

Part-II, 2nd Elective
ENGLISH LITERATURE

Sastri/ B.A 3rd YEAR
Course/Paper.4

LITERARY TERMS AND MOVEMENTS
BLOCK-2



CENTER OF DISTANCE & ONLINE EDUCATION

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NATIONAL SANSKRIT UNIVERSITY :: TIRUPATI-517 507 (A.P)

(Erstwhile Rashtriya Sanskrit Vidyapeetha, Tirupati)

BLOCK – TWO
LITERARY MOVEMENTS
UNIT – 1
Neoclassicism [1660 - 1798]

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1.0. Objectives:

This unit helps you to know about a major period in English literature. When you finish reading the Unit you should be able to

- Explain the background to the emergence of the neoclassical movement in literature
- Describe various features of neoclassical movement
- Analyse different components of neoclassical prose
- Know the emergence of the new form of literature – the novel and the reasons behind it.

1.1 Introduction:

In Block One you have learnt some of the most commonly used terms in English Literature. In this unit you are going to learn about an important movement in English Literature called the Neoclassical Movement. When we talk about movement as it has been already mentioned we refer to the dominant trends in literature of a particular period or time. In this unit we shall also come to know the reasons behind the trends and the effects of the trends on neoclassical writing. Let us know in detail the features of neoclassical period in English Literature.

1.2. General Background:

With the death of Queen Elizabeth I in 1603, the Tudor dynasty came to an end. James VI of Scotland became James I of England and started a new dynasty called Stuart dynasty. When the Tudors were in power, they popularised the concept of Divine Right of kings i.e. king as God's own representative on the earth. But they did not force it seriously on their subjects. James I was a catholic and the majority of the English were protestant. So, James I was not popular as Elizabeth I. Moreover, James I tried to implement seriously the Divine Right of Kingship. So, he was very unpopular. Charles I, son of James I was even more rigid than his father. So, he was very unpopular. Just at that time Calvinists, of which puritans were one sect, were gaining popularity in England and

were in majority in English parliament. It led to a conflict between royalists and puritans. Royalists were defeated. So, the parliament passed an act saying that Charles I was a criminal and beheaded him publicly in 1649.

England was then ruled by Puritan leader Oliver Cromwell. But the people when they saw the beheading of their king could not digest it as they believed him to be God's representative on the earth. Moreover, puritans tried to put restrictions of all sorts of entertainment at all levels of English life. No one was allowed to work on a Sunday. Theatres were abolished as they were seen as sources of immorality. All sorts of entertainment were curtailed. So, gradually, the public opinion went against the puritan rule and disorder followed.

So, naturally, the English began to long for monarchy which for them was a symbol of authority and order. So, Prince Charles, son of Charles I, who had fled to France at the time of his father's death, was brought back to England and made King Charles II. It is often referred to as the Restoration. The Restoration of monarchy was followed by immense changes in general temper of the English people. Puritans and anything they stood for like religious beliefs, morality etc are made fun of. Profligacy, infidelity and immorality became fashionable.

Literature is a social product. It reflects the life of the society from which it sprang. About the middle of the seventeenth century, a change came over the poetic temperament of the English. The metaphysical wave which followed the Elizabethans had exhausted itself and had left literary standards and values confused. The writers of the age began to depend on the past. No doubt, the Elizabethans too were influenced by the Greek and Latin classics but they had mingled it with their own imagination and creative abilities. But these writers lacked the genius of the Elizabethans. Further, there was a very powerful influence of French literary tastes as a

result of Charles II's long stay in French court. The past that they turned to was not directly the Greek or Latin past but a past filtered through France. So, Seneca provided model for the tragedy; Virgil for the epic and the pastoral; Juvenal for satire; Horace with his 'Ars Poetica' for literary taste and criticism.

S.A.Q. How different was the influence of the past on the Elizabethans and the Neoclassicists?

1.3. Precursors

Edmund Waller and Sir John Denham were the pioneers of the new trend which came to be known as 'Neoclassical Movement'. They led the reaction against the fantastic extravagance of the Metaphysical poets. Though not great on their own, they are important as forerunners to the major poets of the day John Dryden and Alexander Pope.

This age is often referred to in three different ways. It is called "Neoclassical Age" as the writers of age imitated and closely followed the classical writers. The age is also called the "Augustan age" because the poets thought their age was as great as the literary age under Augustus, the Emperor of Rome. It is also called "Age of Reason and Good Sense" because it insisted on reason and good sense.

1.4. Characteristic features of Neoclassical Age:

Most of the literature written during the period shared the following characteristics.

