

**Herta Lilia**

*The History  
of the  
English Literature*

**Suport de curs**

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## *Lecture I*

### *The Dawn of English Literature*

#### **Outline:**

- 1. The Ancient Britons and Their Language.**
- 2. The Coming of the Romans.**
- 3. The Invasion by Germanic Tribes.**
  - a) **Their Pagan Gods**
  - b) **The Anglo-Saxon Dialects**
  - c) **Runes**
- 4. The beginnings of English Literature.**

What we speak of as English literature might be more accurately called British literature, for it includes the literature of Scotland, Wales, and Ireland as well as of England. The island of Britain, located twenty miles off the coast of northern Europe, was originally inhabited by primitive tribes known as Britons. This island includes England, Scotland, and Wales. To its west is another island, Ireland.

Britain is a land that has had its history, culture, and literature shaped by a series of invaders from the nearby continents. Perhaps one of the reasons for the universal and lasting appeal of English literature is that of springs from a land that was successfully invaded by people with varying languages and cultures.

**1.** Many hundred years ago (about the 4<sup>th</sup> century before our era) England was known as Britain, and the people who lived there were the Britons. They belonged to the Celtic race; the language they spoke was Celtic. Their culture (that is to say, their way of thinking and their understanding of nature) was very primitive. They believed that different gods lived in the thickest and darkest parts of the woods. Some plants such as the mistletoe and the oak-tree were thought to be sacred. The Britons were governed by a class of priests called the Druids, who had great power over them.

Some curious customs of the Druids are still kept in Britain nowadays, and some traces of the Celtic language are to be found in the English of today; we meet them for the most part in geographical names: *dun/dum*- 'down', *amvuin/avon* - 'river'.

**2.** In the 1<sup>st</sup> century before our era Britain was conquered by the powerful State of Rome. The Romans were practical men. They were very clever at making hard roads and building bridges and fine tall houses that are admired to this day. The Romans thought a great deal of fighting and they were so strong that they usually managed to win most of the battles they fought.

The Romans were greatly interested to learn from travellers that valuable metals were to be found in Britain. Finally they decided to occupy the island; they crossed the sea under the command of Julius Caesar. Caesar wrote an interesting account of Britain.

But well-trained as these soldiers were, it was not so easy to conquer the Britons, and the Romans had to encamp troops all over the country. It is from these camps that some of the English cities later arose.

Many things the Romans taught the Britons were given Latin names. They made the Britons build roads and bridges and a high wall in the north to keep the savages out. Thus, the word 'wall' comes from the Latin 'vallum', 'street' from 'strata' meaning 'road'. But the Romans and the natives of Britain did not become one nation; all that the Romans wanted was to make the Britons work for them.

Towards the end of the 4<sup>th</sup> century the invasion of all of Europe by barbaric peoples compelled the Romans to leave Britain, because they were needed to defend their own country. The fall of the Roman Empire followed soon after.

**3.** As soon as the Britons were left to themselves, they had very little peace for many years. Sea-robbers came sailing in ships from other countries, and the Britons were always busy trying to

defend themselves. Among these invaders were some Germanic tribes called Angles, Saxons and Jutes who lived in the Northern and central parts of Europe. They spoke different dialects of the West-Germanic language from which modern German developed.

a) The Angles, Saxons and Jutes were pagans, they believed in many gods. The gods of the Anglo-Saxons were: Tu, or Tiesco- god of Darkness, Woden – god of War, Thor- the Thunderer, and Freia-goddess of Prosperity. When people learned to divide up time into weeks and the week into seven days, they gave the days the names of their gods. It is not hard to guess that Sunday is the day of the sun, Monday-the day of the moon, Tuesday-the day of god Tiesco, Wednesday-Woden's day, Thursday-Thor's day, Friday-Freia's day, and Saturday-Saturn's day(Saturn was the god of Time worshipped by the ancient Romans).

b) Britain became divided into seven kingdoms: Kent, Sussex, Essex, Wessex, Mercia, East Anglia, and Northumbria which were constantly at war with one another.

Four dialects were spoken in these seven kingdoms: 1) the Northumbrian dialect was spoken by the Angles who lived in the north-east of England; 2) the Mercian dialect was spoken by the Angles who lived between the river Humber and the Thames; 3) the West-Saxon dialect, or Wessex, was spoken by the Saxons who lived to the South of the Thames; 4) and the fourth, a minor dialect, Kentish, was the language of the Jutes. The language of Scotland, Ireland and Wales remained Celtic.

The Angles, Saxons and Jutes fought with one another for supreme power; they nevertheless became one nation in the course of a few centuries. The first king to rule over all of them was Egbert, king of Wessex. He was made king at the beginning of the 9<sup>th</sup> century. Most of the works and documents in Old English that are in existence today are written in the Wessex dialect of Anglo-Saxon.

c) By the time the Angles and Saxons conquered Britain, they already had letters of their own called 'runes' which were carved on stone and wood, but they had no written literature yet, and the stories and poems they made up had to be memorized. These were brought to Britain, and runic inscriptions made in Britain are in existence.

4. English literature began as oral, not written, literature, with songs and poems celebrating heroes. These poems were passed on by minstrels, or scop, who composed many poems that praised Anglo-Saxon ideals. Probably the most important of these ideals were valour, honour and loyalty to one's lord. This was primarily a sombre time in which human destiny was believed to be ruled by fate. Through the songs of the scop, the major battles and the feats of the tribes' heroes and kings were recited and remembered. In this way, heroes could win enduring fame, smth. that was valued highly because their religion did not acknowledge immortality through an afterlife. The scop's poems often reflect the grim, war-ridden lives of the Anglo-Saxons. By immortalizing their heroes, the scop also brought a semblance of permanence to a world ruled by a sense of transience and fatal doom.

The earliest English story-poem to come down to us is about a hero called Beowulf. Beowulf was composed about 700 by an unknown minstrel, one of many who travelled from mead hall to mead hall to entertain the courts' kings and the warriors. The poem was composed in Old English, or Anglo-Saxon. Beowulf is an example of an epic (a long narrative poem in grave and stately language about the achievements of a hero, often a national heroic figure).

Few of the other poems of this period have survived. Those that have we owe to the work and learning of monks in monasteries, which like the castles with their mead halls, dotted the landscape of Anglo-Saxon England. One of these early poems is 'The Seafarer', unusual for its lyric tone and its non-religious subject-matter.

Written literature didn't exist on the British Isles until about the year 700. It first came to our attention in the work of the most famous of the Anglo-Saxon monks, The Venerable Bede, author of 'Ecclesiastical History of the English People'. One of the famous people Bede wrote about in his HISTORY was Caedmon.

5. **Beowulf**, heroic poem, the highest achievement of Old English literature and the earliest European vernacular epic. It deals with events of the early 6th century and is believed to have been

composed between 700 and 750. Although originally untitled, it was later named after the Scandinavian hero Beowulf, whose exploits and character provide its connecting theme. There is no evidence of a historical Beowulf, but some characters, sites, and events in the poem can be historically verified.

*Beowulf* falls into two parts. It opens in Denmark, where King Hrothgar's splendid mead hall, Heorot, has been ravaged for 12 years by nightly visits from an evil monster, Grendel, who carries off Hrothgar's warriors and devours them. Unexpectedly, young Beowulf, a prince of the Geats of southern Sweden, arrives with a small band of retainers and offers to cleanse Heorot of its monster. Hrothgar is astonished at the little-known hero's daring but welcomes him, and, after an evening of feasting, much courtesy, and some discourtesy, the king retires, leaving Beowulf in charge. During the night Grendel comes from the moors, tears open the heavy doors, and devours one of the sleeping Geats. He then grapples with Beowulf, whose powerful grip he cannot escape. He wrenches himself free, tearing off his arm, and leaves, mortally wounded.

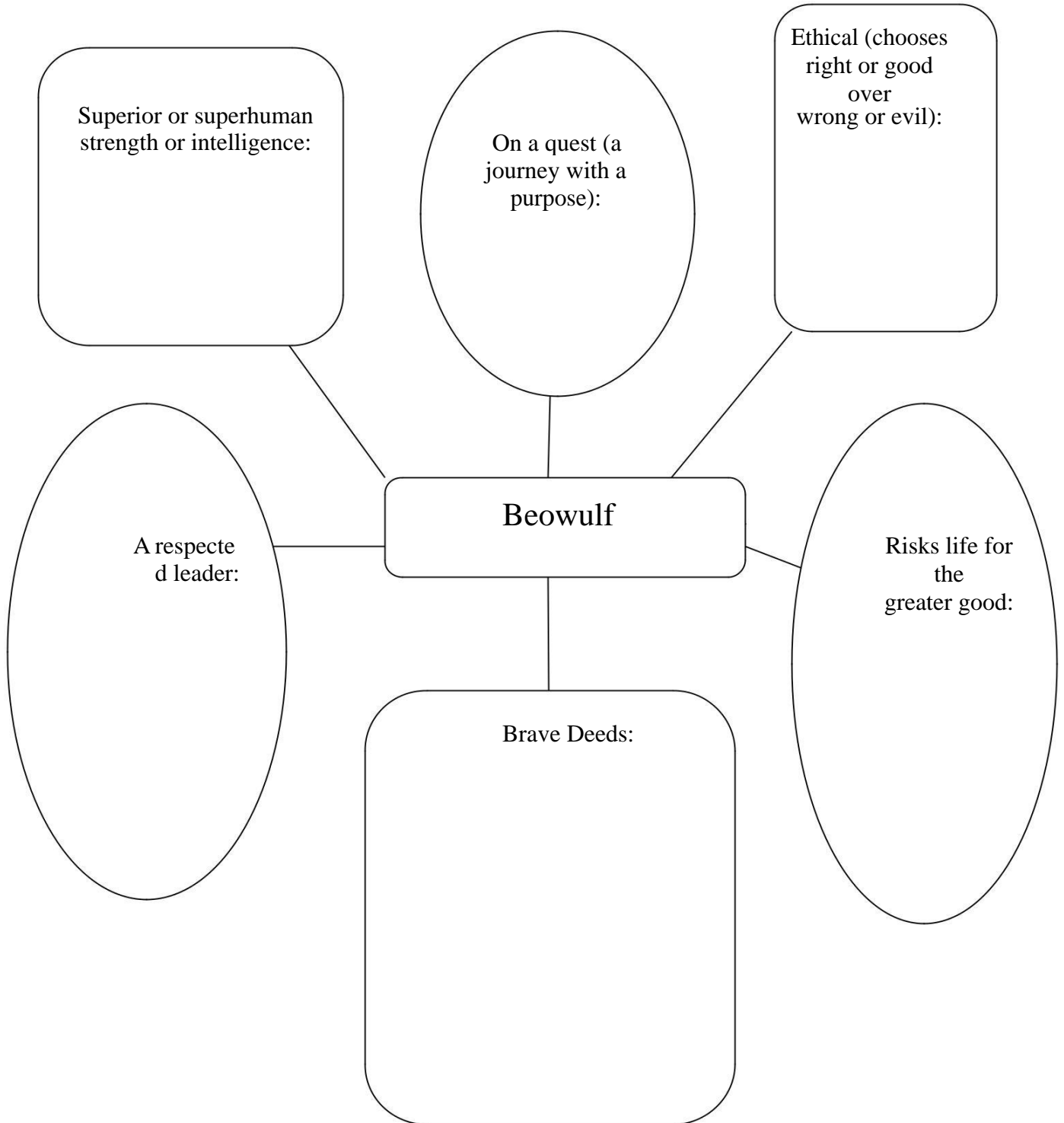
The next day is one of rejoicing in Heorot. But at night as the warriors sleep, Grendel's mother comes to avenge her son, killing one of Hrothgar's men. In the morning Beowulf seeks her out in her cave at the bottom of a mere and kills her. He cuts the head from Grendel's corpse and returns to Heorot. The Danes rejoice once more. Hrothgar makes a farewell speech about the character of the true hero, as Beowulf, enriched with honours and princely gifts, returns home to King Hygelac of the Geats.

The second part passes rapidly over King Hygelac's subsequent death in a battle (of historical record), the death of his son, and Beowulf's succession to the kingship and his peaceful rule of 50 years. But now a fire-breathing dragon ravages his land and the doughty but aging Beowulf engages it. The fight is long and terrible and a painful contrast to the battles of his youth. Painful, too, is the desertion of his retainers except for his young kinsman Wiglaf. Beowulf kills the dragon but is mortally wounded. The poem ends with his funeral rites and a lament.

**Activity**

BEOWULF -EPIC HERO

Development of an Epic Hero: Fill in the following shapes with details that show how Beowulf fits the characteristics of an Epic Hero.



**Lecture II**  
**The Medieval Period**  
**(1066 – 1495)**

**Outline:**

1. The Norman Conquest.
2. Changes in the Language.
3. The First Universities.
4. Storytelling in the Middle Ages:
  - a) Romances;
  - b) The Fable and the Fabliau.
5. Drama in the Middle Ages.
6. Geoffrey Chaucer-

1. In England the Medieval Period, also called the Middle Ages, began in a year that has become famous – 1066. In that year the Normans, who had settled in what is now western France, defeated the Anglo-Saxons at the Battle of Hastings and earned for their leader the title William the Conqueror. Now England had a Norman king.

William introduced in England the European social, economic and political system called feudalism. With feudalism and knighthood the Normans brought to England the code of chivalry. **Chivalry** was an ideal that all knights must try to attain: to be honourable, courteous, generous, brave, skilful in battle, respectful to women, and helpful to the weak. This romantic attitude would affect much of the literature of the period, especially the songs and stories. Within five years William the Conqueror became complete master of the whole England. The lands of the Anglo-Saxon aristocracy were given to the Norman barons and they introduced their feudal laws and made the peasants work for them. The English became an oppressed nation.

2. William the Conqueror could not speak a word in English. He and the barons spoke the Norman dialect of the French language; but the Anglo-Saxon dialects were not suppressed. During the following 200 years communication was in 3 languages:

1. Latin – at the monasteries;
2. Norman – French – at the court and in official institutions as the language of the ruling class;
3. Mother tongue – by the common people.

However language changed so much in the course of the time.

1. Many French words came into the language and the pronunciation of the people changed. Some French words could not be pronounced by the Anglo-Saxons, so some of the Norman – French sounds were substituted by more familiar sounds from Old English. There appeared many new many vowels (diphthongs) in their native language which are near to the pronunciation in Modern English.
2. The spelling did not correspond to the pronunciation. The Norman scribes brought to England their Latin traditions.
3. What was particularly new was the use of French suffixes with words of Anglo-Saxon origin. The French prefix ‘dis’ was used to make up words of negative meaning.
4. The indefinite article was coming to be used.
5. If the French word meant a thing or idea for which there was no name in English, then the French word came into language and vice – versa if the object or idea was clearly expressed in English, then the English word remained.
6. If both words remained, then it was because of a slight but clear-cut difference in the meaning. As a result of this process there appeared a large number of synonyms.  
e.g. to give up – to abandon;  
to give in/over – to surrender;

to begin – to commence;  
to go on – to continue.

**3.** The History of English literature shows us how the popular tongue became the language of the educated classes because it was spoken by the majority of the population, by those who tilled the soil, by those who produced the goods and struggled against the foreign oppressors.

Norman-French and Anglo-Saxon were moulded into one national language only towards the beginning of the 14<sup>th</sup> century when Hundred Years' War broke out. The language of that time is called Middle English.

Before the 12<sup>th</sup> century people thought that books and any kind of learning belonged to the Church only, and that common people who were not priests or monks had no business to meddle with books. But with the development of such sciences as law and medicine, corporations of general study called 'universitas' appeared in Italy and France. Paris was the great centre of higher education for English students. In the middle of the 12<sup>th</sup> century a controversy on the study of Logic arose among the professors. A group of professors were expelled. Followed by their students, they went over to Britain and in 1168 founded schools in the town of Oxford which formed their university. A second university was formed in 1209 in Cambridge, to which a large group of students migrated from Oxford.

