolt against Victorianism. G. B. Shaw learned a lot from him.

Robert Louis Stevenson (1850-1894) is one of the most talented writers with a real passion for the craft of letters and an awareness of its technical demands. He is an essayist and novelist of considerable originality and power. His *Treasure Island* (1883) is a skillful novel that carefully works out a moral pattern, which presents a moral dilemma. The novel has no conventional hero, and the

energy of personality' belongs to a one-legged villain, Long John Silver. The virtuous are finally saved almost by luck and by an irresponsible boy who does not quite know what he is doing. Thus, Stevenson shows interest in moral ambiguities.

PART V

TWENTIETH CENTURY ENGLISH LITERATURE

Chapter 17

Social, Religious, and Political Background to the 20th Century

THE TWENTIETH CENTURY

In the twentieth century England has been displaced from the pinnacle CENTURY of power which she achieved in Victorian times. A commonly held view of the effects of England's new position was well expressed by a staff member of the *Manchester Guardian* living in the United States. Speaking of the rigid class system that had long been established in England, he says: "Most Englishmen suffered under this system and they have profited from its defeat, but it had one advantage for both the privileged and the underprivileged—they never had any doubts about who they were. As a boy, I was rock-certain of my identity—I was a member of the working class in England and an Englishman abroad. And by Englishman abroad, I meant a proud carrier of the white man's burden, a son of the Empire. . . . But all that is over now. By overturning the system, the working class won a chance to share the opportunities; and the colonies, as symbols, were shattered. But with their loss, we have lost the identities they gave us. We are face to face with ourselves now and we don't know who we are."

The social revolution in England may not have been altogether so thoroughgoing as this writer suggests; but the modern temper is one of loss of identity, and social change is one of its causes.

SOCIAL CHANCE

When Queen Victoria died in 1901, England was the most powerful nation in the world. Her Empire stretched to all corners of the globe, her navy ruled the seas and the advance of the Industrial Revolution created jobs and kept her prosperous. But during the reign of Victoria's son Edward VII, a change so gradual as to be at first imperceptible set in. The contrasts between the Captain of Industry and the aristocrat on the one hand and the common man on the other became less marked as the power and wealth of the ruling class declined, as the demands of the new technology created positions for intelligent men without regard to birth or rank, and as the vast number of British laborers obtained real political power for the first time. These changes led to a feeling of dislocation and frustration on the part of the laborer as well as of the industrialists. From government work to dock work, jobs became more specialized, narrower in scope, demanded more uniformity, and gave less satisfaction outside of the salary or wage.

The increasing rise and strength of the laboring force resulted in time in the formation of the Labour Party. It challenged the positions of both Liberals and Conservatives, who for over a hundred years had alternated in governing England, and in the second quarter of the century forced widespread changes in the very fabric of English life. The steel industry was nationalized. A vast new program of social legislation was put into effect. More liberal old-age benefits were set up, along with increased health insurance and free (or very inexpensive) hospital and medical care. To pay the huge costs of the new program, higher taxes were levied against all classes.

DISSOLUTION OF THE EMPIRE

The long reign of George V (1910-1936) was a time of OP the empire cataclysmic change in England and throughout the world. One of the first signs of the emerging new order was the growth of a world-wide nationalist movement, which would within a half century convert England from an ' empire to a commonwealth.

At the opening of the twentieth century the colonial system seemed to most Englishmen the ideal way to maintain and advance an industrial civilization. The departure of laborers from the farms to the cities throughout the nineteenth century had made it necessary for England to import much of her food. To obtain the money to buy food, exports had to be increased. Therefore, so long as England retained her colonies and her superiority in manufacture, she had not only food but wealth. The Empire supplied most of her food and raw materials and was an important market for goods made from some of those same materials.

Long before the nationalist movement swelled in India and in other distant parts of the Empire, it rose to a head in Ireland.

Throughout the nineteenth century the Irish had agitated for home rule, and by the end of the century this feeling of nationalism was becoming evident in literature as well as in politics. A remarkable group of writers, led by William Butler Yeats (see page 622), strove to awaken in the Irish people a sense of the romance of their past and the future they might achieve as a united people. To this end Gaelic, the original language of Celtic Ireland, was revived; the Irish Theatre Movement, which resulted in the founding of the renowned Abbey Theatre in Dublin, was launched; and in drama, prose, and poetry writers interpreted the life of the Irish people. This resurgence in Irish literature is called the Irish Literary Renaissance.

Writers also took an active part in the struggle which led to the establishment of the Irish Free State in 1921 and culminated in 1949 with the establishment of the Republic of Eire.

Early in the twentieth century the urge for self-government also grew stronger in India. Mahatma Gandhi's campaign of nonviolence and civil disobedience made him a national hero. Finally in 1950 India became an independent republic. Unlike Eire, India retained many ties with England as a member of the British Commonwealth of Nations.

THE EFFECTS OF WORLD WAR I

The world-wide surge toward independence inevitably led to war. Germany, a newly united nation, threatened England's colonial expansion, industrial monopoly, and naval supremacy. Since these factors undermined England's economic position, she initiated a system of restraints against Germany. The war which began in 1914 opened with limited objectives, but it later involved the United States and Japan and became World War I. Over the years it became invested with a sense of mission on the part of England, France, the United States, and the other Allies: it was to be a war to end wars; in its wake was to follow a recognition of the rights of people, to govern themselves; there was to be a great Western federation under the League of Nations; the world was to be made safe for democracy. In terms of these ideals; the unprecedented violence of the war could be tolerated. When, after the Versailles Treaty, it appeared that all the ideals had been trampled underfoot in the race for Vengeance and territorial expansion, a wave of profound disillusion spread over Europe, adding its impact to the spirit of the modern age. When, one by one, the democratic republics set up after the war fell into the hand of dictators and Europe began to divide into two armed camps, it seemed to many that at best Western civilization was coming apart at the seams. Many felt that the assumption of continuous progress and social evolution, which had been inherited from the eighteenth century, given its final form by the Darwinians, and upon which men had built for generations, had been discredited. More pessimistic individuals came to believe that all social institutions from the family to religion to international law were based on selfishness and violence; in the ideals that had long served as a spur to a more civilized life, they saw nothing but hypocrisy and sham.