1.4.1. Strong Traditionalism or Imitation of the Ancients: The writers of the age exhibited a strong traditionalism. This was a direct result of the powerful influence of France and French literature on the

English. Because of the prestige it enjoyed in the court of Charles II, French ideas of taste and art became the fashion of the day. France became both the model and the judge for taste and culture. The writers of the day began to show strong inclination to imitate Horace and other Latin poets (significantly not Greek poets) whom the French favoured and evolved a number of rules to be followed by the writers in their writings. There were rules for every variety of writing - drama, epic, satire, ode or pastoral. These rules were accepted by the neoclassical writers with lot of enthusiasm.

Further, this respect for rules was in accordance with the neoclassicist attitude to literature. Literature was regarded by them as an art which has to be perfected by constant and long practice with a set of skills. Art, no doubt, requires natural genius or innate talents, but they felt that natural geniuses like Homer and Shakespeare are rare and probably a thing of the past. So, the best poets have to study and practice. The best way to practice was to adopt the already known and tested means to achieve foreseen ends (expected effects) upon the readers. The tested means was to imitate various classical writers par excellence and write in their plan. The neoclassic ideal founded in Horace's 'Ars Poetica' [I B.C] was the craftsman's ideal demanding finish, correction and attention to detail. The neoclassicists believed that even for the best of artful poets literary 'grace' which occurs without premeditation and which is "a grace beyond art" (Pope) comes only occasionally. So neoclassicist poet should strive for 'correctness' ['Be correct' is their injunction] and should observe the stylistic decorum and follow the rules. So, they framed rules of poetry which were essential properties of various genres abstracted from the classics, whose long survival had proved their excellence. They believed firmly that if a work had to endure and survive, it should incorporate the rules. Alexander Pope, a prominent poet of the period expresses his preference for the classical rules in these couplets:

Those rules of old discovered, not devis'd,

Are Nature still but Nature methodis'd.

Learn hence for ancient rules a just esteem,

To copy nature is to copy them.

But many critics of the period were doubtful about some of the rules accepted by Italian and French critics and opposed the strict application of rules such as 'the three Unities' in drama.

This excessive traditionalism and respect for rules also led to distrust of all innovation, novelty and invention. Even though they rated Shakespeare who is very innovative as natural genius, they dismissed the idea of invention and innovation as people like Shakespeare are rare.

S.A.Q. Say whether the following statements are 'True' or 'False'.

- 1) Neoclassicists believed that art doesn't require genius at all. []
- 2) The best way to practice is to imitate the classical writers. []
- 3) Influenced by the French literature the Neoclassicists framed rules for every type of writing.
- 4) A work of literature according to the Neoclassicists will survive only if it follows the rules. []
- 5) All the writers of the Neoclassical period followed rules. []

1.4.2. Intellectual Quality: The neoclassical writers shied away from all extravagance and emotionalism. The Elizabethan literature was characterised by romantic inspiration, vivid imagination, passion, emotion and sensibility. The neoclassical school broke away from the Elizabethan romanticism. They insisted on reason, good sense and above all being correct. So, the literature of the period was wanting in all elements which we often call romantic - emotions, irrational and non-rational ideas and beliefs, enthusiasm for religion etc. Instead of appealing to the heart, they started appealing to the intellect. They presented in their poems restrained exhibition of emotion but delighted themselves in exhibiting wit-expression of a pregnant (full of meaning) epigrammatic memorable

phrase. The poetry was poetry of argument and criticism, of politics and personalities.

S.A.Q. Why was the poetry of the neoclassical period poetry of argument and of politics?

The result of interest in reason along with respect for rules is that neo-classical poetry is characterized by lucidity (clarity in expression), vivacity (brisk and liveliness in manner), correctness of expression, elegance and finish. Thus, form gained more importance than the warmth and passion in poetry.

1.4.3. Subject matter: Human beings as an integral part of social organisation were regarded as subject matter of poetry. In other words, poetry was an imitation (representation) of human life - in the neoclassicist phrase "a mirror held up to nature" ['Nature' for neoclassic poet is not natural scenes but human nature]. By imitating human actions and by giving the imitation an artistic form, poetry is designed to yield both instruction and aesthetic delight/pleasure to the readers. So, the central idea behind neoclassic humanism is 'art for human's sake' and not art for art's sake".

In representing human nature, the neoclassicists decried representing individual predicament but emphasized what human beings possess in common i.e. widely shared experiences, thoughts, feelings and tastes. Alexander Pope describes wit or poetry in his 'Essay on Criticism' to be "What is oft thought but never so well express'd". That is, a primary aim of poetry is to give new and consummate expression to the great common places of human wisdom, whose prevalence and durability are the best indications of their importance and truth. But, some critics like

Samuel Johnson emphasized the need to balance the general, typical and familiar qualities with opposing qualities like novelty, particularity and invention. So, he modified Pope's definition of 'true wit' as the one which was at once "natural and new". He praised Shakespeare because his characters are "species" as well as "discriminated and distinct". But, there was general agreement that general nature and shared values of humanity were basic sources of art.