**4. a) Romances.** During the Anglo-Norman period feudal culture was at its height. Tales in verse and lyrical poems appeared praising the bravery and gallantry of noble knights, their heroic and chivalrous attitude towards ladies. At first they were all in Norman-French. Many of the stories came from Old French sources, the language of which was a Romanic dialect, and for that reason these works were called 'romances'. They were brought to England by medieval poets called 'trouweres' (finders), who came from France with the Norman conquerors. Later in England such poets were called minstrels, and their art of composing romances and ballads and singing them to the accompaniment of a lute was called the art of minstrelsy.

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

King Arthur, a historical character and the national hero of the Celts, was described as an ideal feudal king endowed with all the virtues of a hero. He possessed magical powers, and was helped by Merlin, the cunning wizard. Arthur was honest, and wise, and fair to all his vassals, the knights. They had their meetings at a round table so that all should be equal.

In the 15<sup>th</sup> century **Sir Thomas Malory** collected the romances of King Arthur and arranged them in a series of stories in prose. They began with the birth of Arthur and how he became king, then related all the adventures of King Arthur and his noble knights and ended in the death of these knights and of Arthur himself.

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

This epic in twenty-one books reflects the evolution of feudal society, its ideals, beliefs and tragedies. In the 'Death of Arthur' the author describes not only the end of a hero's life; the very title of the book implies that the epoch of knighthood, medieval chivalry and feudalism has come to an end.

Sir Thomas Malory's 'Morte d'Arthur' is the last work in English literature to depict dying feudalism.

**b) The Fable and the Fabliau.** In the literature of the townsfolk we find the fable and the fabliau. Fables were short stories with animals for characters and conveying a moral. Fabliaux were funny stories about cunning humbugs and the unfaithful wives of rich merchants. They were metrical tales (poems) brought from France. These stories were told in the dialects of Middle



English. They were collected and written down much later. The literature of the towns did not idealize characters as the romances did. The fabliaux show a practical attitude to life.

5. Drama is a form of story-telling that seems to have a life of its own. The idea of telling a story by acting it out seems to be a very ancient one.

Drama as public entertainment began in England in the Medieval period as religious ritual, in the form of **mystery plays**, or **miracle plays**. The miracle play was developed by the Church in an attempt to instruct the illiterate in the miraculous stories. To celebrate a feast day, the Church would often have common people, dress up like characters in the Bible. The plays were very well attended. They eventually moved from the cathedral to the village green and finally to pageant wagons, ox-drawn wagons that brought this early form of theatre to neighbouring towns and villages. The actors were amateurs, technically speaking, but they were paid for their work, the actor playing God getting more than the others.

The miracle play was followed by a somewhat different development—the **morality play**, in which actors played the roles of virtues and vices – patience, greed, and so on. The most significant aspect of the morality play was that the conflict between virtue and vice, good and evil, was not external (a good king and a bad king, e.g.) but took place in the heart of a single hero.

All in all, the literature of the Medieval Period carries us back into a colourful and exciting world as reported by the poets, storytellers, and dramatists of that time and forward into other ages in which knights, crusaders, monks, and fine ladies would continue to inspire writers. Indeed, the Medieval Period is at once very far away and very close at hand.

## 6. Geoffrey Chaucer

Geoffrey Chaucer has been credited with using a writing style that set the precedent for English poets to come. His exact date of birth is a mystery, although it can be narrowed down to the early 1340s. His use of Middle English to create his works including *The Canterbury Tales* led to the use of the London dialect of Middle English becoming the Standard for English across the country—and the world. Unlike his predecessors and contemporaries who wrote in the language of the monarchy and nobility (French), Chaucer chose to write in the language of the common people.

During his life, Chaucer saw the Black Death (1348—1351), the Hundred Years' War between France and England (1337—1453), religious upheavals such as those led by the Lollards, political upheavals such as the Peasant Revolt of 1381, and the many attempts to supplant King Richard II. Each of these events affected his life and his work.

Chaucer had the double fortune of surviving the Black Plague, which ravaged Europe killing upwards of one third of the population including many among the working class, and having a merchant father who could afford to send him to a fine household to work as a Page (a boy who served a knight). In or near 1357, young Chaucer served in London in the house of the Countess of Ulster, the wife of Prince Lionel of Antwerp. A few years later, Chaucer joined the English effort in the Hundred Years' War as one of Prince Lionel's attendants, and went to France where he was taken prisoner. Because of the skill and service he had shown while in the house of the Countess of Ulster, Chaucer's ransom was eventually paid by King Edward III and Chaucer was brought back to England to work in the king's service. Eventually, Chaucer was promoted to the King's Esquire. Working in the service of nobility and monarchy afforded Chaucer opportunities he might not otherwise have had, as Pages received both an academic and social education. A schoolmaster would provide the academic instruction and the lady of the house would train the page in the social manners and arts of a courtier. Among Chaucer's many accomplishments was his acquisition of several languages, including English, French, Latin, and Italian. In the early 1360s, as well as later on, Chaucer used his linguistic prowess to carry out diplomatic missions for King Edward III and King Richard II (who reigned 1377—1400). In or near 1366 Chaucer married Philippa Roet, a lady in the queen's chamber and sister to the third wife of John of Gaunt, Duke of Lancaster and fourth son of King Edward III. Philippa is believed to have died in 1387. The sisterly connection is

assumed to have paved the way for the Duke of Lancaster's patronage of Chaucer. John of Gaunt promoted Chaucer to Squire and paid him 10 pounds per annum, which was a typical salary for a squire. Because of the political nature of Medieval English society, it was John of Gaunt's patronage that allowed Chaucer to obtain good jobs with well-paying salaries. During the years when John of Gaunt was in Spain, however, Chaucer's popularity waned and he approached poverty.

Chaucer's early influences were French poets and his early work resembles the style of these poets. During his many voyages to France and Italy, Chaucer became familiar with the literature of Dante (1265—1321), Petrarch (1304—1374), and Boccaccio (1313—1375), among others. While there is no actual proof that Chaucer modeled his work after Boccaccio, he wrote *The Canterbury Tales* in a style that is reminiscent of the work of Boccaccio's *Decameron*. Completed in 1358, *Decameron* is a tale of seven women and three gentlemen who flee from a plague-stricken city. Over the course of their ten day voyage to a safe haven, the group takes turns telling stories; they manage to tell 100. Diverging from the *Decameron* a little, Chaucer sends his travelers on a religious pilgrimage to a shrine instead of having them flee from the Black Death. The structure of both poems is similar; however, as both consist of stories that range in topic and were taken from tales that already existed.

Unlike today when authors are expected to create their own stories, in Chaucer's time, a good storyteller was determined by his ability to relay the story using emphasis, language, and other creative elements to give the story a fresh appearance despite its familiarity. Thus, Chaucer's tales have been taken from a variety of sources including Boccaccio, just as Boccaccio borrowed from tales of the time.

In addition to literary influences, the many positions Chaucer held throughout his life afforded him opportunities to see people from various walks of life. As a diplomat during the Hundred Years' War, he was called upon to travel to France and Italy, and as controller and clerk of various government departments he would have been required to travel within England as well. Working as a diplomat for the king would have necessitated Chaucer to be cognizant of the affairs of the state. The reign of King Richard II, for example, was a turbulent one as he was called upon to defend his crown from his coronation at ten years of age in 1377 until his eventual abdication in 1399 at the age of 32. Chaucer would also have been privy to discussions of parliamentary changes and other matters of state. Chaucer was also knowledgeable about matters pertaining to the Catholic Church. It is clear from tales such as the *Prioress's Tale*, the *Man of Law's Tale*, and the *Clerk's Tale* that Chaucer was familiar with the Church doctrine as decreed by the Pope. Chaucer also makes comments in a few places about a group of heretics known as the Lollards. Condemned by the Church, this band of heretics led by John Wycliffe raised questions about abuses of the Church including the abuse of power among its personnel. This message of abuse of Church power is apparent in several of the pilgrims including the Friar who is described as one who sells confessions and manipulates people out of their money. The Monk with his lavish attire, expensive horses, and complete lack of obedience to his Order is another example of the abuses of the Church that caused frustration among the Lollards as well as the people of England.

As already discussed, Chaucer used both French and Italian poetry as his models for style and structure and his tales are revisions of stories which were already told. In that much, his style was similar to that of his contemporaries. However, Chaucer's work is different because he chose to break the norms of literature of the time by writing in the common language of London rather than that of the court. *The Canterbury Tales* was originally written in Middle English, which was the common spoken language of the public, rather than the native French of the reigning monarchs. Most of the poets up to that time wrote in French or Italian. By writing his poetry in the English dialect of London, Chaucer set the precedent for his peers and future poets. Throughout the country there were different dialects of English but, because of the work of Chaucer, the London dialect eventually became the hallmark of proper English. It is believed long time patron and Duke of Lancaster, John of Gaunt, inspired Chaucer's use of Middle English when he requested Chaucer prepare a poem in English in memory of his deceased wife, Blanche.

Chaucer died prior to receiving any of this money, however. It is assumed Chaucer worked on *The Canterbury Tales* for many years and was still writing it when he died in 1400. Chaucer's body was entombed in Westminster Abbey in a place that is now known as Poet's Corner.

### Activity

Match Chaucer's pilgrims and their characteristics:

Knights	Merchant	Wife of Bath	Doctor	Friar
	Clerk/Cleric	Yeoman	Skipper	Cook
				Squire

- \_\_\_\_\_ 1 I am old, with a "weather beaten beard". I pride myself on being a first-rate sea captain, and I know every haven and stream in Britain. I am cunning, and have been known to take a glass of wine while the trader who hired my ship is asleep.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 2 I am hired to go on this pilgrimage by a number of successful Guildsmen. I am an expert at preparing many sorts of meals, though my specialty is blancmange. I have an ulcer on my knee.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 3 My face and my hosiery are a matched set; both bright red. I come from a resort town on the coast of England, but I am well-traveled and have been many places, even as far as Rome. I have had five husbands "through the Church door", and I am very proud of my way of life.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 4. I spend my days outdoors, and my face is as brown as "a nut". I am employed by a noble, and have traveled far with him. I wear green clothes and carry a strong supply of weapons, including a bow, dagger, sword, and shield.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 5. I am well-studied in my trade, having read all the classic authors. I follow a strict diet filled with only the most important nutrients. I am quite wealthy, and see a business opportunity in every plague and pestilence.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 6. I have a forked beard, and claim to be a great hand at bargains and exchanges. None know that I am in debt. I believe there should be "sea-police" on the straights between Britain and Holland.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 7. farthing from even a shoeless widow. I carry a pouch, with gifts of hair-pins for boys, and pocket-knives for pretty girls. I am easily found in taverns or inns, and am friendly with all innkeepers and barmaids, but I avoid lepers and other beggars.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 8 My horse and I are dreadfully thin, because I prefer to spend my money on books, rather than food. My friends loan me money for my studies, and I pay them back by praying for their well-being. I am having a hard time finding a job of any sort, so I've continued with my studies.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 9 I am truthful, brave, chivalrous, and religious. I fought in the Crusades, and did not even take the time to change clothes before heading out on pilgrimage. I am the highest ranking member of the party travelling to Canterbury, and I tell the first story.



*Lecture III*  
*The Fifteenth Century.*  
*The End of the Medieval Period.*

**Outline:**

1. **The Popular Ballads.**
2. **Sir Thomas Malory and his 'Morte D'arthur'.**

With Chaucer's death in 1400 the half century of original creative literature in which he is the main figure comes to an end, and for a hundred and fifty years thereafter there is only a single author of the highest rank. For this decline political confusion is the chief cause; first, in the renewal of the Hundred Years' War, with its sordid effort to deprive another nation of its liberty, and then in the brutal and meaningless War of the Roses, a mere cut-throat civil butchery of rival factions with no real principle at stake. Throughout the fifteenth century the leading poets (of prose we will speak later) were avowed imitators of Chaucer, and therefore at best only second-rate writers. Most of them were Scots, and best known is the Scottish king, James I. For tradition seems correct in naming this monarch as the author of a pretty poem, 'The King's Quair' ('The King's Quire,' that is Book), which relates in a medieval dream allegory of fourteen hundred lines how the captive author sees and falls in love with a lady whom in the end Fortune promises to bestow upon him. This may well be the poetic record of King James' eighteen-year captivity in England and his actual marriage to a noble English wife. In compliment to him Chaucer's stanza of seven lines (riming *ababbcc*), which King James employs, has received the name of 'rime royal.'

**1. THE 'POPULAR' BALLADS.** Largely to the fifteenth century, however, belong those of the English and Scottish 'popular' ballads which the accidents of time have not succeeded in destroying. We have already considered the theory of the communal origin of this kind of poetry in the remote pre-historic past, and have seen that the ballads continue to flourish vigorously down to the later periods of civilization. The still existing English and Scottish ballads are mostly, no doubt, the work of individual authors of the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, but none the less they express the little-changing mind and emotions of the great body of the common people who had been singing and repeating ballads for so many thousand years. Really essentially 'popular,' too, in spirit are the more pretentious poems of the wandering professional minstrels, which have been handed down along with the others, just as the minstrels were accustomed to recite both sorts indiscriminately. Such minstrel ballads are the famous ones on the battle of Chevy Chase, or Otterburn. The production of genuine popular ballads began to wane in the fifteenth century when the printing press gave circulation to the output of cheap London writers and substituted reading for the verbal memory by which the ballads had been transmitted, portions, as it were, of a half mysterious and almost sacred tradition. Yet the existing ballads yielded slowly, lingering on in the remote regions, and those which have been preserved were recovered during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries by collectors from simple men and women living apart from the main currents of life, to whose hearts and lips they were still dear. Indeed even now the ballads and ballad-making are not altogether dead, but may still be found nourishing in such outskirts of civilization as the cowboy plains of Texas, Rocky Mountain mining camps, or the nooks and corners of the Southern Alleghenies.

The true 'popular' ballads have a quality peculiarly their own, which renders them far superior to the sixteenth century imitations and which no conscious literary artist has ever successfully reproduced. Longfellow's 'Skeleton in Armor' and Tennyson's 'Revenge' are stirring artistic ballads, but they are altogether different in tone and effect from the authentic 'popular' ones. Some of the elements which go to make this peculiar 'popular' quality can be definitely stated.

1. The 'popular' ballads are the simple and spontaneous expression of the elemental emotion of the people, emotion often crude but absolutely genuine and unaffected. Phrases are often repeated in the ballads, just as in the talk of the common man, for the sake of emphasis, but there is neither complexity of plot or characterization nor attempt at decorative literary adornment-

-the story and the emotion which it calls forth are all in all. It is this simple, direct fervor of feeling, the straightforward outpouring of the authors' hearts, that gives the ballads their power and entitles them to consideration among the far more finished works of conscious literature. Both the emotion and the morals of the ballads, also, are pagan, or at least pre-Christian; vengeance on one's enemies is as much a virtue as loyalty to one's friends; the most shameful sins are cowardice and treachery in war or love; and the love is often lawless.

2. From first to last the treatment of the themes is objective, dramatic, and picturesque. Everything is action, simple feeling, or vivid scenes, with no merely abstract moralizing (except in a few unusual cases); and often much of the story or sentiment is implied rather than directly stated. This too, of course, is the natural manner of the common man, a manner perfectly effective either in animated conversation or in the chant of a minstrel, where expression and gesture can do so much of the work which the restraints of civilized society have transferred to words.

3. To this spirit and treatment correspond the subjects of the ballads. They are such as make appeal to the underlying human instincts--brave exploits in individual fighting or in organized war, and the romance and pathos and tragedy of love and of the other moving situations of simple life. From the 'popular' nature of the ballads it has resulted that many of them are confined within no boundaries of race or nation, but, originating one here, one there, are spread in very varying versions throughout the whole, almost, of the world. Purely English, however, are those which deal with Robin Hood and his 'merry men,' idealized imaginary heroes of the Saxon common people in the dogged struggle which they maintained for centuries against their oppressive feudal lords.

4. The characters and 'properties' of the ballads of all classes are generally typical or traditional. There are the brave champion, whether noble or common man, who conquers or falls against overwhelming odds; the faithful lover of either sex; the woman whose constancy, proving stronger than man's fickleness, wins back her lover to her side at last; the traitorous old woman (victim of the blind and cruel prejudice which after a century or two was often to send her to the stake as a witch); the loyal little child; and some few others.