THE GREAT DEPRESSION

The period of disillusion that set in after World War I was followed by the world-wide economic collapse of 1929. The northern industrial cities of England suffered most—in some nearly half of the

people were out of work—and the national exchequer, heavily in debt from the war, had to support these people at the same time that money flowed out of the country to pay for food.

By 1936, the year George V died, England was beginning to emerge from the blackest years of the depression. George V's son Edward VIII ruled for less than a year before abdicating. When George VI, the father of Queen Elizabeth II, ascended the throne, England was still troubled by widespread unemployment, torn by struggles with her colonies, and confused about the future.

WORLD WAR II

When World War II began in September 1939, England faced its greatest crisis. In May 1940 Winston Churchill became Prime Minister. Speaking in the House of Commons that same month Churchill declared it:

I have nothing to offer but blood, toil, tears, and sweat. You ask, What is our aim? I can answer in one word: Victory —victory . . . however long and hard the road may be; for without victory there is no survival. Let that be realized, no survival for the British Empire; no survival for all that the British Empire has stood for; no survival for the urge and impulse of the ages, that mankind will move forward to its goal. But I take up my task with buoyancy and hope.

In the early years of war Churchill stood almost alone in believing that England could endure. Norway and Denmark, Belgium and Holland, and France fell before the Nazis. Again and again London was battered by bombs. Industrial towns across England were destroyed. Only the channel across which William the Conqueror had brought his invading Normans almost nine hundred years earlier stood between England and another invading army. During these years Churchill became the symbol of Britain's bulldog determination and courage.

During the war and for some time afterwards, members of all classes, rich and poor, felt the pinch of strictly rationed food and other necessities. By the time Elizabeth II came to the throne in 1952,

austerity had become the hated word symbolizing the continuing necessity of all Englishmen to live frugally.

THE REVOLUTION IN SCIENCE

If events seemed to be conspiring to disillusion modern man, he could find even less comfort in the realm of the intellect. He found that even here the old certainties of Newtonian physics and Euclidean geometry had been found to be only approximate descriptions of the world. New concepts—relativity, particles of energy—made time, space, matter itself seem like nothing more stable than the stuff that dreams are made of. Writing in 1925 the English philosopher Alfred North Whitehead said, "The progress of science has now reached a turning point. The stable foundations of physics have broken up.... The old foundations of scientific thought are becoming unintelligible. Time, space, matter, material, ether, electricity, mechanism, organism, configuration, structure, pattern, function, all require reinterpretation." At the same time the new study of depth psychology seemed, like the political events of the age, to say that there was irreducible evil at the core of man and the best he could do was to learn to live with it.

The modern outlook was bleak indeed. Britain had emerged from World War II only to be confronted with the continuing fact of the atomic bomb and the baffling and ever-widening revolution that is reshaping her social, economic, political, and intellectual existence. In 1947 the British-born poet W. H. Auden gave to his long philosophical poem the title *The Age of Anxiety*. In this title he has summed up the dominant tone of literature during the past half century.

Chapter 18

Twentieth Century English Literature

Queen Victoria's reign ended in 1901, but the Victorian age ended about twenty years earlier. That peculiar spirit called "Victorianism"—a mixture of optimism, doubt, and guilt—began to disappear with men like Swinburne the rebel, Fitzgerald the pessimist, Butler the satirist, and others-. The literature produced from about 1880 to 1914 is characterized either by an attempt to find substitutes for religion, or by a kind of spiritual emptiness—a sense of the hopelessness of trying to believe in anything.

There were many possible substitutes for religion. One was Art, and Walter Pater (1839-94) was its expounder. "Art for art's sake" (very different from Ruskin's highly moral doctrines) was the theme of books like *Marius the Epicurean* and *Studies in The History of the Renaissance*. It was one's duty, said Pater (in the most exquisite prose), to cultivate pleasure, to drink deep from the fountains of natural and created beauty. In other words, he advocated *hedonism* as a way of life. Pater does not preach, however. He is mainly concerned with shaping his wonderful prose, concentrating (following his own doctrine) on his art, and letting the philosophy filter gently through.

Hedonism was the thesis of some of Oscar Wilde's witty essays, as also of his novel *The Picture of Dorian Gray*. Wilde (1856-1900) seems, in the latter book, however, to be concerned with showing the dangers of asking for too much from life. The beautiful Dorian Gray—Faustus-like—wishes that he should remain eternally young and handsome, while his picture painted in the finest flush of his

beauty, should grow old in his stead. The wish is granted: Dorian remains ever-young, but his portrait shows signs of ever-increasing age and, moreover, the scars of the crimes attendant on asking for too much (a murder, the ruining of many women, unnamable debauchery). Dorian, repentant, tries to destroy his portrait, symbolically quelling his sins, but-magically-it is he himself who dies, monstrous with age and ugliness, while his portrait reverts to its former perfection of youthful beauty. The sense of guilt—as much medieval as Victorian—intrudes into Wilde's bright godless world unexpectedly, and this book prepares us for those later works of his-written under the shadow and shame of his prison-sentence—which lack the old wit and contain a sombre seriousness—*The Ballad of Reading Goal* and *De Profundis*.