The common experience that neoclassicists were emphasizing was the experiences, interests of the town life which they believed were the centres of culture and civilization. Whatever fell outside its purview such as humbler aspects of village life, country side, country people and even nature and landscape were completely neglected. If they ever wrote about beauties of nature, they were not real beauties of nature described from first hand knowledge but copied out of Greek and Latin as in Pope's *Windsor Forest*.

Moreover, whoever did not conform to the ideas popular in the coffee houses came to be made fun of. So, satire became a major genre of the day. Another factor which added to the popularity of satire was the belief of neoclassic writers as well as the philosophers of the day that human beings are limited agents who should set themselves only accessible (reachable) goals. They believed in Great chain of Being or natural hierarchy of species. So anyone who tries to go beyond the limits is considered presumptuous. Many great works of the period, satire and didactic attack human 'pride' or presumption to go beyond the natural limits of one's species. So, the neoclassical age saw excellent satires like Dryden's 'Macflecknoe', Pope's 'The Rape of the Lock' Swift's 'Gulliver Travels'.

In art, as in life what was most praised of is acceptance of limits on one's freedom. The poets of the day admired great genres of epic and tragedy but wrote their own masterpieces in less forms like the essay in verse [Pope's 'Essay on Man', 'Essay on Criticism'] and prose [Addison

and Steele's 'The Spectator'], the comedy of manners, satire where they thought they could equal or surpass their classical or English predecessors.

S.A.Q. What is the purpose of art according to the Neoclassicists?

S.A.Q. What forms of literature are favoured by the Neoclassicists?

1.4.4. Heroic couplet : The Heroic couplet is two lines of iambic pentametre rhyming together. It got the name heroic because it was used frequently for heroic plays and poems. It was the most widely used metre of the neoclassical age. It was initiated into fashion of the age by Waller and Denham but was systematised and popularized by John Dryden and Alexander Pope. The heroic couplet as used by the neoclassicists was the closed couplet, in which the sense instead of flowing from one couplet to another closes at the end of the couplet. It became the only measure of the day because it suited the neoclassicist notion of poetry - its intellectual quality and their adherence to rules. Precise and terse it became a natural means of expression for their wit. It gave them that distinctive quality which is often referred to by a phrase from Horace "art that hides art" i.e. to appear free and written at ease when following highly restrictive pattern.

S.A.Q. Why was the Heroic Couplet so popular with the Neoclassical poets?

The heroic couplet in the neo-classical age was used for a variety of purposes for drama, didactic verse, satire, for mock epic, etc., Alexander Pope was the master of heroic couplet. He used it with great skill, variation and delicacy of touch. Within the rigid form of couplet, he brought variety by bringing rhetorical balance with the help of antithesis, zeugma, chiasmas etc.

1.4.5. *Artificial and conventional style*: Extreme devotion to rules and form, a love of superficial elegance, polish and finish and observance of decorum [suiting the style of narration and dialogue to the subject, characters and action so that highest and most serious genres should have characters of high social class speaking in high style] led to the establishment of a highly artificial and conventional style, which became stereotyped into a regular poetic diction. Poetic diction is the system of conventional titles, epithets, periphrases which was recognised as proper to metrical composition in the eighteenth century. It originated in a desire for a language and imagery distinct from those ordinarily used in conversation and prose. Thomas Gray, a poet of the age, believed that "the language of the age is never the language of the poetry". With a view to distinguish the language of poetry from that of prose and also because they thought direct naming of common things unpoetical, the poets of neo-classic age began to choose words which are "at once refined from the grossness of domestic use and free from the harshness of terms appropriated to particular arts". So, in the place of simple words like fish, bird, sheep, eloquent phrases and circumlocutions like "the finny tribe" "the feathered quire" and "the bleating kind" are used respectively. "God rest his soul" becomes "eternal blessings on his shade attend". "From the snowy leg... the inverted silk she drew" is nothing but "she took off her silk stocking". They used resounding words derived from Latin like "refulgent", "irriguous", "umbrageous" etc. Thomas Gray's "Ode on a

Distant Prospect of Eton college" (1747) manifests all these devices of neoclassic artificial style. Further, the neo-classicists believed that only abstraction can express general truths so they used profusely personification of abstract entities which added to the artificial style. Alexander Pope mastered this artificial style and as other poets began to imitate it, the style became, monotonous, lacked simplicity and naturalness. It is exactly against this, Wordsworth and other romantic poets reacted against.

S.A.Q. Given below are some statements. Tick the statements which are responsible for the emergence of the artificial style of the Neoclassicists.