5. The verbal style of the ballads, like their spirit, is vigorous and simple, generally unpolished and sometimes rough, but often powerful with its terse dramatic suggestiveness. The usual, though not the only, poetic form is the four-lined stanza in lines alternately of four and three stresses and riming only in the second and fourth lines. Besides the refrains which are perhaps a relic of communal composition and the conventional epithets which the ballads share with epic poetry there are numerous traditional ballad expressions--rather meaningless formulas and line-tags used only to complete the rime or meter, the common useful scrap-bag reserve of these unpretentious poets. The license of Anglo-Saxon poetry in the number of the unstressed syllables still remains. But it is evident that the existing versions of the ballads are generally more imperfect than the original forms; they have suffered from the corruptions of generations of oral repetition, which the scholars who have recovered them have preserved with necessary accuracy, but which for appreciative reading editors should so far as possible revise away.

Among the best or most representative single ballads are: The Hunting of the Cheviot (otherwise called The Ancient Ballad of Chevy Chase--clearly of minstrel authorship); Sir Patrick Spens; Robin Hood and Guy of Gisborne; Adam Bell, Clym of the Clough, and William of Cloudelee; Captain Car, or Edom o' Gordon; King Estmere (though this has been somewhat altered by Bishop Percy, who had and destroyed the only surviving copy of it); Edward, Edward; Young Waters; Sweet William's Ghost; Lord Thomas and Fair Annet. Kinmont Willie is very fine, but seems to be largely the work of Sir Walter Scott and therefore not truly 'popular.'

**II. SIR THOMAS MALORY AND HIS 'MORTE DARTHUR.'** The one fifteenth century author of the first rank, above referred to, is Sir Thomas Malory (the *a* is pronounced as in *tally*). He is probably to be identified with the Sir Thomas Malory who during the wars in France and the civil strife of the Roses that followed was an adherent of the Earls of Warwick and who

died in 1471 under sentence of outlawry by the victorious Edward IV. And some passing observations, at least, in his book seem to indicate that if he knew and had shared all the splendor and inspiration of the last years of medieval chivalry, he had experienced also the disappointment and bitterness of defeat and prolonged captivity. Further than this we know of him only that he wrote 'Le Morte Darthur' and had finished it by 1467.

Malory's purpose was to collect in a single work the great body of important Arthurian romance and to arrange it in the form of a continuous history of King Arthur and his knights. He called his book 'Le Morte Darthur,' The Death of Arthur, from the title of several popular Arthurian romances to which, since they dealt only with Arthur's later years and death, it was properly enough applied, and from which it seems to have passed into general currency as a name for the entire story of Arthur's life. [Footnote: Since the French word 'Morte' is feminine, the preceding article was originally 'La,' but the whole name had come to be thought of as a compound phrase and hence as masculine or neuter in gender.] Actually to get together all the Arthurian romances was not possible for any man in Malory's day, or in any other, but he gathered up a goodly number, most of them, at least, written in French, and combined them, on the whole with unusual skill, into a work of about one-tenth their original bulk, which still ranks, with all qualifications, as one of the masterpieces of English literature. Dealing with such miscellaneous material, he could not wholly avoid inconsistencies, so that, for example, he sometimes introduces in full health in a later book a knight whom a hundred pages earlier he had killed and regularly buried; but this need not cause the reader anything worse than mild amusement. Not Malory but his age, also, is to blame for his sometimes hazy and puzzled treatment of the supernatural element in his material. In the remote earliest form of the stories, as Celtic myths, this supernatural element was no doubt frank and very large, but Malory's authorities, the more skeptical French romancers, adapting it to their own age, had often more or less fully rationalized it; transforming, for instance, the black river of Death which the original heroes often had to cross on journeys to the Celtic Other World into a rude and forbidding moat about the hostile castle into which the romancers degraded the Other World itself. Countless magic details, however, still remained recalcitrant to such treatment; and they evidently troubled Malory, whose devotion to his story was earnest and sincere. Some of them he omits, doubtless as incredible, but others he retains, often in a form where the impossible is merely garbled into the unintelligible. For a single instance, in his seventh book he does not satisfactorily explain why the valiant Gareth on his arrival at Arthur's court asks at first only for a year's food and drink. In the original story, we can see to-day, Gareth must have been under a witch's spell which compelled him to a season of distasteful servitude; but this motivating bit of superstition Malory discards, or rather, in this case, it had been lost from the story at a much earlier stage. It results, therefore, that Malory's supernatural incidents are often far from clear and satisfactory; yet the reader is little troubled by this difficulty either in so thoroughly romantic a work.

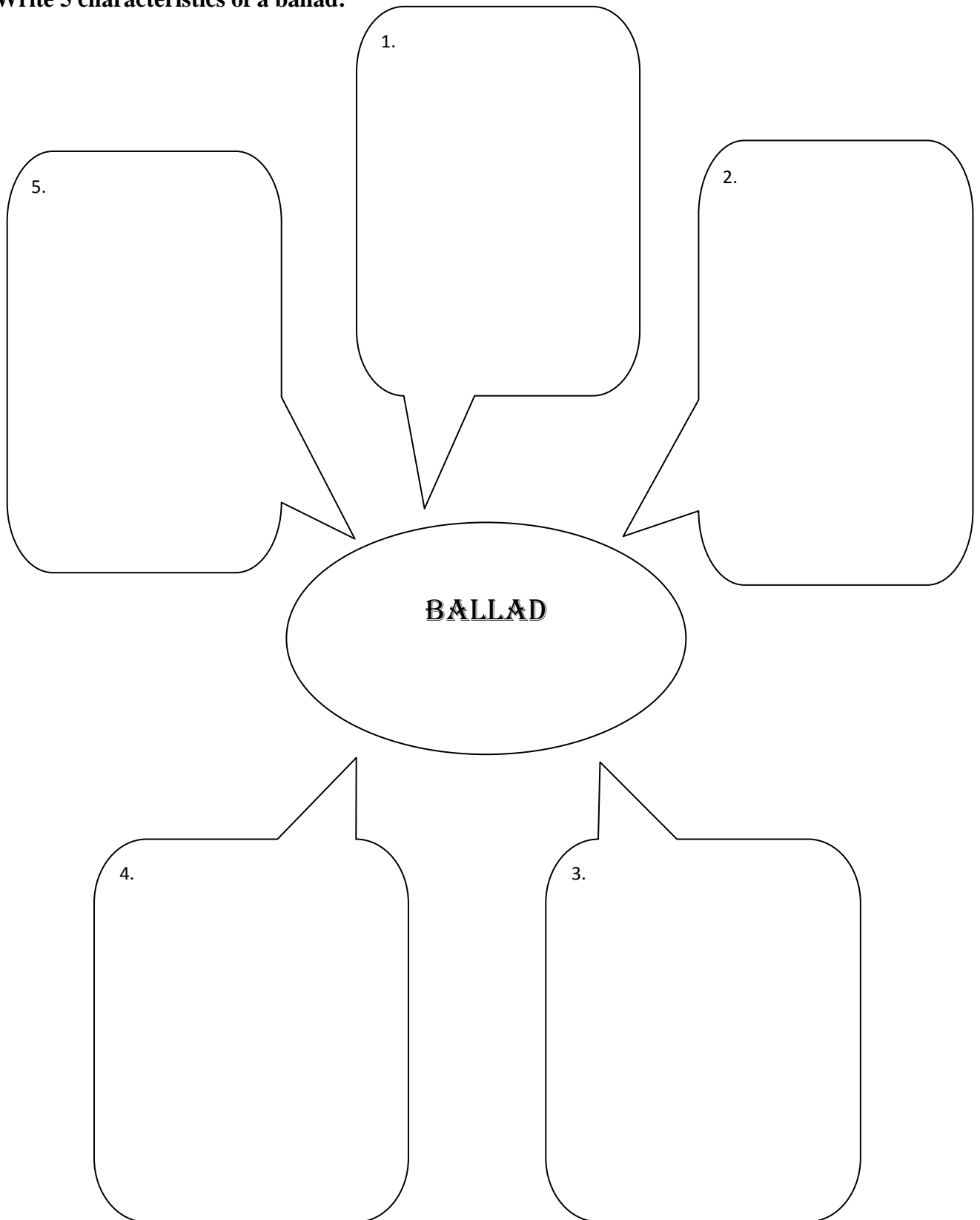
Other technical faults may easily be pointed out in Malory's book. Thorough unity, either in the whole or in the separate stories so loosely woven together, could not be expected; in continual reading the long succession of similar combat after combat and the constant repetition of stereotyped phrases become monotonous for a present-day reader; and it must be confessed that Malory has little of the modern literary craftsman's power of close-knit style or proportion and emphasis in details. But these faults also may be overlooked, and the work is truly great, partly because it is an idealist's dream of chivalry, as chivalry might have been, a chivalry of faithful knights who went about redressing human wrongs and were loyal lovers and zealous servants of Holy Church; great also because Malory's heart is in his stories, so that he tells them in the main well, and invests them with a delightful atmosphere of romance which can never lose its fascination.

The style, also, in the narrower sense, is strong and good, and does its part to make the book, except for the Wiclif Bible, unquestionably the greatest monument of English prose of the entire period before the sixteenth century. There is no affectation of elegance, but rather knightly straightforwardness which has power without lack of ease. The sentences are often long, but

always 'loose' and clear; and short ones are often used with the instinctive skill of sincerity. Everything is picturesque and dramatic and everywhere there is chivalrous feeling and genuine human sympathy.

**Activity**

**Write 5 characteristics of a ballad:**





**Lecture IV.**  
**The Elizabethan Age**  
**(1485-1625)**  
**The Renaissance**

**Outline:**

- 1. Historical background.**
- 2. The Influence of Renaissance.**
- 3. The Renaissance in England (3 periods).**

1. When Henry VII, a Tudor, became a king of England in 1485, he was starting a new royal line. His defeat of Richard III and his marriage to a member of the House of York had ended the civil war known as the Wars of the Roses and he could probably predict the time of peace and progress that his reign would bring to England until 1509.

Luck, wisdom and monumental forces were at work to produce the golden age that was to come by the late 1500s. Feudalism had collapsed. A new economy took shape and brought great prosperity to the Island. Money as well as land became a source of power; banking became a business. Overseas commerce helped to make nation rich. Henry VII had been king for only seven years when Columbus landed in the New World.

During this time (the early 1500s) a religious revolution that had begun in central Europe was spreading across the Continent. It was called the Protestant Church. Until the Reformation the only form of Christianity in most of Europe was Roman Catholicism. The German monk Martin Luther and the French-born theologian John Calvin both criticized the established church, disagreeing with its actions, conducts and many of its beliefs. By the 1530s Henry VIII aligned himself and England with the Protestants. He wanted to divorce Catherine of Aragon because she had not given him a male heir. When the Pope in Rome refused, Henry the VIII broke with the Roman Catholic Church. He established the Church of England, The Anglican Church, and made himself its powerful head, initiating fights among different religious groups.

In 1588, during the reign of Elisabeth I, England became one of the great sea powers of the world. In that year Philip II, King of Spain and the most powerful ruler on the Continent, sent his Spanish Armada to fight England's small navy. The fight seemed unequal, but the English navy won an amazing victory. After this victory England forgot that it was a little island and became a great sea power and the world trade and colonization had begun.

2. While England was becoming an economic, religious and naval power, it was also being influenced by a cultural movement – **The Renaissance**. Beginning in Italy with the writings of **Boccaccio** and **Petrarch**, the Renaissance was a flowering of learning that swept from Italy into France and Germany across the Channel into England.

The Renaissance was a period that saw reborn in Europe the interest in science, art, and learning. New social and economic conditions called for a new ideology. The Catholic dogmas did not correspond to the new trend of life. People questioned religious principles that had not been questioned before. The new ideology proclaimed the value of human individuality, the value of individual initiative and enterprise, the value of man as such, whatever his birth and social standing. Instead of the blind faith ordered by the Catholic religion, great importance was assigned to intellect, experience, to scientific experiment. This new outlook was called **Humanism**. It could not accept the old theological views and took the art and science of ancient Greece and Rome for its basis, hence the term 'The Revival of Learning'. The time demanded positive, rational knowledge, and the demand was supplied in astronomy by Copernicus; in medicine – by Vesalius and Servetus, in philosophy – by More, Montaigne and Bacon, in philology – by Desiderius Erasmus. Great geographical discoveries were made by Columbus, Vasco da Gama, Fernando Magellan and many others. Leonardo da Vinci put forth a new theory and practice of art.

The Renaissance was called "that mighty epoch".

All this flurry and creativity also made its way to the court of Elizabeth I. When not involved with statecraft, the queen often occupied herself by giving new life and style to literature. She also enjoyed flattery. Playwrights would dedicate their works to her, and she was often the direct subject of a piece of poetry, because writers sought her sponsorship and favour. Responding to the new interest and learning, the queen in 1571 recognized the universities of Oxford and Cambridge. These centres of learning along with the court, the presence of printing helped to create an era of English literature that has never been surpassed.

**3. First Period.** When King Richard III was killed during the battle of Bosworth in 1485 (the battle which marked the end of the War of the Roses), it marked the end of feudalism in England. The new dynasty, the Tudors, established absolute monarchy, which gave the bourgeoisie more freedom for commercial enterprises. This policy was continued by his son, Henry VIII, who was the first patron of the humanists in England. During his reign music and poetry flourished at his court; foreign scholars, artists, and musicians came to England. Among them were the great scholar Erasmus of Rotterdam and the great German painter Hans Holbein the Younger. Music was represented by Italians and Frenchmen. With literature the case was different, many of the ideas of the Renaissance were popularized by English poets and dramatists. The most important of these writers was the great Englishman and one of the greatest men of the period, the humanist Sir Thomas More.

***Second period. The Predecessors of Shakespeare.***

The most brilliant period English literature ever knew was in the second half of the 16<sup>th</sup> and the beginning of the 17<sup>th</sup> century; it is usually called the Elizabethan age after Queen Elizabeth I who reigned from 1558 to 1603, but it must be remembered that many authors of that time, including Shakespeare and Ben Johnson, wrote their greatest works after her death.

England had become a great world power, the English people were now a great nation, and the English language, enriched and to a certain extent already standardized, was now, except for the spelling, not unlike Modern English.

By that time principles of Italian and French Renaissance poetry had been completely introduced among the writers.

The English nation felt a great interest in their past.

Many famous poetical and prose works by ancient and contemporary authors were translated. Original prose works also appeared, but the chief medium of the age was verse – lyric, epic, and dramatic.

Some of the foremost poets of the period are: Sir Philip Sidney, Edmund Spenser and others.

***Third period.*** The third period in the literature of the period of Renaissance is considered the age of the life of Shakespeare. Theatre and drama began to develop during this period. Beside Shakespeare, there lived and wrote such other poets and playwrights as: Christopher Marlowe, Ben Johnson.

## **Activity**

### **Elizabeth I**

Elizabeth I was one of England's most famous monarchs. She was the Queen of England for forty-four years and this period, known as the Elizabethan Age, was one of the golden ages in the history of Britain.

Queen Elizabeth I was born on September 7, 1533, in Greenwich, England. She was the daughter of King Henry VIII and his second wife, Anne Boleyn. Henry VIII had Anne Boleyn executed in 1536. Elizabeth was only two years old when she lost her mother. It is said that she was a serious child. She excelled at languages and music.

King Henry VIII died in 1547. Elizabeth's half-brother Edward became king. He was a Protestant and wanted the next monarch to be a Protestant too. He died in 1553 and Lady Jane Grey, his cousin, became queen. However, she spent only nine days on the throne. Then, Elizabeth's half-sister Mary took her place. Mary was a Roman Catholic and wanted the country to become Catholic again. She put Elizabeth in prison and Elizabeth's life was in her half-sister's hands until Mary's death. Mary died in 1558 and Elizabeth, who was a Protestant, became queen.