Another substitute for religion was Imperialism (with undertones of Freemasonry), and *Rudyard Kipling* (1865-1936) was the great singer of Empire. Born in India, Kipling knew the British Empire from inside, not merely, like so many stay-at-home newspaper-readers, as a series of red splashes on the map of the world. This concern with Empire expresses itself in many forms—the sympathy with the soldiers who fought the frontier wars, kept peace in the Empire, did glorious work for a mere pittance and a reward of civilian contempt; the stress on the white man's responsibility to his brothers who, despite difference of colour and creed, acknowledged the same Queen; the *Value* of an Empire as the creator of a new, rich civilization. Kipling's reputation as a poet has always been precarious' among the "intellectuals": They have looked askance at his mixture of soldier's slang and biblical idiom. Kipling was rehabilitated by T. S. Eliot, in his long essay prefacing his selection of kipling's verse, and George Orwell has said, in an essay on Eliot's essay, valuable things which put kipling firmly in his place: he is not a great poet, but he sums up for all time a certain phase in English history; he has the gift of stating the obvious—not, as with Pope, for the men of reason and learning, but for the man in the street—with pithy and memorableness. He is a poet who knows the East, and certain lines of his (as in *The Road to Mandalay*) evoke the sun and the palm-trees, and the "longing - to be-back" of many a repatriated Englishman, with real power. As a prose-writer Kipling is known

for one novel (*Kim*) and a host of excellent short stories, also for a schoolboy's classic. *Stalky and Co.* He has, in both verse and prose, a vigour and an occasional vulgarity that are refreshing after men like William Morris, Swinburne, and Rossetti.

Pessimism reigned in the novel. *Thomas Hardy* (1840-1928) produced a whole series of books dedicated to the life of his native Dorsetshire, full of the sense of man's bond with nature and with the past—a past revealed in the age-old trees, heaths, fields, and in the prehistoric remains of the Celts, the ruined camps of the Romans. In his novels, man never seems to be free: the weight of time and place presses heavily on him, and, above everything, there are mysterious forces which control the life. Man is a puppet whose strings are worked by fates which are either hostile or indifferent of him. There is no message of hope in *Tess of the D'Urbervilles* (when Tess is finally hanged we hear: '... And so the President of the Immortals had finished his sport with Tess') nor in *The Mayor of Casterbridge* or *Jude the Obscure*. The reception of this last work, with its gloomy 'Curst be the day in which I was born' and its occasional brutal frankness, was so hostile that Hardy turned from the novel to verse. To-day it seems that his stature as a poet is considerable, and that both as poet and novelist he will be remembered. His verse expresses the irony of life—man's thwarted schemes, the need for resignation in the face of hostile fate—but also he expresses lighter moods, writes charming nature-poems, even live-lyrics. Hardy's skill at depicting nature, his eye for close detail, is eminently apparent in the novels, and it comes to full flower in the poems. His verse occasionally suffers from a "clotted" quality—consonants cluster together in Anglo-Saxon violence ('hill-hid tides throb, throe on throe')—but this is an aspect of his masculine force. An ability to produce a verse—composition of epic length was shown in *The Dynasts*, a vast un-actable drama meant to be presented on the stage of the reader's own imagination, dealing with the Napoleonic Wars as seen from the viewpoint not only of men but of the Immortal Fates, who watch, direct, and comment.

George Gissing (1857-1903), whose importance has slowly been revealed in our own age, presents grim pictures of futility with a classical restraint. *The Unclassed* shows the effect of poverty

upon human character; *Demos* seems to show that, no matter how much the depressed classes may agitate, they cannot build a juster world: *New Grub Street* tells something of Gissing's own story—the writer of merit struggling to make a living by churning out trashy novels at starvation-rates, contrasted with the glib, successful book-reviewer who is successful because he has no literary conscience. Gissing's, concern with showing the "other side" of life (*The Nether World* is a ruthless study of slum-life) owes something to Dickens, though Gissing does not possess Dickens's fantasy, robustness, or humour, but his critical study of Dickens is one of the most penetrating books ever written about that matter.

A return to optimism is shown in the verse and prose of *Robert Louis Stevenson* (1850-94), but it is rather a superficial one, for Stevenson is a rather superficial writer. He is at his best in adventure stories which show the influence of his fellow-countryman, Walter Scott —*Kidnapped*, *The Master of Ballantrae*—and boys' books like *Treasure Island*, a juvenile masterpiece. *Dr Jekyll and Mr. Hyde* deals with the duality of good and evil within the same man, but it is perhaps little more than a well-written thriller. The poems, especially those for children, are charming, and the essays, which have little to say, say that little, very well. His short stories are good, and we may note here that the short story was becoming and accepted form-writers had to learn how to express themselves succinctly, using great compression in plot, characterization, and dialogue—heralding the approach of an age less leisurely than the Victorian, with no time for three-volume novels, and demanding its stories in quick mouthfuls.

A new faith, more compelling than Pater's hedonism or Kipling's Imperialism, was still needed, and *Bernard Shaw* and *H. G. Wells* (1866-1946) found one in what may be called Liberalism—the belief that man's future lies on earth, not in heaven, and that, with scientific and social progress, and earthly paradise may eventually be built. Wells is one of the great figures of modern literature, he owed a lot to Dickens in such novels as *Kipps* and *The History of Mr. Polly* — works which borrow Dickens's prose-style, his humour, and his love of eccentrics, and which deal affectionately with

working people — but he found themes of his own in the scientific novels. *The Time Machine*, *The First Men in the Moon*, *The War of the Worlds*, *The Invisible Man*, *When The Sleeper Awakes*, and *The Food of the Gods* all seem concerned not merely with telling a strange and entertaining story but with showing that, to science, everything is theoretically possible. The glorification of scientific discovery leads Wells to think that time and space can easily be conquered, and so we can travel to the Moon, or Martians can attack us, we can travel forward to the future, and back again to the present. The old Newtonian world, with its fixed dimensions, begins to melt and dissolve in the imaginative stories of Wells: flesh can be made as transparent as glass, human size can be increased indefinitely, a man can sleep for a couple of centuries and wake up in the strange Wellsian future; a man can work miracles; a newspaper from the future can be delivered by mistake; a man can lose weight without bulk and drift like a balloon.

Wells sometimes described himself as a "Utopiographer". He was always planning worlds in which science had achieved its last victories over religion and superstition, in which reason reigned, in which everybody was healthy, clean, happy, and enlightened. The Wellsian future has been, for many years, one of the furnishings of human minds —skyscrapers^ the sky full of aircraft, men and women dressed something like ancient Greeks, rational conversation over a rational meal of vitamin-pills. To build Utopia, Wells wanted—like Shaw—to destroy all the vestiges of the past which cluttered the modern world—class-distinction, relics of feudalism, directionless education, unenlightened and self-seeking politicians, and economic inequality. In other words, both Shaw and Wells wanted a kind of Socialism. Rejecting the doctrine of sin, they believed that man's mistakes and crimes came from stupidity, or from an unfavorable environment, and they set to work to blueprint the devices which would put everything right.

Wells, in book after book, tackles the major social problems. In *Ann Veronica* we have the theme of women's new equal status with men; in *Joan and Peter* education is examined; in *The Soul of a Bishop* we hear of the new religion of the rational age; in *The New Machiavelli* we have Wells's

philosophy of politics But these works remain novels, characterized by a Dickensian richness of character and not lacking in love-interest. *Tono-Bungay* is about commerce, *Mr Blettsworthy on Rampole Island* a satire on the "savage" social conventions, *The Dream* a story of the muddle of twentieth-century life as seen from the viewpoint of a thousand years ahead. Wells was a prolific writer and, when he kept to a story, always produced an interesting one. His preaching is now a little out-of-date, and his very hope for the future, rudely shattered by the Second World War, turned to a kind of wild despair: mankind would have to be superseded by some new species, *Homo Sapiens* had had his day; "You fools," he said in the preface to a reprint just before his death, "you damned fools". Optimistic Liberalism died with him.

John Galsworthy (1867-1933) is best known for his *Forstyle Saga*, a series of six novels which trace the story of a typically English upper-class family from Victorian days to the nineteen-twenties—presenting their reactions to great events which, in effect, spell the doom of all they stand for, including World War I, the growth of Socialism, the General Strike of 1926. Galsworthy had shown himself, in his early *The Island Pharisees*, to be critical of old standards—the philistinism, decadence, dullness, atrophy of feeling which characterized the so-called "ruling class". *The Forsyte Saga* in trying to view this dying class dispassionately—with occasional irony—nevertheless seems to develop sympathy for the hero of *The Man of Property*, Soames Forsyte the epitome of the money-seeking class which Galsworthy is supposed to detest. Galsworthy, in fact, is himself drawn into the family of Forsytes, becomes involved with its fortunes, and what starts off as a work of social criticism ends in acceptance of the very principles it attacks. This work is still widely read, though it is not greatly esteemed by the modern critics. In Germany its influence on the great Thomas Mann was considerable.

Joseph Conrad (1857-1924) brought a new quality into the novel. Conrad was a Pole (his real name was Teodor Josef Konrad Korzcniewski), born in the Ukraine, in love with the sea from an early age. This led him eventually to a British merchant ship, a Master's certificate, and a mastery of

the English language. Conrad produced his first novel at the age of forty, but then made up for lost time by turning out a book every year. He normally writes of the sea, of the Eastern islands, of the English character as seen against a background of the exotic or faced with difficulties. His handling of English is distinctive, a little foreign in its lack of restraint and its high colour, but admirably suited to the description of storms, labouring ships with skippers shouting through high winds, the hot calm of a pilgrim-ship in the Red Sea. Conrad's finest book is perhaps *Lord Jim*, where moral conflict is admirably presented in the character of the young Englishman who loses his honour through leaping overboard when his ship seems to be in danger, but expiates his sin by dying heroically at the end. A good brief introduction to Conrad is the short *Youth*, with its action, swift character-studies, and its vision of the mystical, magical East at the close of the voyage. Other novels are *Typhoon*, *The Nigger of The Narcissus*, *Nostramo*, and *The Secret Agent*.

Associated with Conrad is Ford Madox Ford (1873-1939) who collaborated with him in the writing of *Romance* and *The Inheritors*. Ford is neglected, though there are signs that he is at last being recognised by a few as one of the great novelists of the period. His four novels on Christopher Tietjens ('the last Tory') are a study of English during the World War I, as well as a penetrating satire on the new forces against which Tietjens, with his outmoded standards of honour and honesty[^] must contend. They are called *Some Do Not*, *No More Parades*, *A Man Could Stand Up*, and *Last Post*. Stylistically, Ford is the superior of bigger names of the period, and his analytical skill is shown at its best in *The Good Soldier*, a tragic novel which is one of the really important pieces of literature of the twentieth century.

Verse generally did not flourish in the England of the early modern period. Besides pre-Raphaelic poets, there were a number of versifiers who wrote pleasantly of love and country matters, among them a man who perhaps gained more admiration than he altogether deserved — Robert Bridges (1844-1930), friend and editor of Hopkins, whose long poetic life was crowned with *The Testament of Beauty*, a philosophical poem (possibly of no great depth), in 1929, Poets who breathed a new and

rather uninspired Romanticism, like Robert Brooke, had no chance to develop, for the First World War swallowed many of them. Edward Thomas, Walter de Mare, Edmond Blunden, and John Masefield have shown a sturdier Romanticism, and one young Romantic, Wilfred Owen (1893-1918), lived long enough to be influenced by his war experiences in the direction of a new and terrible poetry, sometimes, in its dignity and haunting music, resembling even Dante. Satire came out of that War, as in the poems of Siegfried Sassoon and Robert Graves, but, generally speaking, the poet who had most virtues and most facets was the Irishman, *William Butler Yeats* (1865-1939), and he may be said to dominate the greater part of the early modern period.