Under Elizabeth, England became a Protestant country again. Elizabeth was a successful monarch. In 1588, the English Navy defeated the famous Spanish Armada, which wanted to invade England. One of the greatest dangers for Elizabeth was her cousin Mary Stuart, Queen of Scots, who was a Roman Catholic. Elizabeth put Mary in prison in 1567 and had her executed twenty years later.

Elizabeth was a talented diplomat. Many European monarchs wanted to marry her, for example the king of Sweden or the future King Henry III of France. Elizabeth didn't marry anybody and got the nickname "the Virgin Queen". Elizabeth liked music, dancing and watching plays. The most famous writer of her times was William Shakespeare. She also liked clothes and jewellery.

Queen Elizabeth died on March 24, 1603, at Richmond Palace in Surrey. After her death, James I, Mary Stuart's son, came to the throne.

### 1 Read the text and answer the following questions.

1 Who was Queen Elizabeth's mother?

\_\_\_\_\_

2 How old was Elizabeth when her mother died?

\_\_\_\_\_

3 How long was Lady Jane Grey queen?

\_\_\_\_\_

4 Who was queen before Elizabeth I?

\_\_\_\_\_

5 When did Elizabeth I become queen?

\_\_\_\_\_

6 What happened in 1588?

\_\_\_\_\_

7 Who was the most famous writer of Elizabeth's times?

\_\_\_\_\_

### 2 Are these sentences true (T) or false (F)?

1 When she was a child, Elizabeth I was good at languages and music. \_\_\_\_\_

2 Elizabeth's half-sister Mary put Elizabeth in prison. \_\_\_\_\_

3 Elizabeth I was a Roman Catholic. \_\_\_\_\_

4 Mary Stuart was Elizabeth's half-sister. \_\_\_\_\_

5 The Swedish king wanted to marry Elizabeth. \_\_\_\_\_

6 Elizabeth I didn't have a husband. \_\_\_\_\_

7 The son of Elizabeth's rival became king after Elizabeth's death. \_\_\_\_\_

## *Lecture V*

### *William Shakespeare*

#### *(1564 – 1616)*

#### **Outline:**

- 1. William Shakespeare's Life.**
- 2. William Shakespeare's Literary Work.**
- 3. William Shakespeare's Plays:**
  - a) Comedies;**
  - b) Tragedies;**
  - c) Sonets;**
  - d) Poems.**
- 4. Shakespeare's Contribution to World Literature.**

The English renaissance gave birth to an amazing galaxy of great writers, but William Shakespeare outshines them all. William Shakespeare was an English poet and playwright, widely regarded as the greatest writer in the English language and the world's pre-eminent dramatist. He is often called England's national poet and the "Bard of Avon".

**1.** William Shakespeare was born in April of 1564. There is no specific date of birth because at that time the only date of importance was the date of baptism, though infants often were baptized when they were three days old. Shakespeare's baptismal date was April 26, 1564. Shakespeare was born in the village of Stratford-upon-Avon in Warwickshire. At the time of his birth, the village had a population of 1500 people, and only 200 houses. Shakespeare's father, John Shakespeare, came from a family of yeomen, and he gained many prestigious positions in the community. Shakespeare's mother, Mary Arden, came from an ancient family of landed gentry. The whole family was Anglican. The family's financial situation was well off. Not much information is known about Shakespeare's youth, although undoubtedly he was educated in the local school, where he studied Latin and Greek, among other subjects, during a school day that often lasted from dawn to dusk.

Shakespeare's first exposure to the theatre probably occurred when he was young. As a child his father probably took him to see plays when traveling troupes of actors came to town, although that was not often.

Shakespeare was married to Anne Hathaway in 1582, when he was 18; she was 26, eight years his senior. The exact wedding date is uncertain, but the marriage certificate was issued on November 27, 1582. William and Anne had their first child, Susanna, in May of 1583. This was followed by the birth of twins, Hamnet and Judith, in January of 1585. Most historians believe that Shakespeare was not often around his family in Stratford after that because historical records show him in London during the following years.

The first written reference to Shakespeare's existence in London occurred in 1592, when Shakespeare was in his late twenties. He seems to have been fairly well established in the theatre by that point, since the reference, written by another playwright, hints of jealousy at Shakespeare's success.

With his two patrons, the Earls of South Hampton and Pembroke, Shakespeare rose quickly in the theatre as both an actor and an author. He joined the Lord Chamberlin's Men, an acting company which was protected by the Queen, becoming a shareholder and senior member in 1595. Because of his success in London, he was able to purchase New Place, the largest and most elegant house in his home town of Stratford, when he was in his early thirties (1597).

In addition to his popularity as both an actor and playwright, Shakespeare became joint owner of the famous Globe theatre when it opened in 1599. His share of the company's management added heavily to his wealth.

Shakespeare's financial success in the London theatre enabled him to retire and return to his home in Stratford around 1610. He lived there comfortably until his death on April 23, 1616 (it is popularly believed that he died on his birthday). He is buried in Holy Trinity Church in Stratford-upon-Avon.

Though Shakespeare is most closely associated with the Elizabethan period, his career can be categorized as both Elizabethan and Jacobean, as several works were completed after James I became king in 1603.

## 2. Shakespeare's Literary Work may be divided into four periods.

The first period, dating from the beginning of his career to 1594, may be called the period of apprenticeship. The plays of that period were written under the influence of University Wits and are cruder in their stage – craft and psychology than his later works. One play written during that time, “Richard III”, remains one of his most popular and most frequently staged works.

During the second period, from the 1594 – 1595 up to 1600, Shakespeare wrote plays belonging mainly to two dramatic genres: histories (historical plays) and comedies. The two tragedies written during those years, “Romeo and Juliet” and “Julius Caesar”, differ greatly from his mature tragedies. The former, one of his most popular and frequently produced plays, is a true masterpiece; but its treatment of the material places it apart from his great tragedies. “Julius Caesar” in its construction resembles a history rather than a tragedy.

During the third period of his literary career, from 1600 to 1608, Shakespeare wrote the great tragedies that were the peak of his achievement, and made him truly immortal.

In the Middle Ages a tragedy meant a literary work (not necessarily a play) dealing with the hero's transition from fortune to misfortune and ending with his death. Shakespeare brought something new to tragedy. The hero of any Shakespearean tragedy perishes by reason of some trait of character that makes him either prefer some positive ideal to life, or else make him betray an ideal and hence, meet his doom. All the tragic characters of Shakespeare are shown in their development; a hero at the end of the tragedy isn't the man he was at the beginning, his soul having undergone great changes. Shakespeare's second innovation is his way of explaining the evolution (or degradation) of his heroes by the social factors that form their psychology and influence their lives.

Many of Shakespeare's great tragedies are devoted to his favourite themes: the themes of state and society, the nature of power in general and the institution of monarchy in particular. In his great tragedies he comes to the conclusion that monarchy is evil in its very essence, and can be nothing else.

Shakespeare's sonnets also belong to this period of his literary work. They can't be placed among his best works; only a few of them may be placed among the best English sonnets in general; but they occupy a unique place in the Shakespearean heritage, because they are his only lyrical pieces, the only things he wrote for himself.

The fourth period. The last years of Shakespeare's career as a playwright are characterized by a considerable change in the style of drama. The plays of Shakespeare written during his fourth period are modelled after the dramatic technique of Beaumont and Fletcher (the most popular dramatists). All of his plays are written around a dramatic conflict, but the tension in them is not so great as in the tragedies; all of them have happy endings. On the whole we get an impression that he is telling us fairy-tales in which he doesn't believe himself. The play that was the last one written by him in which he bids farewell to the theatre is one of the most profound and significant he ever wrote is “The Tempest”.

## 3. William Shakespeare's Plays:

### **The Comedies.**

Comedies treat subjects lightly, meaning that they don't treat seriously such things as love. Shakespeare's comedies often use puns, metaphors and insults to provoke 'thoughtful laughter'. Disguises and mistaken identities are often very common.

The plot is very important in Shakespeare's comedies. It is often very complicated and confusing, and extremely hard to follow. Other characteristics of Shakespearean comedy are the themes of love and friendship, played within a courtly society.

Love provides the main ingredient. If the lovers are unmarried when the play opens, they either have not met or there is some obstacle to their relationship.

Shakespearean comedies also contain a wide variety of characters. Shakespeare often introduces a character and then discards him, never to be seen again during the play.

Many themes are repeated throughout Shakespeare's comedies. One theme is the never-ending struggle between the forces of good and evil. Another theme is that love has profound effects and that people often hide behind false faces.

The comedies themselves can be sub-categorised as tragicomedies, romantic comedies, comedies of justice and simple entertaining comedies with good wholesome fun.

- *All's Well That Ends Well*‡
- *As You Like It*
- *The Comedy of Errors*
- *Love's Labour's Lost*
- *Measure for Measure*‡
- *The Merchant of Venice*
- *The Merry Wives of Windsor*
- *A Midsummer Night's Dream*
- *Much Ado About Nothing*
- *Pericles, Prince of Tyre*\*†
- *The Taming of the Shrew*
- *The Tempest*\*
- *Twelfth Night*
- *The Two Gentlemen of Verona*
- *The Two Noble Kinsmen*\*†
- *The Winter's Tale*\*

### **The Tragedies.**

William Shakespeare started writing tragedies because he thought the tragic plots used by other English writers were lacking artistic purpose and form. He used the fall of a notable person as the main focus in his tragedies. Suspense and climax were an added attraction for the audience. His work was extraordinary in that it was not of the norm for the time. A reader with even little knowledge of his work would recognize one of the tragedies as a work of Shakespeare.

A hero today is seen as a person who is idolized. Nowadays, a hero does not have to have wealth or certain political beliefs, but instead can be regarded as a hero for his/her actions and inner strength. However, in the plays of Shakespeare, the tragic hero is always a noble man who enjoys some status and prosperity in society but possesses some moral weakness or flaw which leads to his downfall. External circumstances such as fate also play a part in the hero's fall. Evil agents often act upon the hero and the forces of good, causing the hero to make wrong decisions. Innocent people always feel the fall in tragedies, as well.

- *Romeo and Juliet*
- *Coriolanus*
- *Titus Andronicus*†
- *Timon of Athens*†
- *Julius Caesar*
- *Macbeth*†
- *Hamlet*
- *Troilus and Cressida*‡

- *King Lear*
- *Othello*
- *Antony and Cleopatra*
- *Cymbeline\**

**The Histories.**

Shakespeare’s histories, or chronicle plays, are more closely related to his tragedies than to his comedies. This was the genre in which he started his career as a playwright, and beginning with his first works, he gives us a vast dramatic cycle in which he deals with themes in the historical process, the laws of historical development, and the nature of power.

- *King John*
- *Richard II*
- *Henry IV, part 1*
- *Henry IV, part 2*
- *Henry V*
- *Henry VI, part 1†*
- *Henry VI, part 2*
- *Henry VI, part 3*
- *Richard III*
- *Henry VIII†*

**4. Shakespeare’s Contribution to World Literature:**

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**Activities**

**1. Can you find the 30 missing words?**

William Shakespeare was \_\_\_\_\_ on or about 23<sup>rd</sup> April 1564 in the house preserved as his birthplace in Henley Street, Stratford-upon-Avon. The record of his \_\_\_\_\_ in the register is on 26<sup>th</sup> April.

Contrary to \_\_\_\_\_ given in some of the older biographies, Shakespeare came from good middle-class \_\_\_\_\_ on both sides. His mother, Mary Arden, was one of the eight \_\_\_\_\_ of a substantial farmer of Wilmcote, where the Arden farmstead may still be seen, his father, John Shakespeare was a prosperous and respected tradesman, who took an active part in \_\_\_\_\_ affairs.

William was the eldest son and third child of the marriage and \_\_\_\_\_ took on several responsibilities, including helping his father.

One day while doing an \_\_\_\_\_ for his father with his young brother Edmund, he stopped in the local \_\_\_\_\_ to buy something. His brother \_\_\_\_\_ in the mud and was helped to his feet by a young woman \_\_\_\_\_ name was Anne Hathaway. She was a country girl who lived a few miles from Stratford in a little village \_\_\_\_\_ Shottery. William and Anne soon fell in love and \_\_\_\_\_ married in 1582.

They started their married \_\_\_\_\_ in the family home in Henley Street, but unfortunately Anne \_\_\_\_\_ with her mother-in-law Mary. Mary had always thought that her son could have chosen a more \_\_\_\_\_ wife.

After one year of marriage their daughter Susanna was born in May 1583 and not long after that William found a teaching job which \_\_\_\_\_ him to rent a little cottage for himself and Anne. They moved in \_\_\_\_\_ Christmas 1584 and in February 1585 Anne gave birth to twins, Hamnet and Judith. Hamnet was a weak baby and child and \_\_\_\_\_ at the age of eleven.

William had always been \_\_\_\_\_ by travelling actors and more than once had been on the point of following them to London to \_\_\_\_\_ his fortune. He, in fact, left when the twins were five and Susanna seven. He left his brother in \_\_\_\_\_ of looking after his family and regularly sent money to them. He came back to visit, but \_\_\_\_\_ most of his life living and working in London.

Having already \_\_\_\_\_ money in property in London, in 1597 (one year after Hamnet's death) he \_\_\_\_\_ New Place, one of the largest houses in Stratford. In 1610 he settled permanently there. By the standards of his day the poet was obviously \_\_\_\_\_.

Shakespeare died at the \_\_\_\_\_ of fifty-two on 23<sup>rd</sup> April 1616 and Anne in 1623. Their daughter Susanna married John Hall, a doctor and New Place was \_\_\_\_\_ to their daughter Elizabeth, who married twice, but \_\_\_\_\_ had any children. So Shakespeare's \_\_\_\_\_ line came to an end with her death in 1670.

---

**Choose from these words:**

Age	purchased	left	spent	direct	make
Wealthy	slipped	called	therefore	life	errand
Impressions	around	municipal	were	never	charge
Educated	baptism	whose	market didn't	which	parentage
born	daughters	invested	get on well	died	fascinated

---



2.

## Sayings from Shakespeare

1. Pablo is forty years old. It's **high time** that he got a job and moved out of his parents house.

- a) It should have already happened
- b) It's time to be happy.

2. He always stays up late writing. He's a real **night owl**.

- a) someone who stays up late.
- b) Someone who stares a lot.

3. I don't have any food left in the kitchen. My visitors **ate me out of house and home**.

- a) He destroyed my house
- b) He ate all my food.

4. My baby cried all night so I **haven't slept one wink**.

- a) I haven't slept at all.
- b) I have slept for a long time.

5. John's **in a pickle**. His friends are coming for dinner but he hasn't got any food.

- a) drunk.
- b) in a difficult situation.

6. The joke was really funny. It had us **in stitches**.

- a) badly injured.
- b) laughing a lot

7. We'll find out who stole the painting eventually. **The truth will out**.

- a) In the end everyone will know the truth.
- b) The truth will be destroyed.

8. The ghost story he told at Halloween **made my hair stand on end**.

- a) It was interesting.
- b) It was very frightening.

9. Be careful of people selling Rolex watches for £100. **All that glitters is not gold**.

- a) Something may look better than it is.
- b) It might be deadly.

10. When you give a speech you should be clear and concise. **Brevity is the soul of wit**.

- a) It's more intelligent not to talk too much.
- b) Short people are funnier.

11. You'll never find English tea bags in Spain. It's **a wild goose chase**.

- a) It's very energetic.
- b) It's impossible to do.

12. They were clean and shiny but now they're destroyed. My shoes **have seen better days**.

- a) They have deteriorated.
- b) They weren't made for this weather.

## Sayings from Shakespeare

Use the phrases to make your own sentences:

1. **high time**

.....

2. **night owl**.

.....

1. **eat (someone) out of house and home**.

.....

2. **not sleep one wink**.

.....

3. **in a pickle**

.....

4. **in stitches**.

.....

5. **The truth will out**.

.....

6. **made my hair stand on**

**end**.....

7. **All that glitters is not gold**.

.....  
8. **Brevity is the soul of wit.**  
.....

9. **a wild goose chase.**  
.....

10. **have seen better days.**  
.....