Yeats's early work is full of Irish melancholy, breathing the spirit of the "Celtic Twilight". Exquisite music, evocation of; Irish myth and Irish landscape, and a quality of eerie mystery are to be found in the earlier volumes, but in later life the inspiration and form of his work changed radically. Yeats forged his own philosophy, made a personal mythology (based on the image of ancient Byzantium, a symbol of the Undying in art), and wrote a rough, terse verse, avoiding true rhyme capable of expressing abstruse ideas or of speaking all—too—intelligible home-truths about life, religion, and love. Yeats has the true magic, so that often, when we find him difficult to understand, he speaks to our imagination in a strange way that somehow though paraphrase would be impossible—makes the whole poem perfectly clear. His quality is strongly individual, his content profound, he belongs to the great tradition of English poetry.

The twentieth century has been much concerned with finding something to believe in—it has that in common with the last twenty years of the Victorian era. But whereas the first English moderns were satisfied with their hedonism or liberalism or medievalism, the later age has demanded something deeper—it has wanted the sense of a continuous tradition, the sense of being involved in a civilization. This, is difficult to make clear but if we consider that most of the writers we discussed earlier were trying to manufacture something to believe in, and that most of the more modern writers want to belong to something already there, but perhaps hidden, then we can understand the main

difference. A artist has to have subject-matter—a civilization, a religion, a myth, and the emotions of people who belong to these things, but it should not have to be the artist's job to create his subject-matter—it should be ready, waiting.

Americans sick of two aspects of American life—Puritanism and materialism—found a myth in the continuity of European culture, especially as revealed in the Latin countries. Henry James (1843-1916) proclaims in his dates a kinship with writers already discussed, but the spirit of his books anticipates T. S. Eliot, who produced his first book of poems a year after James's death. James was an American born in New York, educated at Harvard, a member of a great American family that had produced in Henry James senior a remarkable writer on philosophy, and in William James (the brother of Henry James junior) one of the most important original philosophers of the age. Henry James felt that his spiritual home was Europe, despite the tremendous 'Liberal' advances that America was making. His most significant novels—beginning with *The American* and ending with *The Ambassadors* and *The Golden Bowl*—deal with the theme of the impact of Europe on visiting Americans: the Americans feel themselves uncivilized, young, inexperienced, and Europe seems so old, wise, and beautiful. Europe absorbs America—it has continuity of tradition, and the tradition itself is old and valuable, the Americans of *The Ambassadors* are bewitched by a civilization almost against their will.

Ezra Pound (1885-1972) and Thomas Stearns Eliot (1888-1965), both American, made their homes in Europe, like their senior compatriot. Both seemed concerned with trying to conserve what is best in European culture before European civilization is finally destroyed. Pound followed Browning and various Italian and French poets of the Middle Ages, translated Chinese and Anglo-Saxon, looking for something to build on. He came to fruition of his talent in *Hugh Selwyn Mauberley*, an autobiographical poem which sums up his position as a poet who detests the civilization of Materialism, and is trying to build up a culture based on the past. Eliot, after satirizing the puritanical world of New England and condemning its philistinism, produced in 1922 an epoch-making poem of

some 400 lines, *The Waste Land*, which set out in a new poetical technique a picture of a materialistic age dying of lack of belief 'M in anything: the solution to the problem of living in such an arid Waste Land of a civilization seemed to be to accept it as a kind of fiery purgation (he quotes Dante: 'Then he hid in the fire which refines them') and to gather together such scraps of civilization and faith as have not yet been destroyed (These fragments I have shored against my ruins') *The Waste Land* makes tough demands on the reader: it quotes frequently from the literature of Europe and India (in the original), uses a rapidly shifting point-of-view (sometimes it is the poet speaking, sometimes a woman in a pub, sometimes a prostitute, sometimes the Greek mythical figure Tiresias, who is half-man and half-woman and thus contains in himself all the other characters) and uses verse which owes something to practically every English poet of the past, though Eliot's voice is always heard clearly enough. Eliot's distinctive verse-form is a kind of free verse derived from the blank verse of the late Elizabethan playwrights: it is supple and capable of much variety, also highly dramatic. *The Waste Land* is a closely organized poem, and not a word is wasted: it repays the trouble spent on it and is, in fact, a sort of door into European literature—a concise summary of a civilization which is contrasted sharply with the twentieth century.

Pound's later work is a lengthy poem called *Cantos* (or verse-chapters). In it he ranges over the civilizations of the , past —Eastern as well as Western —and fragments of Chinese appear, as well as Greek, Latin, and the modern European tongues. The general theme is —Usury as the cause of a civilization's decline. But the *Cantos* can be read as the shimmering history of civilization, in which time and place are not important and all ages are seen as one. Eliot's finest work after the *Waste Land* was the *Four Quartets*— four poems organized on the analogy of musical pieces, in which the old concern for European civilization has been changed into a very Christian preoccupation with 'the intersection of time with the timeless'-the way in which eternity can redeem the mistakes of history. The technique is remarkable, though we notice clearly one characteristic of modern poetry which is frequently condemned—the tendency for verse to sound like prose. Since early days of twentieth

century the dividing-line between prose and poetry has become very thin indeed.

In 1922 there appeared an important work in prose which (inevitably) sometimes sound like verse. This was *Ulysses*, by the Irishman James Joyce (1882-1941), a novel of enormous length dealing with the events of a single day in the life of a single town—the author's native Dublin. Joyce had previously published some charming but not outstanding verse, a volume of short stories called *Dubliners*, and a striking autobiographical novel—*Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man*. The hero of this novel—Stephen Dedalus—appears again in *Ulysses*, this time subordinated in a secondary role: the hero is a Hungarian Jew, long-settled in Dublin, called Leopold Bloom. The novel has no real plot. Like the Greek hero whose name provides the title. Bloom wanders from place to place, but has very un-heroic adventures, and finally meets Stephen, who then takes on the role of a sort of spiritual son. After this the book ends. But the eight hundred pages are not filled with padding; never was a novel written in conciser prose. We are allowed to enter the minds of the chief characters, who are presented with their thoughts and feelings in a continuous stream (the technique is called 'interior monologue'). The book is mostly a never-ending stream of Bloom's half-articulate impressions of the day, but Joyce prevents the book from being nothing but that, by imposing on it a very rigid form. Each chapter corresponds to an episode in Homer's *Odyssey* and has a distinct style of its own: for instance, in the Maternity Hospital scene the prose imitates all the English literary styles from *Beowulf* to Carlyle and beyond, symbolizing the growth of the foetus in the womb in its steady movement through time. The skill of the book is amazing, and when we pick up a novel by Arnold Bennett or Hugh Walpole after reading *Ulysses* we find it hard to be impressed by ways of writing which seem dull, unaware, half-asleep. *Ulysses* is the most carefully-written novel of the twentieth century.

In *Finnegans Wake* Joyce tried to present the whole of human history as a dream in the mind of a Dublin inn-keeper called H. C. Earwicker, and here the style—on which Joyce, going blind, expended immense labour—is appropriate to dream, the language shifting and changing, words becoming "glued

together, suggesting the merging of images in a dream, and enabling Joyce to present history and myth as a single image, with all the characters of history becoming a few eternal types, finally identified by Earwicker with himself, his wife, and three children. This great and difficult work probably marks the limit of experiment in language—it would be hard for any writer to go farther than Joyce. In both *Ulysses* and *Finnegans Wake* Joyce shows himself to have found a positive creed: man must believe in the *City* (symbolized by Dublin), the human society which must change, being human, but which will always change in a circular fashion. Time goes round, the river flows into the sea, but the source of the river is perpetually refreshed by rain from the sea: nothing can be destroyed, life is always renewed, even if the 'etym' 'abnihilises' us. The end of *Ulysses* is a triumphant 'Yes', the end of *Finnegans Wake* is the beginning of a sentence whose continuation starts the book.

One reaction against the Liberalism of Wells and Shaw was to be found in the novels and poems of the Englishman David Herbert Lawrence (1885-1930), who in effect rejected civilization and, like Blake, wanted men to go back to the 'natural world' of instinct. Lawrence's novels—*Sons and Lovers*, *The Plumed Serpent*, *Aaron's Rod*, and the controversial *Lady Chatterley's Lover* to mention a few—are much concerned with the relationship between man and woman, and he seems to regard this relationship as the great source of vitality and integration (*Lady Chatterley's Lover* was banned because it too frankly glorified physical love). Lawrence will have nothing of science: instinct is more important; even religions are too rational, and, if man wants a faith, he must worship the dark gods' of primitive peoples. Nobody has ever presented human passion, man's relationship to nature, the sense of the presence of life in all things, like Lawrence. His poems, which express with intimate knowledge the 'essences' of natural phenomena and of the human instincts, are also capable of bitter satire on the 'dehumanisation' of man in the twentieth century.

It is hard to say how far E. M. Forster (1879-1970) fits into any pattern. His influence on the construction of the novel has been great, but he has no real 'message', except about the value of individual life, the need not to take too seriously out-moded moral shibboleths (*A Room With a View*,

which affirms passion rather than control). *Howard's End* and *Where Angels Fear to Tread* are distinguished by very taut construction and the creation of suspense through incident—Forster does not think a plot to be very important. *A Passage to India*— perhaps his finest novel—deals with the East and West duality: can the two really meet? After a long analysis of the differences, expressed in terms of a vividly realised India, against which the puppets of English rulers parade, Forster comes to the conclusion that they cannot—at least, not yet. Forster's book *Aspects of the Novel*, is admirable criticism and entertaining reading.

Virginia Woolf (1882-1941) is another novelist hard to classify. She dispenses with plot and even characterization. Preferring to analyze in the closest possible detail a mood or thought as presented at a given moment in time. Like Joyce, she uses an interior monologue device to depict 'the stream of consciousness' of her characters. Her prose is careful, exquisitely light, approaching poetry in its power to evoke mood and sensation. Her view of the novel was a comprehensive one; she did not wish to limit herself to the mere story-telling of men like Arnold Bennett and Hugh Walpole, but wanted to see the novel to absorb as many literary devices as possible, even occasionally, to break away from prose and use verse instead. To many readers her novels do not appear to be works of fiction at all: they seem too static, too lacking in action and human interest—a kind of literary form which is neither true poetry nor true prose, neither completely dramatic nor completely lyrical. Perhaps her best works are *Mrs. Dalloway*, *To the Lighthouse*, and *The Waves*. *Orlando* is a curious work—it presents a picture of English history from the Renaissance to modern times, as seen through the eyes of a character who is, presumably, immortal and, moreover, changes from hero to heroine exactly half-way through the book! Here Virginia Woolf's great literary gifts are to be seen at their most dazzling. Her two books of literary - criticism—the *Common Reader* 1 and 2—show a penetrating intellect and great good taste.

We may note here—in parenthesis—that the twentieth century has been the great age for women novelists though perhaps none has approached the genius of Jane Austin. Virginia Woolf is certainly

the most important, but Ivy Compton-Burnett (1884-1969) has her devotees, who see in her a great and remarkable genius firmly rooted in tradition. All her novels deal with family relationships, all her settings are, upper middle-class homes in the late Victorian period, and a character is revealed through endless, rather stylised, dialogue. Like Virginia Woolf, she has no interest in plot, and is content to let her revelations of human character unfold slowly, deliberately eschewing tricks which will 'charm' the reader and make him want to read on. There is always a dichotomy of what has been called a "diptych" structure at the base of her novels, to be seen usually in the disjunctive and conjunctive titles: *Brothers and sisters*, *Parents and children*, *Elders and Betters*, *Men and Wives*, *Pastors and Masters*, *More Women than Men*, *Two Worlds and Their Ways*, *House and its Head*, and so on.