## *Lecture VI*

### *English Literature of the Seventeenth Century*

#### **Outline:**

1. **Poetry in Seventeenth-Century England.**
  - a) **The Metaphysical Poets;**
  - b) **The Cavalier Poets.**
2. **Drama in Seventeenth Century England.**
3. **Prose in Seventeenth Century.**

#### **1. Poetry of the 17<sup>th</sup> century.**

Poetry dominated the literature of the early 17<sup>th</sup>-century. John Donne and his followers wrote what would later be called metaphysical poetry – complex, highly intellectual verse filled with delicate metaphors. Ben Johnson, the predecessor of English neoclassicism, and his disciples, called the Sons of Ben or the Tribe of Ben, were responsible for a second main style of poetry. They wrote in a more conservative, restrained fashion and on more limited subjects than the metaphysical poets. Above all, Johnson strove for clarity and precision. Some of the Sons of Ben are known as Cavaliers because their verses often take the form of witty, elegant, and gentlemanly compliments or trifles.

A great poetry of the century, John Milton has a style of his own, and he remained outside both Donne's and Johnson's influence. His epic, '*Paradise Lost*', a work of over ten thousand lines, takes its place in Western literature along with Homer's *Odyssey* and *Iliad*, Virgil's *Aeneid* and Dante's *Divine Comedy* and in English Literature with *Beowulf* and Spenser's *Faerie Queene*.

#### **a) The Metaphysical Poets.**

The Metaphysical poets were a loose collection of poets who developed a new genre of poetry during the late 16th and early 17th Century.

The Metaphysical poets introduced a fresh approach to poetry. They rejected the flowery imagery of their predecessors, such as Spenser. Instead they sought to concentrate on clearly defined topics, often of a religious interest. The poems were also characterized by sharp polarities and paradoxical imagery. This imagery is often called metaphysical conceit. T.S. Eliot, who later popularized some of these poets said that the metaphysical poets were able to combine reason with passion, showing a unification of thought and feeling. The most important poet of this movement was John Donne. Other metaphysical poets were: John Donne, George Herbert, Henry Vaughan, Richard Crashaw.

John Donne, along with similar but distinct poets such as George Herbert, Andrew Marvell, and Henry Vaughn, developed a poetic style in which philosophical and spiritual subjects were approached with reason and often concluded in paradox. This group of writers established *meditation*—based on the union of thought and feeling.

The metaphysical poets were eclipsed in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries by romantic and Victorian poets, but twentieth century readers and scholars, seeing in the metaphysicals an attempt to understand pressing political and scientific upheavals, engaged them with renewed

interest. In his essay "The Metaphysical Poets," T. S. Eliot, in particular, saw in this group of poets a capacity for "devouring all kinds of experience."

John Donne (1572 – 1631) was the most influential metaphysical poet. His personal relationship with spirituality is at the center of most of his work, and the psychological analysis and sexual realism of his work marked a dramatic departure from traditional, genteel verse. His early work, collected in *Satires* and in *Songs and Sonnets*, was released in an era of religious oppression. His *Holy Sonnets*, which contains many of Donne's most enduring poems, was released shortly after his wife died in childbirth. The intensity with which Donne grapples with concepts of divinity and mortality in the *Holy Sonnets* is exemplified in "Sonnet X [Death, be not proud]," "Sonnet XIV [Batter my heart, three person'd God]," and "Sonnet XVII [Since she whom I loved hath paid her last debt]."

George Herbert (1593 – 1633) and Andrew Marvell (1621 – 1678) were remarkable poets who did not live to see a collection of their poems published. Herbert, the son of a prominent literary patron to whom Donne dedicated his *Holy Sonnets*, spent the last years of his short life as a rector in a small town. On his deathbed, he handed his poems to a friend with the request that they be published only if they might aid "any dejected poor soul." Marvell wrote politically charged poems that would have cost him his freedom or his life had they been public. He was a secretary to John Milton, and once Milton was imprisoned during the Restoration, Marvell successfully petitioned to have the elder poet freed. His complex lyric and satirical poems were collected after his death amid an air of secrecy.

#### **b) The Cavalier Poets.**

**Cavalier poets** is a broad description of a school of English poets of the 17th century, who came from the classes that supported King Charles I during the English Civil War. They were marked out by their lifestyle and religion from the Puritans on the Parliamentarian side; much of their poetry is light in style, and generally secular in subject. The Cavaliers preferred more straightforward expression. They valued elegance, and were part of a refined, courtly culture, but their poetry is often frankly erotic. Their strength was the short lyric poem, and a favorite theme was *carpe diem*, "seize the day." The best known of the Cavalier poets are Ben Jonson, Robert Herrick, Richard Lovelace, Thomas Carew, and Sir John Suckling.

## **2. Drama in Seventeenth-Century England.**

In the 16<sup>th</sup> century drama was at its height with Shakespeare, Marlow, with acting companies formed and playhouses built and filled with appreciative audiences. As the 17<sup>th</sup> century progresses into the reign of Charles I, the new plays are neither bone-shaking tragedies, like those of Shakespeare and Marlow, nor traditional, rather simple-minded comedies that grew out of medieval morality plays and Roman comedies. Rather, early 17<sup>th</sup>-century theatre saw satiric comedies by Ben Johnson, tragicomedies, and a kind of melodrama. As the terms of satiric comedy, tragicomedy and comedy of manners suggest, comedy was becoming more sophisticated, less dependent upon stock situations-like mistaken identity – and on pratfalls and other sight gags. The manner of the upper class became the source of situations and of humour. Also, the introduction of a new element, wit, reflected the influence of the masterfully inventive, witty playwright Molière.

At the beginning of the civil war in 1662, the Puritans, who regarded drama as frivolous, made theatre illegal in England. Plays were still produced, of course, in private houses and even in playhouses until the hoof beats of mounted law enforcers signalled the evening raid.

If the theatre lost its momentum in the years of the Cromwell Commonwealth, it sprang to life joyfully when, in 1660 young Charles II restored the easygoing, theatre-loving monarchy. Women actresses, like the famous Nell Gwyn began to play female roles. The drama that came to life in the last half of the 17<sup>th</sup> century has been called Restoration comedy. To be sure, few tragicomedies from the past were popular on the newly lighted stages. However, during the later 17<sup>th</sup> century French-influenced playwrights created more sophisticated plays, still based on the manners of upper-class society but sharpened with wit and satire.

Then as the 17<sup>th</sup> century came to a close, the witty frivolity of Restoration comedy fell into disfavour. Playwrights turned to sentimental comedy, in which the heroine attempts to reform the hero.

### 3. Prose in Seventeenth Century England.

The Prose of the 17<sup>th</sup> century was not used for imaginative literature. When John Milton wrote his great narrative, *Paradise Lost*, he turned to poetry. With one exception, the prose works in this century are works of non-fiction – essays and histories, works about religion and science, and works reflecting a new interest in what was going on. Toward the end of the century, essays on literary criticism began to appear, and criticism became a kind of literature in itself. The fiction exception is John Bunyan’s *Pilgrim’s Progress*. This is a long prose work in which imaginary characters tell a story. *The Pilgrim’s Progress* drew upon the medieval morality play for its approach and for the kind of character it invents. It is the story of a hero named Christian, who, carrying Sin on his shoulders and a Bible in one hand, with the help of another character called Helpful, overcomes obstacles such as Vanity on his journey to heaven. This work was written to provide entertainment for the poor.

The bulk of seventeenth-century prose – nonfiction – developed because of several influences, one of them was Caxton’s printing press. Some writers created prose for the growing bureaucracy that demanded a large body of legal and governmental writings. Some writers produced prose in response to the spirit of scientific inquiry that was sweeping England. Some relied on prose to persuade wide audiences to adopt certain religious and political convictions. Other writers turned to prose for their own eccentric reasons: Robert Burton wrote a brilliant, gloomy, indefinable work called *The Anatomy of Melancholy*. Izaak Walton wrote a fascinating manual on fishing. Samuel Pepys kept a private, coded diary. Whatever their purposes, one thing is clear: just as there were professional minstrels or poets in the Anglo-Saxon period and professional playwrights in Elizabethan period, the seventeenth century saw the emergence of serious, professional prose writers.

Prose style in the seventeenth century developed in two distinct directions. Early in the century, we find an ornate though majestic style. Religious leaders including John Donne wrote sermons and other works that were complex and richly seeded with images. After the Restoration the Royal Society declared that its members should use a plainer, more efficient prose style. John Dryden was the leading prose writer of the last third of the century, and his writing attempted to move closer to the rhythms and spirit of actual speech. The development of more modern-sounding prose reminds that the seventeenth century was in all ways a period of continuing exploration – in politics, in religion, in science, and in language.

#### Activity

Similarities and Differences Between Cavalier Poetry and Metaphysical Poetry	
Similarities	Differences

## *Lecture VII*

### *The Enlightenment*

#### **Outline:**

- 1. Historical Background.**
- 2. The Literature of the Period.**
- 3. Periods in the Literature of the Enlightenment.**

#### **1. Historical Background.**

The history of England in the second half of the 17th century and during all the 18th century was marked by British colonial expansion and the struggle for the leading role in commerce. The most active sections of the population at the time were the commercial classes, that is the middle classes. They hated prejudice and lived by common sense; it was a rational age.

The writers and philosophers of this age protested against the survivals of feudalism. Man, they thought, was virtuous by nature and vice was due to ignorance only; so they started a public movement for enlightening the people. They wanted to bring knowledge, that is 'light' to the people. To their understanding this would do away with all the evils of society, and social harmony would be achieved. This movement was called *the Enlightenment*. Since the enlighteners believed in the power of reason, the period was also called *the Age of Reason*.

The movement of the Enlightenment spread later to the Continent. The characteristic features of this movement all over Europe were much the same:

- a) a deep hatred of feudalism and its survivals; the enlighteners rejected Church dogmas and caste distinctions;
- b) a love of freedom, a desire for systematic education for all, a firm belief in human virtue and reason;
- c) a concern for the fate of the common people and of the peasants in particular.

In spite of all these common features there was a difference between the ideas expressed by the English enlighteners and those expressed by the French. The French enlightenment was more progressive than the English: the French enlighteners were political leaders and set forth sharp political problems which prepared the French people for the coming revolution; whereas the English Enlightenment had no revolutionary aims in view; the English Bourgeois Revolution was over long before the Enlightenment spread in England; hence its restricted character.

#### **2. The Literature of the Period.**

The period saw a remarkable rise in literature. People wrote on many subjects and made great contributions in the field of philosophy, history, natural sciences and the new science of political economy.

Writers widely accepted those literary forms, in particular prose forms, which were understandable to the people as a whole.

Contact between writer and democratic reader was established by Joseph Addison and Richard Steele, the famous English essayists who started and directed several magazines, for which they wrote pamphlets and essays. Periodical newspapers, which had been published since the Civil War and now had daily issues, also helped to spread information among the general public.

Copies of current newspapers were kept in the coffee-houses. The latter came into being as soon as coffee, chocolate and tea were introduced as common drinks. Many people went there regularly to learn the latest news, and the coffee-houses eventually became centres of political and literary discussion. Each rank and profession, each shade of religious and political opinion had its own coffee-house. Men of letters and the wits criticized the latest literary works and discussed political problems there. University students, translators, printers and other people crowded in to join the discussion.

English literature of the period may be characterized by the following features:

- a) the period saw the rise of the political pamphlet and essay, but the leading genre of the Enlightenment became the novel. Poetry and the heroic age of Shakespeare gave way to the prose age of the essayists and novelists. The prose style became clear, graceful and polished. The poets of the period did not deal with strong human passion, they were more interested in the problems of everyday life, and discussed things in verse.
- b) the hero of the novel was no longer a prince but a representative of the middle class. This had never taken place before. So far, common people had usually been depicted as comic characters. They were considered incapable of rousing admiration or tragic compassion.
- c) literature became very instructive: problems of good and evil were set forth. Writers tried to teach their readers what was good and was bad from their own points of view. They mostly attacked the vices of the aristocracy and many of them praised the virtues of the then progressive bourgeois class.

### **3.Periods in the Literature of the Enlightenment.**

The literature of the age of the Enlightenment may be divided into three periods:

**The first period** lasted from the Glorious Revolution (1688-1689) till the end of the seventeenth century. It is characterized by classicism in poetry. The greatest follower of the classic style was Alexander Pope. Alongside with this high style there appeared new prose literature, the essays of Steele and Addison and the first realistic novels written by Defoe and Swift. Most of the writers of this time wrote political pamphlets, but the most skillful and competent came from the pens of Defoe and Swift.

**The second period** of the Enlightenment was the most mature period. It embraces the forties and the fifties of the 18th century. It saw the development of the realistic social novel represented by Richardson, Fielding and Smollett.

**The third period** refers to the last decades of the century. It is marked by the appearance of a new trend: Sentimentalism, typified by the works of Goldsmith and Sterne. This period also saw the rise of realistic drama (Sheridan) and the revival of poetry.

### **Activities**

The new ways of thinking developed during the Scientific Revolution began to extend into other areas of life beyond that of just science. Scholars and philosophers began to re-think the old ideas about religion, economics, and education.

In France, these social critics were known as “*Philosophes*”. For the most part, they were not professional philosophers, but rather self-appointed critics who believed that it was their duty to think critically. These thinkers were optimistic and believed that they lived in an exciting era of great change for humanity.

#### **Five concepts formed the core of their beliefs:**

*DIRECTIONS: use pictures to explain what you think each means in your own words*

1. **Reason-**
2. **Nature-**
3. **Happiness-**
4. **Progress-**
5. **Liberty-**

## Hobbes and Locke

The Enlightenment started from key ideas put forth by two English political thinkers of the 1600's, Thomas Hobbes and John Locke. Both men experienced hardships in England early in that century (in the English Civil War) but as a result, they developed very different ideas about government and human nature.



Thomas Hobbes expressed his views in a book called *Leviathan*. The horrors of the English Civil war convinced him that all humans were selfish and wicked.



John Locke wrote his views in a book called *The Two Treatises on Government*. Locke took on a more positive view of human nature. He believed that all people are born with three natural rights- life, liberty, and property.

**With a partner, examine the views of Locke and Hobbes and decide who you agree with more.**

**Why do people join society?**

**Hobbes**

When men live without common power (order in society) to keep them all in order, they are in a condition which is called war... every man against every man. In such conditions, there is fear of danger, violent death, and the life of men is poor, nasty, brutish, and short.

**Locke**

The reason men enter into society is the preservation of their property; and the reason they make a government is so laws can be made, and rules set, to limit the power of every member of society.

**Explain each view of Locke and Hobbes in your own words:**

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**We agree more with... (include your reason in the box)**

<b>Hobbes</b>	<b>Locke</b>

**The Ideal Government**

Hobbes- *The Social Contract*

The only way to create a government is to give the power and strength to one man... men will give up their right of governing oneself to this man. This is more than just giving up their individuality; it is the real unity of them all. This done, so united in one person, is called a commonwealth.

Locke- *Protection of the peoples Natural Rights*

Whenever the government tries to take away the property of the people, or to reduce them to slavery, they put themselves into a state of war with the people who are then freed from any further obedience. People are right to put the laws in the hands of a government which will protect their rights.

**Explain each view of Locke and Hobbes in your own words:**

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**We agree more with... (include your reason in the box)**

<b>Hobbes</b>	<b>Locke</b>







*Discussion: Who ideas most reflects our government in America today: Hobbes or Locke?*

Why?

**What would Locke and Hobbes think of us today?**

Look at the different issues below and with your group, decide how Locke and Hobbes would answer the question.

Issue	Hobbes	Locke
<p>1. Should there be a military draft?</p> 		
<p>2. Should the government censor obscenity and violence in our music and movies?</p> 		
<p>3. Should the police use any means necessary to prevent crime?</p> 		
<p>4. Should the government eavesdrop on our phone calls, text messages, and email in order to prevent terrorism?</p> 		

## *Lecture VIII*

### *The Romantic Period*

**Outline:**

1. **Historical Background.**
2. **English Romantic Poetry**

1. The second half of the 18th century witnessed the rise of political, economic and social forces that produced some of the most radical changes ever known in history. The age of revolution began in America and swept across Western Europe. The thirteen American colonies broke from the British Empire and formed the independent nation, the United States of America.