Franz Kafka (1883-1924), a Czech who wrote in German, had a good deal of influence in England, with his *The Castle* and *The Trial*. These novels, using the technique of allegory, seem to show that man is subject to powers greater than himself and carries a burden of guilt for a crime which is never specified but which must be punished. It is, in a sense, Christian allegory, though Kafka never provides a key to his strange stories. The hero of *The Trial* is arraigned for a crime which his judges will not name and which he is certain he has never committed. Gradually, in the long tortuous process of the trial, the hero comes to develop a sense of guilt (Original Sin) and his final execution (two polite men trick a knife in his heart) seems somehow just.

Other novelists—senior novelists—have been content to push on their plain story-telling, without any desire apparently for a faith to express, or for a technique more original than that of the nineteenth century. William Somerset Maugham (1874-1965) has told good stories, showing himself not unconcerned with the paradoxes in human behaviour but fundamentally he is the mere observer who refuses to be too deeply involved in humanity. His attitude to morals is a simple Utilitarian one, except that he seems grateful when people behave outrageously, because they thus supply him with a new theme for a story. His alleged masterpiece, *Of Human Bondage*, is distinguished by frequently

clumsy prose and a length which hardly seems justified by the subject. Maugham's wittiest and warmest book—one of the best of the age—is *Cakes and Ale*, the story of an eminent novelist whose background is not all that his admirers would like. *The Razor's Edge* dallies with the question of faith, but superficially. Maugham is perhaps best as a writer of short stories—especially about British expatriates in the Far East.

Some novelists found their subject-matter in modern political ideologies, and one of the most important of these was George Orwell (1909-50), whose early works expressed pungently a profound dissatisfaction with the economic inequalities, the hypocrisies, the social anachronisms of English life in the nineteen-thirties, but whose last and finest novels attack the Socialist panaceas which, earlier, seemed so attractive. Orwell was a born radical, champion of the small man who is 'pushed around' by bosses of all denominations, and something of Swift's 'savage indignation' as well as his humanitarianism is to be found in *Animal Farm* and *Nineteen-Eighty-Four*. The former is a parable of the reaction which supervenes on all high-minded revolutions: the animals take over the farm on which they have been exploited for the selfish ends of the farmer, but gradually the pigs—ostensibly in the name of democracy—create a dictatorship over the other animals far worse than anything known in the days of human management. The final farm-slogan —'All animals are equal, but some are more equal than others'—has become one of the bitter catch-phrases of our cynical age, *Nineteen-Eighty-Four* is a sick man's prophecy of the future (Orwell was dying of tuberculosis when he wrote it) and with its nightmare picture of a totalitarian world it has helped to create a new series of myths. The eternal dictator. Big Brother, the concept of 'double-think', the notion of the mutability of the past — these have become common furniture of twentieth-century western mind.

Politics provided an inspiration for poets too. Three who expressed a left-wing faith in their early days were *W. H. Auden* (1907-73), *Cecil Day Lewis* (1904-72), and *Stephen Spender* (1909-95). The first two found the sprung rhythm and alliteration of Gerard Manley Hopkins congenial for their near-propagandist purpose, while Spender's technique was more reminiscent of Georgian poets like Rupert

Brooke. Auden especially was telling and vigorous, but the faith that nourished his early work did not survive the Second World War. When, at the outbreak of that war, he went to America with the novelist Christopher Isherwood, to become, like him, an American citizen, a more attractive creed seemed to be Anglican Christianity, and Auden has produced fine work—*New Year Letter, For the Time Being, The Age of Anxiety*—rooted in traditional belief and traditional technique. (Auden's main contribution to the technique of modern verse has been the introduction of scientific and slang terms into its vocabulary, and, by taking in religious, philosophical, political, and psychological themes of a specifically modern kind, he has enormously increased its range.) Day Lewis, much of whose early work reads like a series of parodies of Hopkins, and whose subject-matter used to be uncompromisingly 'revolutionary', became a traditional poet owing much to Hardy, deliberately limiting his range to a few themes.

A poet who emerged just before the War was Dylan f Thomas (1914-53), a Welshman with Welsh fire and eloquence and a technique that borrowed freely from Hopkins, Joyce, and the Bible. His best poems affirm the unity of life (man with nature, growth with decay, life with death) and, in the exultant tones of Traherne, glorify the innocence of childhood. His images are a curious mixture of the erotic and the biblical (though, even in this, he shows the underlying fertility themes of religion), and the originality of his very concise language, with its Romantic overtones, has injected new vigour into an art threatening to become (under Eliot's influence) a little too passionless and intellectual. Dylan Thomas's early death deprived literature of an important poet, a fine prose-writer, and a promising dramatist.

One significant and hopeful sign of modern art was the increasing 'internationalization' of English literature. Novels, poems, and plays in English were appearing all over the world, and the language was being made richer and more flexible through having to express new states of thought and feeling and sensuous impressions appropriate to 'torrid zones'. French and German literature remained insular, but English literature no longer had its centre in London coteries, the Lake District, or the

universities. Even Literary criticism seemed to be flourishing most outside the home of Johnson, Coleridge, and the *Edinburgh Review*. Readers were drawing more and more on America for critical theories, and one of the best of the mid-century periodicals was produced in Ceylon.

So, in the second half of the twentieth century, to try to unify English literature in terms of the region that first produced it, seemed to be quite unrealistic. The English were no longer able to assert racial pride in either the language or the literature of which they formerly had the monopoly: literature in English became the property of the world.

Chapter 19

The Twentieth Century: 1945 to the Present

CONTEXTS AND CONDITIONS

The ending of the Second World War did not bring with it stability. The world had moved into the Atomic age with the dropping of bombs on Hiroshima and Nagasaki in 1945. With the atomic bomb, the world was on a knife-edge: the world might end at any moment. This threat hung over the world until the end of the so-called cold war between the Communist bloc and "the West" in the late 1980s. The "Iron Curtain" divided the world politically into Communist and non-Communist. The United States of America, which had entered the First World War in 1916, entered the Second World War in late 1941 and being on the winning side each time helped it become the dominant economic and cultural force in the world, a position which was strengthened by the fall of Communist regimes in the late 1980s and early 1990s.

The war accelerated the break-up of the British Empire and forced upon Great Britain a reassessment of its place in the world. The wartime prime minister, Winston Churchill, after the Labour government was elected in 1945, devoted much of his time to writing a six-volume history of *The Second World War* (1945-54) and *A History of the English-Speaking Peoples* (four volumes; 1956-58). He won the Nobel Prize for Literature in 1953.

The years since the end of the Second World War have seen a decline in British influence and continuing failure to compete successfully with the newly developing economies of the world. In

national terms, the country has also seen decentralization. The regions have competed with London for economic, social and cultural influence. Nowadays, regional accents are heard as regularly on BBC television and radio programmes as Standard English accents. These changes have corresponded to changing inflections in writing in the English language worldwide, with the result that the term "literatures in English" is now often preferred to English literature.

In social terms, a long period of austerity led to the boom years of the 1960s, when the post-war youth culture began to find expression, and a new affluence and optimism filled Britain. The pendulum swung back in the 1970s, with a great deal of social unrest; and it swung back again to affluence and the "me" generation of yuppies in the 1980s.

Underlying these swings have been continuing polarities — South / North; London / provinces; Conservative / Labour; management/trades unions; rich/poor—and continuing conflicts in Ulster, in international wars, and, to a lesser extent, in claims for autonomy for Wales and Scotland.

What stability there is tends to be seen as economic, and therefore political. Culture questions, but frequently ends up by affirming a *status quo*; humour is a useful safety valve; the most widely followed narratives are television soap operas. But there has probably never been greater variety, richness, and sheer productiveness in literary expression. It is fashionable to say there are no great novelists/poets/playwrights, and to look back to the past of an imaginary golden age—when very probably the same complaint could have been heard! The literary imagination has charted the last fifty years with no lack of inventiveness and imagination.

In spite of the growth of other media, in the final years of the twentieth century more books are being published than ever before, and more books are being read than ever before. It is impossible to say which of today's writers will be considered "important" in a hundred year's time. However, trends can be identified —preoccupations, kinds of writing, and directions in which literature is moving.

After the Second World War, the changes in society—in ways of thought and in literature—were every bit as deep and far-reaching as they were after the First World War. The sense of fragmentation

developed into a sense of absurdity, of existential futility, which echoes and goes beyond the kind of futility expressed in the poems of Wilfred Owen. There is, a veritable explosion of expression around the question of the atomic bomb, around the possibility that all life could end at a moment's notice. Each decade, as the century moves towards its close, has had a distinct and different feeling: the 1950s were the age of austerity; the 1960s, the age of youth; the 1970s, and age of anxiety; the 1980s, and age of new materialism; the 1990s, and age of recession and preoccupation.

For the novelist A.S. Byatt, there is, throughout this time, new richness and diversity in English writing, a continuing of d the search for a post-Darwinian security in creativity: wonderful mix of realism, romance, fable, satire, parody, play with form and philosophical intelligence. "Byatt notes an almost obsessive recurrence of Darwin in modern fiction."Where nineteenth-century writers — novelists in particular—wrote about the ending of certainty, especially religious certainty, late twentieth-century writers have largely concerned themselves with (again according to Byatt) "what it means to be a naked animal, evolved over unimaginable centuries, with a history constructed by beliefs which have lost their power". "This is a useful perception of the common themes underlying much of modern writing, and indeed much of the Modern or post-Modern perception of the world we live in.

Where *Modern* was a keyword for the first part of the twentieth century, the term *post-Modern* has been widely used to describe the attitude and creative production which followed the Second World War. Post-Modernism almost defies definition. Rather, it celebrates diversity, eclecticism and parody in all forms of art, from architecture in cinema, from music to literature. All the forms which represent experience are mediated, transformed, and the "truth" of experience thus becomes even more varied than it has ever been before.

The mix of 'post-Darwin' and post-Modern is indicative of the binary linking of traditional and new elements in literature: "the subject matter is still, essentially, the human condition, but the means and methods of exploring it are infinitely richer and more varied than ever before. There are no more

heroes, as there might have been in the time of Beowulf. There is the individual; solitary, responsible for his or her own destiny, yet powerless when set against the ineluctable forces of the universe. This is one of the basic conflicts of the post-Modern condition, and one which gives rise to the immense variety of explorations of recent writings in English. Identity is a common theme: sexual identity, local identity, national identity, racial identity, spiritual identity, intellectual identity. All of these, and more, recur.

It is almost impossible to classify modern authors in terms of their lasting contribution to the literature of their time. A few figures have attained critical impregnability: Samuel Beckett would seem to have a secure place among the major dramatists of the century; Seamus Haney's winning the Noble Prize for Literature in 1995 assures his place in Irish poetry after Yeats. In the novel, it is much more problematic. For every exploration of history or myth, there will be a forward-looking exploration of future worlds in science fiction or a near-documentary examination of life on the streets today. Past, present, and future coexist in literature today as never before.

Just as the earlier part of the twentieth century opened up literature to many hitherto unheard or ignored voices, so more recent years have opened up the literary world to voices from a wide range of countries, and from differing social and sexual orientations. Added to this, modern critical studies have recovered a great many voices from the past, and, with the critical approach designated New Historicism, have revisited many periods, gaining new perceptions of them.

All this adds to the post-Modern celebration of diversity in writing, making the end of the twentieth century the most diverse and rich mixture of old and new, English and non-English, standard and non-standard, male and female, public and private, universal and individual, certain and uncertain in the ongoing search to express the contemporary world we live in.

It is an ongoing concern with humanity that keeps literature alive. The twenty-first century well no doubt see new trends, new forms of expression, a new literature to set beside the continuing story that began more than thirteen centuries ago.