**The American Revolution** was a political upheaval that started in 1765 as the Americans rejected the authority of Parliament to tax them without elected representation. The protests culminated in the **Boston Tea Party of 1773**, when the entire supply of tea sent by the East India Company was destroyed by the demonstrators in Boston Harbor. In 1774 the Patriots suppressed the Loyalists and expelled all royal officials. Each colony now had a new government that took control. The British responded by sending combat troops to re-establish royal control. Through the Second Continental Congress (a convention of delegates from the 13 colonies that started meeting

in the summer of 1775, in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania) the Thirteen Colonies fought the British in the American Revolutionary War, or the **American War of Independence**, 1775–83. As a result European powers recognized the independence of the United States.

The French Revolution started on July 14, 1789, with the storming of the Bastille.

**The Bastille** was a fortress in Paris, known formally as the *Bastille Saint-Antoine*. It was used as a state prison by the kings of France. It was stormed by a crowd on 14 July 1789 in the French Revolution, becoming an important symbol for the French Republican movement, and was later demolished and replaced by the *Place de la Bastille* (a square in Paris)

It was a mass uprising against the absolute power of the king and the privileges of the upper classes. The rebellion was carried out in the name of *liberty, equality and fraternity*. In reality it led to the loss of liberty, dictatorship and nationalism. To crush the resistance to the new order thousands of people were executed. France was governed under a dozen of different constitutions as a republic, a dictatorship, a constitutional monarchy, and two different empires. Subsequent events caused by the revolution included the Napoleonic wars and the restoration of the monarchy.

Britain waged the war against Napoleon. Napoleon's navy was defeated by England at the Battle of Trafalgar in 1805. In 1815 Napoleon's armies were beaten by British forces at Waterloo, Belgium.

Many changes in the English life were caused by the Industrial Revolution.

By 1800 Britain was the most industrialized country in the world. Various factors contributed to this success: cheap raw materials were brought from the colonies; the Bank of England started to operate around the country; the transport system was developed; coal provided a cheap source of energy. Factories sprang up all over the country. Different cities specialized in certain goods - Manchester produced cotton, Sheffield concentrated on steel cutlery and Birmingham became the centre of light engineering.

The cities became overcrowded. Despite the economic improvements most people continued to live and work in dreadful conditions. The majority of workers, including women and children, slaved for long hours on miserable pay. They lived in overcrowded slums where sanitation was poor or non-existent. Diseases and epidemics became a common feature of everyday life.

The social and economic difficulties were neglected by the government. Those who were troubled by the exploitation of workers and the degradation of the cities sympathized with the ideals of the American and French Revolutions. They often supported the workers' protests. From 1811 to 1817, textile artisans came together to destroy the machines which were threatening their livelihood in what were known as the '*Luddite*' riots. An agricultural variant of Luddism, centering on the breaking of threshing machines, occurred during the widespread *Swing Riots* of 1830 in southern and eastern England.

Although the origin of the name **Luddite** ( is uncertain, a popular theory is that the movement was named after **Ned Ludd**, a youth who allegedly smashed two stocking frames in 1779, and whose name had become emblematic of machine destroyers. The name evolved into the imaginary General Ludd or King Ludd, a figure who, like Robin Hood, was reputed to live in Sherwood Forest.

A high point in the protest movement was a demonstration at St Peter's Field, Manchester, 1819, against the rise in the price of bread, caused by a ban on the import of foreign corn. Eleven people were killed by the army in what is now known as the Peterloo Massacre (or the Battle of Peterloo to rhyme with 'Waterloo'). The ruling classes of England were afraid that the revolution would spread across the Channel. Any attempts on the part of the poor to protest were suppressed by repressive measures. The army had sometimes to be called in to keep law and order. Usually the protests took the form of 'mob' violence and were never sufficiently well organized to present a real threat. The conservatives in England felt they had saved their country from chaos, and the supporters of the Revolution felt betrayed and disappointed.

## 2.English Romantic Poetry

English Romantic poets rebelled against the accepted conventions of the Neo-classical literature of the first half of the 18th century. Although some of the Romantics adapted the classical forms (for example, *ode*) and included the elements of Greek mythology in their works, they rejected the idea of imitation as too restrictive of creative imagination.

**Ode** is an elaborately structured poem praising or glorifying an event or individual, describing nature intellectually as well as emotionally. There are two distinctive features of the ode: it uses heightened, impassioned language; and addresses some object. The ode may speak to objects (an urn), creatures (a skylark, a nightingale), and presences or powers (beauty, autumn, the west wind). The speaker first invokes the object and then creates a relationship with it, either through praise or prayer. Unlike the early 18th century authors, who looked outwards to society for general truths to communicate to common readers, Romantic writers looked inwards to their soul and imagination to find private truths for special readers.

The poet was considered to be a supremely individual creator, who gave freedom to his creative spirit. In 1759 Edward Young published *Conjectures on Original Composition*, where he introduced the idea of **organic**, as opposed to mechanical, nature of composition. Coleridge wrote: "*An original may be said to be of a vegetable nature; it rises spontaneously from the vital root of genius; it grows, it is not made; Imitations are often a sort of manufacture, wrought up by those mechanics, art and labour, out of pre-existent materials, not their own.*" Keats wrote: "*If poetry comes not as naturally as leaves to a tree, it had better not come at all*".

The idea of poetry as a series of strictly defined rules diminished the figure of a poet to a skilled craftsman. In the beginning of the 19th century it was rejected in favour of the idea that creative process is regulated by the laws of its own nature.

In 1798 **William Wordsworth (1770–1850)** and **Samuel Taylor Coleridge (1772–1834)** published the *Lyrical Ballads*. The book became a landmark in English literature, indicating the beginning of a new era. The preface, written by Wordsworth for the second edition (1800), is often considered to be a manifesto for the Romantic movement. In it Wordsworth stated that:

- the poet's imagination can reveal the inner truth of ordinary things, to which the mind is habitually blind;
- poetry is not simply the unrestrained, spontaneous expression of emotions. It takes its origin "*from emotion recollected in tranquility*". The initial emotion is recalled and reproduced in the poet's mind, and when it has been processed through thought, the creative act of composing begins;
- the poet is "*a man speaking to men*"; he uses his special gift to show other men the essence of things.

The six of the most important Romantic poets were **William Blake, William Wordsworth, Samuel Taylor Coleridge, George Gordon Byron, Percy Bysshe Shelley and John Keats.**

Although many of these poets were conscious of a new "spirit of the age", they didn't refer themselves to a movement as a unity of purpose and aim. Only towards the middle of the 19<sup>th</sup> century they were conveniently grouped together under the term "Romantic" on the basis of some common features: *imagination, individualism, irrationalism, childhood, escapism, nature, etc.* Romantic poets attached much importance to the role of the **imagination** in the creative processes. They believed the imagination was an ability of the mind to apprehend a kind of truth and reality which lay beyond sensory impressions, reason and rational intellect. The imagination is an almost divine activity through which a poet gets the access to the supernatural order of things. He recreates and reinterprets the world becoming a prophet to all men.

This new, subjective vision of reality went hand in hand with a much stronger emphasis on **individual thought and feeling**. Poetry became more introspective and meditative.

Autobiographical element and first person point of view, which for many years had been unpopular, became very common and most appropriate for the expression of emotions and feelings.

Some of the Romantics lived in isolation and believed that poetry should be created in solitude. In this they anticipated the idea of the artist as a non conformist. This feeling of alienation later was shared by many writers of the modernist age. Together with the new emphasis on imagination, Romantic poets turned their attention to the **irrational aspects of human life** – the subconscious, the mysterious and the supernatural. As a result poetry became more symbolic and metaphorical.

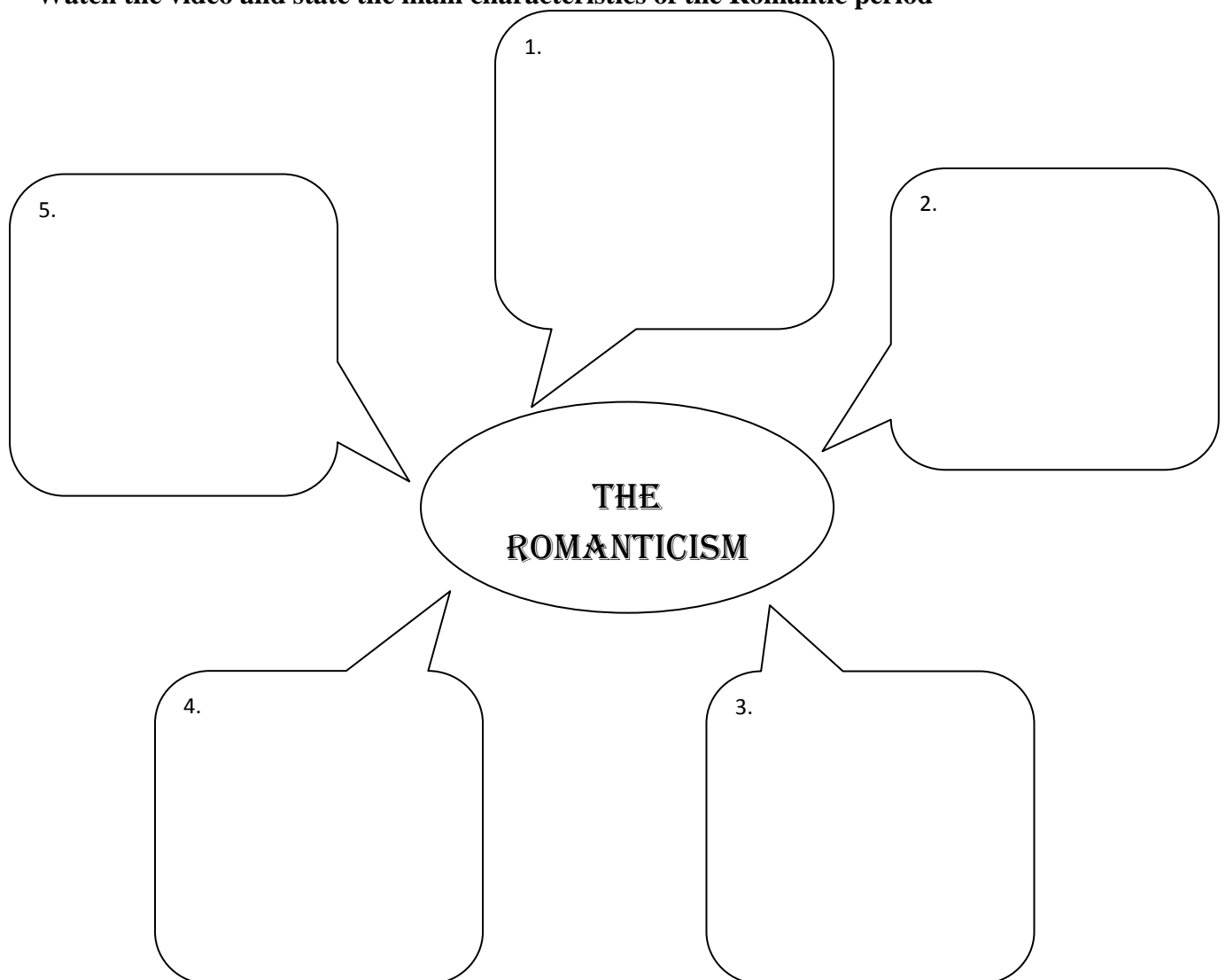
**Childhood** provided another source of interest. Some poets celebrated an uncorrupted, instinctive, or childlike, view of the world. In its innocence untouched by civilization, this view gave a freshness and clarity of vision which the poet himself aspired to. Some poets felt themselves attracted to **the exotic**. Distant times and places became a sort of refuge from the unpleasant reality. The Middle Ages in particular served as a source of inspiration in both form (*ballad*, for example, became a popular verse form once again) and subject matter.

**Nature** provided another stimulus for imagination and creativity. It reflected a poet's moods and thoughts. It was interpreted as the real home of man, a beneficial source of comfort and morality, the embodiment of the life force, the expression of God's presence in the universe. The Romantic poets are traditionally grouped into *two generations*. The poets of the first generation, William Blake, William Wordsworth and Samuel Taylor Coleridge, were greatly influenced by the French Revolution, which physically represented a deliverance from the restrictive patterns of the past.

Poets of the second generation lived through the disillusionment of the post-revolutionary period. George Gordon Byron, Percy Bysshe Shelley and John Keats, all had intense but short lives

### **Activity**

**Watch the video and state the main characteristics of the Romantic period**



## *Lecture IX*

### *The Victorian Era*

#### **Outline:**

1. **Historical and Social Context**
2. **Literary Context**

1. The 19th century in Britain is often referred to as the *Victorian Era* because it corresponds with the reign of one of the country's best-loved queens, Victoria.

**Queen Victoria** (Alexandrina Victoria; 24 May 1819 – 22 January 1901) was the monarch of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland from 20 June 1837 until her death. Victoria was the daughter of *Prince Edward*, the fourth son of *King George III*. She inherited the throne at the age of 18, after her father's three elder brothers had all died, leaving no legitimate, surviving children. Victoria married her first cousin, *Prince Albert* of Saxe-Coburg and Gotha, in 1840. Their nine children married into royal and noble families across the continent, earning Victoria the nickname "*the grandmother of Europe*". The United Kingdom was already an established constitutional monarchy, in which the sovereign held relatively little political power. The real business of running the country was left to parliament. However, Queen Victoria became a symbol of all that was good and glorious in nineteenth-century Britain. She was a national icon identified with strict standards of personal morality. Her simple and virtuous behavior made the monarchy more popular than it had ever been before.

In the 19th century Britain became a world power. After Napoleon's defeat at Waterloo in 1815, the country was not involved in a major European war until World War I began in 1914. The Empire grew steadily, and by the beginning of the 20th century Victoria was Queen-Empress of more than two hundred million people living outside Great Britain. Britain's foreign trade was higher than that of France, Germany, Italy and the United States put together, and the pound was the internationally recognized unit of currency. While Britain was at the height of its wealth, power and influence, large sections of its population lived and worked in appalling conditions.

The Industrial Revolution created a new urbanized society. The process of industrialization quickened as more factories were built particularly in the north of England. Heavy engineering, machine tool production and the highly mechanized cotton and wool industries resulted in ever greater numbers to towns and cities. The rapid growth of cities made them dirty and disorderly.

In 1845, the potato blight caused a famine in Ireland that killed 1.5 million people and forced nearly 20 percent of Ireland's population to emigrate. People drifting to towns had to survive in horrible conditions. They worked in the newly formed factories living in the unhealthy slums built for them hurriedly at a minimum cost. Epidemics were common and deadly. Employers used women and child labor at starvation wages. In the 1850s town councils began to pay attention to these problems. They appointed a Health Officer, built parks and public baths for the population. Towards the end of the century the working man's life improved greatly. A series of political reforms gave the vote to almost all adult males by the last decades of the century. Factory Acts limited child labor and reduced the usual working day to ten hours, with a half-holiday on Saturday. State-supported schools were established in 1870 and made compulsory in 1880.

In the second half of Victorian era people of all classes began to live better. The price of food dropped after mid-century. Clothing, furniture, travel, and other goods and services became cheaper. At the end of the Victorian era, British people were better housed, better clothed, better informed and healthier than any other population in Europe. Political and social reforms shattered the system of classes. The lower-class became more self-conscious, the middle class more powerful and the rich became more vulnerable.

Parliamentary reforms, however, did not affect women's rights. Although there was a Queen on the throne, the progress towards the emancipation of women was slow. For much of the century, married women continued to be simply part of their husband's property. The Matrimonial Causes Act of 1857 granted the right to a divorce to both men and women on the basis of adultery but, in order to divorce her husband, a woman would have to further prove gross cruelty or

desertion. Women who sought divorce for whatever reason were ostracized from polite society. The Victorian family has become a synonym for a strict upbringing. Discipline was severe, corporal punishment was common both at home and schools. Parents were typically distant and unemotional, and the household was a closed environment, with little chance for women or children to have contacts outside their immediate family.

The term Victorian has come to stand not only for a period of time but also for a particular outlook on life. And that particular outlook consisted in respect to the regulations. The qualities of the modern man and the modern woman, especially, were described in semi-religious tracts.

Women were expected to be frail, fainting, prudent and proper. A woman could earn a living teaching, doing social work, delivering the Bible and religious books, working in a milliner's shop or filling other positions in which she could preserve her femininity. For the model man the code prescribed equally rigid rules and prohibitions. Gambling, swearing, drunkenness and sometimes even smoking, automatically removed a man from the ranks of the respectable.

Gambling pavilions and taverns fell into disgrace. Coffee houses gave way to public reading rooms and clubs.

Along with the Industrial Revolution, there was another revolution taking place between science and religion. Scientific and technological advances paved the way for a better future as traditional religious beliefs began to crumble under the weight of new discoveries. Charles Darwin upset the nation with his new doctrine that man evolved from earlier forms through a process of long development. Dispute began between those who believed that Man was created in a day in the image of God and given authority over the animal world, and those who believed Man evolved scientifically.

**Charles Robert Darwin** (1809–1882) was an English naturalist and geologist, best known for his contributions to evolutionary theory. In his book *On the Origin of Species* (1859) Darwin introduced his scientific theory that populations evolve over the course of generations through a process of natural selection.

The new theories together with many political, economic, social and ideological developments changed subsequent thought and literature dramatically.

## 2.Literary Context

As the Renaissance is identified with drama and Romanticism with poetry, the Victorian age is identified with the novel. Though poetry and drama were certainly distinguished, it was the novel that proved to be the Victorian special literary achievement. There are several reasons for the triumph of fiction: the rapid growth of middle-class, an improved education system, a fall in book prices, popularity of public libraries, the growth of the number of women readers and writers. Writing became an important commercial activity and novels were written to please the public and sell. The middle-class readership wanted *realistic* novels, where the contemporary world was authentically described and not idealized as in Romantic literature. Romanticism now seemed too abstract and aloof with its mystery and symbolism. The social circumstances had changed. Everyday life demanded a new presentation of the social problems. Hardships and sufferings of the common people were described in realistic prose.

**Literary realism** is the trend, beginning with mid nineteenth-century literature and extending to late-nineteenth- and early-twentieth-century authors, toward depictions of contemporary life and society as it was, or is. Realist authors opted for depictions of everyday and banal activities and experiences, instead of a romanticized or similarly stylized presentation.

The Victorian novel's most notable aspect was its diversity.

**Charles Dickens (1812–1870)** emerged on the literary scene in the 1830s, confirming the trend for *serial publication*. Many early Victorian novels first appeared in periodicals. To bridge the gap between one installment and the next writers had to create highly memorable characters, and episodes usually ended with a "cliff-hanger" technique which is still used in today's soap operas. Writers received immediate feedback from their readers and could fashion their work to satisfy the public's taste. Dickens wrote vividly about London life and the struggles of the poor,

but in a good-humoured fashion which was acceptable to readers of all classes. Charles Dickens exemplifies the Victorian novelist better than any other writer. His first real novel, *The Pickwick Papers* (1837), written at only twenty-five, was an overnight success, and all his subsequent works sold extremely well. He was in effect a self-made man who worked hard to produce exactly what the public wanted. While Dickens exposed the evils of society, he never lost his sense of optimism, and many of his novels had a happy ending with all the loose ends neatly tied.

The happy endings of Dickens's novels satisfied his own and his readers' belief that things usually work out well for decent people. But from the beginning of his career in the 1830s to the publication of his last complete novel in 1865, many Dickens's stories showed decent people neglected, abused and exploited. In his later novels Dickens showed that in the competition for material gain, both winners and losers could be desperate and unhappy. The slow trend in his later fiction towards darker themes is mirrored in the works of other writers, and literature after his death in 1870 is very different from that at the start of the era.

During the Victorian era **William Thackeray (1811–1863)** was ranked second only to Charles Dickens. He was Dickens' great rival at the time. Dickens, with little education and less interest in literary culture, rejoiced at the ideas of democracy and social justice. Thackeray, well born and well bred, with artistic tastes and literary culture, looked sceptically at the changing life around him. He found his inspiration in a past age, and tried to uphold the best traditions of English literature. In his books Thackeray was inclined to use eighteenth-century narrative techniques, such as omniscient narrator, digressions and direct addresses to the reader. Thackeray began as a satirist and parodist, writing works that displayed his attraction to roguish characters. He is best known for his novel *Vanity Fair, A Novel without a Hero* (1847–48), a panoramic survey of English manners and human frailties set in the Napoleonic era. It is an example of a form popular in Victorian literature: the historical novel, in which very recent history is depicted. Thackeray himself distinguished his work from the sentimentality of Dickens. His *Vanity Fair* is a satire of society as a whole, characterised by hypocrisy and cunning. It is not a reforming novel. Thackeray didn't believe that anything like reforms or morality could improve the nature of society. He continually compares his characters to actors and puppets. Thackeray liked people, but he also thought they were weak, vain and self-deceived.

**Naturalism** was a literary movement or tendency from the 1880s to 1940s that used detailed realism to suggest that social conditions, heredity, and environment had inescapable force in shaping human character. It was a mainly unorganized Literary movement that sought to depict believable everyday reality, as opposed to such movements as Romanticism or Surrealism, in which subjects may receive highly symbolic, idealistic, or even supernatural treatment. Naturalism was an outgrowth of literary realism, a prominent literary movement in mid-19th-century France and elsewhere. Naturalistic writers were influenced by Charles Darwin's theory of evolution. They often believed that one's heredity and social environment largely determine one's character. Whereas realism seeks only to describe subjects as they really are, naturalism also attempts to determine "scientifically" the underlying forces (e.g., the environment or heredity) influencing the actions of its subjects. Naturalistic works exposed the dark harshness of life, including poverty, racism, violence, prejudice, disease, corruption, prostitution, and filth. As a result, naturalistic writers were frequently criticized for focusing too much on human vice and misery.

Tess, an intelligent and loving girl, is driven to her death by a rigid, inflexible social system. Jude, a working man who is passionate for education, is oppressed and defeated by Victorian narrow-mindedness and destructive destiny. Hardy's indictment of Victorian morals caused a terrible scandal. His books were burned, banned and denounced. He became so disillusioned and discouraged by the public response that he stopped writing.

The crises of faith and morality which characterizes the latter half of the Victorian period gave rise to an artistic movement known as *Aestheticism*.

The term **Aestheticism** comes from the Greek word meaning "to perceive" or "to feel". It is a late 19th-century European arts movement that centred on the doctrine that art exists for the sake of its beauty alone. It began in reaction to prevailing utilitarian social philosophies and to the

perceived ugliness of the industrial age. Its philosophical foundations were laid by *Immanuel Kant*, who separated the sense of beauty from practical interests. Aesthetes believed that sensation should be the source of art, and that the role of the artist was to make the public share his feelings. They totally rejected the Victorian notion that art should have a moral, social or political purpose, believing that artist should care about form and technique and express himself freely: he should not become the slave of fixed moral and ethical conventions. Decadent movement in literature, or **Decadence**, was closely associated with the doctrines of Aestheticism. In France, decadence became almost synonymous with the work of the

*Symbolists* who wrote in reaction against *realism* and *naturalism*. Designed to convey impressions by suggestion rather than by direct statement, **Symbolism** found its first expression in poetry but was later extended to the other arts. In England, it emerged from the *Pre-Raphaelite* circle, in the poetry of *Dante Gabriel Rossetti*, leading to the work of *Oscar Wilde*, until Wilde's imprisonment in 1895 suddenly ended the decadent episode. Perhaps the most outstanding figure in the movement was **Oscar Wilde (1854–1900)**. His novel *The Picture of Dorian Gray* (1890) was considered daringly modern and highly immoral. It highlights the tension between the respectable surface of life and the life of secret vice. Oscar Wilde was also an outstanding dramatist. He revived the *comedy of manners*. Wilde's plays are characterized by brilliantly constructed plots and witty and polished dialogues. He produced outrageous social comedies in which he laughed at conventional Victorian seriousness by using elevated and solemn language to describe frivolous and ridiculous situations. *The Importance of Being Earnest* (1895) ranks among one of the most brilliant comedies in the history English literature.

In Victorian period literature for children developed as a separate genre. The Victorians are sometimes credited with the *invention of childhood*, partly because they tried to stop child labour and introduced compulsory education. Victorians started to see children as distinct from adults rather than adults-in-waiting. As children began to be able to read, literature for young people became a growing industry.

**Rudyard Kipling (1865–1936)** is also chiefly remembered now for his tales for children, though he was a prominent short-story writer, poet, and novelist. Kipling's best works include *The Light that Failed* (1890), *The Jungle Book* (1893–94), *Kim* (1901), *Just So Stories* (1902), and his poems from *Barrack-Room Ballads* (1892). Kipling was one of the most popular writers in England, in both prose and verse, in the late 19th and early 20th centuries. In 1907, he was awarded the Nobel Prize in Literature, making him the first English-language writer to receive the prize, and to this day he remains its youngest recipient.

By the time of Queen Victoria's death in 1901, Great Britain had become the literary capital of the world. The final blow to the Victorian age did not come until the outbreak of World War I in 1914. For the next four years, novelists, poets and dramatists directed their energies primarily to war. After the war ended, the British Empire was shaken badly by political and social changes. The ideas and popular forms of the Victorians no longer satisfied the radically different society. The Victorian age came to an end around 1916, terminating one of the most fascinating times in English history.

## The Victorians



**Queen Victoria** was born on the 24 May in 1819. Her father died eight months after she was born. Victoria was part of a family of Germans, mainly called George, who came from Hanover. Victoria was christened '**Alexandrina Victoria**'. However, from birth she was formally addressed as Her Royal Highness Princess Victoria.



Victoria's first language was German. At three years old she learnt to speak English and French. Later she learnt to speak Hindustani because she was ruler of India as well.

Victoria didn't go to school. She was taught at home. As well as learning languages, Victoria studied history, geography, and the Bible. She was taught how to play the piano and learned how to paint, a hobby that she enjoyed into her 60s.

Queen Victoria came to the throne when she was only 18 years of age on **June 20, 1837**. Her coronation was a year later on 28 June 1838. She inherited the throne at the age of eighteen, upon the death of her uncle William IV who had no legitimate children (children born to married parents).



At the age of 21, Victoria married her cousin, Albert of Saxe-Coburg Gotha, a German Prince. They married on the 10th February 1840 at the Chapel Royal in St. James's Palace.

Her husband Albert died in 1861 at the young age of 42. She mourned his death for almost 10 years. For the rest of her reign she wore black.

Queen Victoria reigned for exactly sixty-three years, seven months, and two days (June 20, 1837 - January 22, 1901). Queen Victoria is Britain's longest ever serving monarch. Queen Victoria was the first monarch to live in Buckingham Palace.

Queen Victoria died on 22 January, 1901 at Osborne House on the Isle of Wight. She was 81. Queen Victoria was succeeded by her eldest son, Albert Edward, Prince of Wales. He became King Edward VII.

Queen Victoria had 9 children, 40 grandchildren and 37 great-grandchildren, including four future sovereigns of England: Edward VII, George V, Edward VIII and George VI.

Eight of Victoria's children sat on the thrones of Europe, those of Great Britain, Prussia, Greece, Romania, Russia, Norway, Sweden and Spain.

- When was Queen Victoria born?
- What was Queen Victoria's first name?
- How old was Victoria when she became Queen?
- Who did Victoria marry and when?
- Which country did her husband come from?
- How long was Queen Victoria on the throne for?
- What year did Queen Victoria die? Who succeeded Victoria ?

**Did you know?** # Both Queen Elizabeth, the Queen today, and her consort (as her husband is known), the Duke of Edinburgh, are great-great-grandchildren of Queen Victoria.

# Victoria was known as the "Grandmother of Europe" because many of her children and grandchildren married into the royal families of other European countries.

Britain at that time was divided into two categories : ***The Rich and The Poor.***  
Look at this chart to understand better

## *The Industrial Revolution*

During the 1800s the Industrial Revolution spread throughout Britain. Britain changes from a rural society to an urban one. In 1837, Britain was still a rural nation with 80% of the population living in the countryside. Soon new machines were invented that could do what the farmers did in a fraction of the time. Many people were out of work, so they went to the towns in search of jobs in new industries. By the middle of the nineteenth century over 50% of the population lived in towns and cities.

Most cities and towns were not prepared for the great increase of people looking for accommodation to live near their work place. Many people had to share a room in other people's houses. Rooms were rented to whole families or perhaps several families. Often ten or twelve people shared one room. Many factory owners built houses for their workers near their factories. The houses were built close together really quickly and cheaply. The houses also did not have running water and toilets. Up to 100 houses shared an outdoor pump to get their water and share an outside toilet. To make things worse, the water from the pump was often polluted.

The household rubbish was thrown out into the narrow streets and the air was filled with black smoke from the factories chimneys. Dirty streets and cramped living led to diseases. More than 31,000 people died during an outbreak of cholera in 1832 and lots more were killed by typhus, smallpox and dysentery.

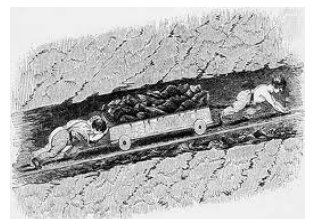
In 1853, with the end of the tax on soap, poor people could buy soap and become more hygienic by washing with it.



### **Working conditions**



Children and young women were employed in terrible conditions in textile mills and mines. Children worked long hours and sometimes had to do dangerous jobs in factories.



**Why did many children from poor families work?** Most children from poor families worked because their families needed the money. The more people in a family work, the more money you have. More money means more food and better living conditions.

Children were much cheaper than adults as a factory owner did not have to pay them as much. There were plenty of children in orphanages, so they could be replaced easily if there were. Many children were killed working in coal mines.

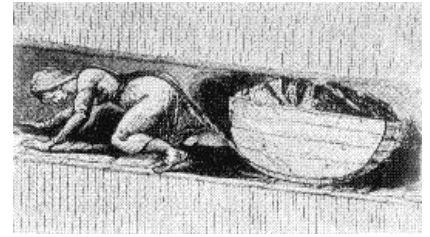
Children were also small enough to crawl under machinery to repair them.

Children were also used for cleaning chimneys in houses. **Chimney sweeping** was a job children did better than adults. Small boys (starting at the age of 5 or 6 years) were sent inside the chimney to scrape and brush soot away. They came down covered in soot, and with bleeding elbows and knees. Children worked for up to **12 hours a day**.

## Read about these children's routines

"I start work promptly at 5:00 in the morning and work all day till 9:00 at night. That's 16 hours! We are not allowed to talk, sit or look out of the window whilst we work. The only day off from work I get is on Sundays, when we have to go to church." **Girl aged 9**

"I am a drawer, and work from six o'clock in the morning to six at night. stop about an hour at noon to eat my dinner: I have bread and butter for dinner; I get no drink. I have a belt round my waist, and a chain passing between my legs, and I go on my hands and feet. The tunnels are narrow and very wet where I work. My clothes are wet through almost all day long." **Girl aged 10**



"I sit in the dark down in the pit for 12 hours a day. I only see daylight on Sundays when I don't work down the pit. Once I fell asleep and a wagon ran over my leg" **Boy aged 7**



Thousands of poor children worked and lived on the streets. Many were orphans, others were simply neglected. They worked very long hours for very little money. To buy bread, they sold matches, firewood, buttons, flowers or bootlaces, polished shoes, ran errands and swept the crossing places where rich people crossed the busy roads.

In 1833 the **Factory Act** was made law. It was now illegal for children under 9 to be employed in textile factories.

**The Mines Act** was passed by the Government in 1847 forbidding the employment of women and girls and all boys under the age of ten down mines. Later it became illegal for a boy under 12 to work down a mine.

### 1844 Factory Act:

- Minimum age for working in factories reduced to 8 years old.
- 8 to 13 years old to work a maximum of six and a half hours on weekdays and only six hours on Saturday
- 13 to 18 year olds to work a maximum of 12 hours a day and the same applied to women.
- Safety guards had to be fitted to all machines.
- Three hours education a day for children.

**1847 Fielder's Factory Act:** a maximum of 10 hours a day is introduced for under 18's and for women.

**In 1891**, a law promised free education and, for the first time, all children could go to school.



There could be as many as 70 or 80 pupils in one class, especially in cities. The teachers were very strict. Children were often taught by reading and copying things down, or chanting things till they were perfect

Typical lessons at school included the three Ls - **Reading**, **WR**iting and Dictation, and **AR**ithmetic. In addition to the three Ls which were taught most of the day, once a week the children learned geography, history and singing. The girls learned how to sew. Schools did not teach music or PE in the way that schools do now.

The day usually began with prayers and religious instruction. Morning lessons ran from 9a.m. to 12p.m. Children often went home for a meal, then returned for afternoon classes from 2p.m. to 5p.m.



**IMPORTANT PEOPLE**

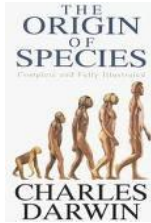
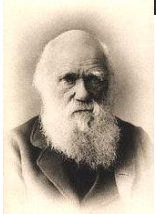
Lord Shaftesbury was a politician who wanted to improve children's lives during the Victorian times. In 1833, he proposed that children should work for a maximum of 10 hours a day. He was also interested in education for working children. He was chairman of the Ragged Schools Union - an organization that set up over a hundred schools for poor children.



**Lewis Carroll** (1832 -1898) (real name Charles Lutwidge Dogson) He was a lecturer in mathematics at Oxford University. He was the author of the well known book



Alice in Wonderland which he wrote in 1865



**Charles Darwin** (1809 -1882) An English naturalist who was famous for his famous theory of "natural selection"

**Joseph Lister** (1827 - 1912) The enemy of germs started antiseptic surgery.



**Robert Louis Stevenson** (1850-1894) An English novelist who created the characters of Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde



**Alexander Graham Bell** (1847 - 1922) In 1876 at the age of 29 he invented the telephone.

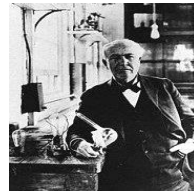


**Arthur Conan Doyle** (1859-1930) He created the character Sherlock Holmes

**Florence Nightingale** (1820-1910) "The lady with the lamp". The founder of modern nursing. In 1860, the first nurse training school opens



**Sir Robert Peel** (1788 - 1850) As home modern police force, unarmed and in blue so possible.



Secretary he created the as to be as unlike the army as



**Thomas Edison** He invented the electric light bulb

**Henry Bessemer** In 1856, he invented a method for converting iron into steel quickly. Ships, bridges and building could now be bigger.

**And Charles Dickens of course!**

**IMPORTANT INVENTIONS**



The steam locomotive – the telephone - the Christmas card - The pedal bicycle - the first postage stamp - the electric bulb **and also the first car!**



**Did you know ?**

- The football league** started in 1863
- 1853 Livingstone** ‘discovers’ Victoria Falls in Africa
- 1861** First horse drawn trams used in London
- 1863** London Underground begins
- 1837 Samuel Morse** showed how electric telegraph worked
- 1899** School leaving age raised to 12
- 1851** Sewing machine is invented
- 1838 Fox Talbot** invents photography

## *Lecture X*

### *The Modern Period*

#### **Outline:**

1. **Historical Context**
2. **Literary Context**

1. The 20th century in Britain began with the death of Queen Victoria in 1901. She was succeeded by her son *Edward VII (1901–1910)* whose reign marked the beginning of the age in which the Victorian strict moral code began to give way to modern influences. The crucial feature of the period was the build-up to World War I. Britain's supremacy and domination of world affairs was now called into question. During the time of **The South African War (1899–1902)** in which the rest of Europe sided with the *Boers*, Britain had to seek alliances with other countries (France, Russia) to ensure the balance of power within Europe.

**Boer** is the Dutch word for "farmer". It was used in South Africa to denote the descendants of the Dutch-speaking settlers of the Eastern Cape frontier during the 18th century. For a time the Dutch East India Company controlled this area, but it was taken over by the United Kingdom. Tension in Europe steadily increased. Germany and Austro-Hungarian Empire, on the one hand, Russia and France, on the other, formed military coalitions. When Germany marched through Belgium, which was a neutral territory, in order to attack France, Britain was dragged into the war. Edward's successor *George V (1910–1936)* saw the outbreak of the **First World War** in history which lasted from 1914 to 1918. It destroyed the bloom of European youth and left deep scars on European life for generations.

The beginning of the 20th century was marked by a crucial change in the intellectual climate. This was a new age of uncertainty. Scientific discoveries such as *relativity* and the *quantum theory* destroyed people's assumptions about reality.

**Albert Einstein (1879–1955)** was a German-born theoretical physicist and violinist. He developed the general **theory of relativity**, one of the two pillars of modern physics (alongside *quantum mechanics*). While best known for his mass–energy equivalence formula  $E = mc^2$  (which has been dubbed "*the world's most famous equation*"), he received the 1921 Nobel Prize in Physics for the discovery of the law of the *photoelectric effect*. The latter was fundamental in establishing **quantum theory** that explains the behaviour of matter on the scale of atoms and subatomic particles. *Freud's* work, beginning with *The Interpretation of Dreams (1901)*, revolutionized people's view of the human mind.

**Sigmund Freud**, born **Sigismund Schlomo Freud (1856–1939)** was an Austrian neurologist who became known as the founding father of *psychoanalysis*. In creating psychoanalysis, a clinical method for treating psychopathology through dialogue between a patient and a psychoanalyst, Freud developed therapeutic techniques such as the use of free association (in which patients report their thoughts without reservation and in whichever order they spontaneously occur) and discovered *transference* (the process in which patients displace onto their analysts feelings derived from their childhood attachments), establishing its central role in the analytic process. Freud's redefinition of sexuality to include its infantile forms led him to formulate the *Oedipus complex* as the central tenet of psychoanalytical theory. His analysis of his own and his patients' dreams as wish-fulfillments provided him with models for the clinical analysis of symptom formation and the mechanisms of repression. He also elaborated his theory of the unconscious as an agency disruptive of conscious states of mind. Freud postulated the existence of *libido*, an energy with which mental processes and structures are invested and which generates erotic attachments, and a death drive, the source of repetition, hate, aggression and neurotic guilt. In his later work Freud drew on psychoanalytic theory to develop a wide-ranging interpretation and critique of religion and culture.

Advances in physics, cybernetics, genetics, psychoanalysis, and other sciences alongside with rich literary output, and the emergence of the motion picture as an art form greatly enriched

philosophical subject matter. Numerous philosophical developments, such as *existentialism*, tended to undermine firm 19th century beliefs in the solidity of observed reality.

**Existentialism** is a term applied to the work of certain late 19th- and 20th-century philosophers who, despite profound doctrinal differences, shared the belief that philosophical thinking begins with the human subject – the acting, feeling, living human individual. In existentialism, the individual's starting point is characterized by what has been called "the existential attitude", or a sense of disorientation and confusion in the face of an apparently meaningless or absurd world. The themes popularly associated with existentialism – dread, boredom, alienation, the absurd, freedom, commitment, nothingness. *Modernism*, being the leading cultural trend of the beginning of the 20th century, first began to be exhibited in the visual arts.

**Modernism** is a philosophical movement that, along with cultural trends, arose from changes in Western society in the late 19th and early 20th centuries. Modernism, in general, includes the activities and creations of those who felt the traditional forms of art, architecture, literature, religious faith, philosophy, social organization, and activities of daily life were becoming outdated in the new economic, social, and political environment of an emerging fully industrialized world. Modernism explicitly rejected the ideology of realism and manifested the deliberate departure from tradition and the use of innovative forms of expression that distinguish many styles in the arts and literature of the 20th century. It brought innovations like the stream-of-consciousness novel, twelve-tone music and abstract art. In music and painting the *avant-garde* broke away from the 19th century concepts of beauty. *Cubist* and *Post-Impressionist* exhibitions in London in 1907 and 1910, revolutionary manifestoes of *Futurism* and *Dada* aggressively challenged Victorian popular tastes.

## 2.Literary Context

Two world wars and an intervening economic depression predetermined the quality and direction of English literature in the first half of the 20th century. The traditional values of Western civilization came to be questioned seriously by a number of new writers, who saw society breaking down around them.

It is difficult to say exactly when the Victorian literary heritage gave way to new tendencies. In the first ten years of the 20th century some writers continued to adhere to tried and tested Victorian traditions, while others began to modify their style in accordance with the changing world around them. While the traditional novel continued to find a wide readership, there appeared more daring forms of expression which were relevant to the complexities of the new age. Among the writers who used the realistic method and traditional forms were **John Galsworthy (1867–1933)**, **William Somerset Maugham (1874–1965)** and **Edward Morgan Forster (1879–1970)**. They observed society very closely and in great detail. John Galsworthy was a novelist and playwright whose literary career bridged the Victorian and Edwardian eras. He is viewed as one of the first writers who challenged some of the ideals of society depicted in the preceding literature of Victorian England.

**The Edwardian era** or Edwardian period in Great Britain is the period covering the reign of King Edward VII, 1901 to 1910, and is sometimes extended beyond Edward's death to include the four years leading up to World War I. The Edwardian period is imagined as a romantic golden age of long summer afternoons and garden parties. This perception was created by those who remembered the Edwardian age with nostalgia, looking back to their childhoods across the horrors of World War I. The Edwardian age was seen as a mediocre period of pleasure between the great achievements of the preceding Victorian age and the catastrophe of the following war.

As a novelist Galsworthy is chiefly known for *The Forsyte Saga (1906–1921)*. The first novel of this vast work *The Man of Property (1906)* was a harsh criticism of manners and values of the upper middle classes: the narrow, snobbish, and materialistic attitudes of people from Galsworthy's own background and their suffocating moral codes. In other novels, *In Chancery (1920)*, *To Let (1921)*, which follow the lives of three generations of the Forsytes, the author

became more and more sympathetic to the world he had judged very harshly. This development is evident than in the author's changing attitude toward *Soames Forsyte*, the "man of property", who dominates the first part of the work.

The most recurring themes in Galsworthy's novels are *duty vs. desire, generations and change, a woman in an unhappy marriage*. The character of *Irene* in *The Forsyte Saga* is drawn from *Ada Pearson*, Galsworthy's wife who had been married to his cousin. In 1932 Galsworthy won the Nobel Prize in Literature. Somerset Maugham became a witty satirist of the post-colonial world. He was a sophisticated world traveler, and many of his works depict Europeans in alien surroundings that provoke strong emotions. Maugham's writing is remarkable for realistic portrayal of life, powerful character observation, interesting plots and an astonishing understanding of human nature. His manner is distinguished by economy and suspense. He avoided verbose sentimentality in favour of a clear, simple and expressive style that makes easy reading. Maugham said: "I have never pretended to be anything but a story teller." The writer's philosophy of life can be described as certain skepticism about the extent of man's innate goodness and intelligence. Many of his novels and stories end with a bitter hint of irony. Maugham always wants the readers to draw their own conclusion about the characters and events described in his works. Maugham's masterpiece is generally agreed to be *Of Human Bondage* (1915), a semiautobiographical novel that deals with the life of the main character *Philip Carey*, who, like Maugham, was orphaned, embarrassed by his physical defect of a club-foot (echoing Maugham's struggles with his stutter), and like Maugham himself would live for many years in search of his calling and a place where he belonged. The novels of E. M. Forster *A Room with a View* (1908), *Howards End* (1910) had exposed the senselessness of abstract intellectuality and upper-class social life. Forster called for a return to a simple, intuitive reliance on the senses and for a satisfaction of the needs of one's physical being. His most famous novel, *A Passage to India* (1924), combines these themes with an examination of the social distance separating the English ruling classes from the native inhabitants of India and shows the impossibility of continued British rule there. A member of the *Bloomsbury Group*, Forster was deeply critical of the upper-middle classes from which he himself came. The structure and style of his novels was traditional, but his revolt against conventions and hypocrisies of society placed him among an avant-garde group of writers.

The **Bloomsbury Group** was an influential group of associated English writers, intellectuals, philosophers and artists. This loose collective of friends and relatives lived, worked or studied together near Bloomsbury, London, during the first half of the 20th century. Their works and outlook deeply influenced literature, aesthetics, criticism, and economics as well as modern attitudes towards feminism, pacifism, and sexuality.

Unlike Forster, **Herbert George Wells (1866–1946)** was one of a new breed of writers who came from relatively poor backgrounds. His interest and wide reading in the sciences led him to write some of the first science fiction novels in the language. *The Time Machine* (1895), *The Invisible Man* (1897) and *The War of the Worlds* (1898) were all outstanding in their ideas which seem extremely advanced for their era. Wells explored the effects of modern science and technology on men's lives and thoughts. In the 20th century the short story became a popular and significant form of writing. One of the most talented short-story writers of the beginning of the 20th century was **Katherine Mansfield (1888–1923)**. She has been seen as an originator of the modernist style, and an early practitioner of *stream-of-consciousness technique*. **Stream of consciousness** is a narrative device used in literature to depict the multitudinous thoughts and feelings which pass through the mind. Another phrase for it is *interior monologue*. The term "Stream of Consciousness" was coined by philosopher and psychologist William James in *The Principles of Psychology* (1890): *consciousness, then, does not appear to itself as chopped up in bits ... it is nothing joined; it flows. A 'river' or a 'stream' are the metaphors by which it is most naturally described. In talking of it hereafter, let's call it the stream of thought, consciousness, or subjective life*. In literary criticism, *stream of consciousness* is a narrative mode that seeks to portray an individual's point of view by giving the written equivalent of the character's thought

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

Mansfield's best known stories are *Miss Brill* (1922) and *A Cup of Tea* (1922). Above all, she is praised for her capacity to pack complex emotion and thought into simple and direct plots. Mansfield was influenced by the works of *Anton Pavlovich Chekhov*. Her stories aim to reveal to the reader some essential truth implicit in the narration. A master of understatement, Mansfield built up each story through the description of closely observed, seemingly insignificant moments. Thus, the complexity of human relationships is shown through everyday concerns of ordinary people. Katherine Mansfield's main subjects were the troubles of family relations, the selfishness of the rising middle classes, the social consequences of war, and people's attempt to find beauty and vitality in their difficult lives. The most important writer to use new literary techniques was James Joyce. He influenced many writers on both sides of Atlantic. The portrayal of the stream of consciousness as a literary technique is particularly evident in his major novel *Ulysses* (1922). Generally regarded as the greatest novel of the 20th century, *Ulysses* is the story of one day in the city of Dublin, written in a framework based on the Greek classic epic of the same name. Joyce wanted to present a day in ordinary life as a miniature picture of the whole human history.

Joyce's novels were paralleled by those of Virginia Woolf, whose *Mrs. Dalloway* (1925) and *To the Lighthouse* (1927) demonstrate the technique of interior monologue to great effect. The complexity of human psychology and the central importance of man's emotional and sensual life are core features of the works of D. H. Lawrence, one of the period's most revolutionary writers. In the semi-autobiographical *Sons and Lovers* (1913), the daring *Women in Love* (1921), and the scandalous *Lady Chatterley's Lover* (1928) Lawrence reveals his characters' deepest inner emotions as they strive to find renewed vitality in the materialized world. Man's salvation, according to Lawrence, lies in rooting himself in his natural instincts. He offers sexual liberation as the means to overcome social and moral repression. As far as drama is concerned the early 20th century is dominated by **George Bernard Shaw's (1856–1950) comedy of ideas**. A man of exceptional energy, Shaw was a master of innovation. His plays aim to entertain and engage the audience intellectually. In many ways Shaw saw the theatre as a vehicle for social reform, and the long prefaces to many of his works offered him the opportunity to express his views. Many of the best plays of the period were produced in Bernard Shaw's native country.

### Activity

Research one of the modern writers' novels.

- Give a five-minute talk to your classmates about the information you found.
- Include information about the following:

<b>Title of the story/the author</b>	
<b>Main Characters</b>	



<b>Summary</b>	
<b>Short description of the main character</b>	

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