Neoclassicists' love of nature.

Neoclassicists' observance of decorum.

Their use of personifications

Their love of common speech

Their love of elegant style

Their use of round about phrases

Their love of rules

Their love of direct naming of things

1.5. Phases of the Period:

The Neo-classical age can be broadly categorized into three phases - the rise- the height - the fall. The phase of the rise is otherwise called the restoration period. The second phase can also be called the age of Pope or Augustan age; the fall is also known as the Age of Johnson or Transition or Age of sensibility. As the eighteenth century came to an end, there was a gradual shift in the literary tendencies and attitudes and there was a gradual shift towards naturalism and romanticism as evident in the poetry

of Thomas Gray, Thomson and Robert Burns. These ultimately led to the emergence of the Romantic Revival.

Let us now look into the prominent features of other genres in the Neoclassical Age.

1.6. Drama

The drama in the neoclassic age saw three different phases. The first phase was that of restoration drama during the restoration period.

1.6.1. Restoration drama :

The restoration period saw the emergence of new types of comedy and tragedy.

1.6.1 .a). Restoration comedy

The new type of comedy that evolved during Restoration came to be called Restoration comedy or comedy of manners. It drew inspiration from the later Elizabethan dramatists Beaumont, Fletcher and Ben Jonson. It was also influenced by the dramatists of Europe like Moliere (France) and Calderon (Spain). From Moliere the playwrights derived plot and characterization and from Spanish drama they derived the love of intrigue and incident. But, it was the world of fashion with loose morals that formed the backbone of this type of comedy. Some features of the comedy are

1. It often represented high class society - their love affairs and love intrigues. It often reflected the contempt with which the high society held the ordinary standards of morality.
2. There were numerous and intricate plots and subplots.
3. The romance of Elizabethans is replaced by polish and intellectual control.
4. Poetry is replaced by clear concise prose.

5. The effect of the comedy depends on wit and sparkle of dialogue or repartee.
6. The comedy was full of open, unabashed indecency.
7. The characters of the comedy are of ten types, their names indicating their personalities. For example, Sir Fopling Flutter, Scrub (servant) etc.
8. The comedy was unrealistic as they were not true to nature.

William Congreve was one of the most prominent names among restoration comic dramatists. In his hands, the restoration comedy reached its perfection. His hard finish, wit and lack of realistic presentation conceal the immorality in his works. 'The Way of the World', 'The Old Bachelor', and 'The Double Dealer' are his famous plays. William Wycherley, George Etherege were other famous dramatists.

The immorality of the restoration comedy became so notorious that it became an object of fierce puritanical attacks. Jeremy Collier's 'Short view of the Immorality and Profaneness' is one such attack. This led to a change in the pattern of comedy.

1.6.1. b). Restoration Tragedy:

Heroic drama was the most popular type of Restoration tragedy. This was introduced by Sir William Davenut but was popularized by John Dryden. According to Dryden, "Heroic play ought to be an imitation of a heroic poem and consequently love and valour ought to be the subject of it".

Impossible idealistic love in conflict with the honour of hero and heroine is often the subject of a heroic drama. This leads naturally to exaggerated emotions. The characters are often stock characters and are psychologically unconvincing. The characters often use bombastic rhetoric on all occasions; the stage settings are very lavish.

Dryden's *Conquest of Granada*, *All for love* are good examples of heroic drama.

1.6.2. Sentimental Comedy :

Towards the middle of the neoclassical period, a perceptible change came about in drama especially that of comedy. The reaction against the licentiousness of the Restoration comedy led to the emergence of the sentimental comedy which tried to make the theatre as a medium of moral regeneration. Sir Richard Steele and Colley Cibber, were among prominent exponents of sentimental comedy. Some of the important features of sentimental comedy were:

a. It had monumentally benevolent heroes and heroines of the middle class.

b. Dialogue is full of elevating moral sentiments.

c. The hero and the heroine suffer a lot - their sufferings are designed to evoke maximum tears from the audience.

d. Humour is occasional, dull and insipid. The best examples of sentimental comedy are Steele's 'The Constant Lovers', George Lillo's 'London Merchant'.

Joseph Addison's 'Cato' was the only worth mentioning work in tragedy in the middle of the neo-classic period. It was an attempt to introduce to the English stage the decorous and rhetorical drama of the French school. It contains a few rather fine passages but its verification is stiff, characters lifeless.

1.6.3. Revival of comedy of Manners

Towards the end of the neoclassical period, as against the sentimental comedy, comedy of manners was once again revived but without the indecency of previous dramas. Oliver Goldsmith and Sheridan were great exponents of this type of drama.

S.A.Q. List out the difference between the Comedy of Manners and Sentimental Comedy		
	Comedy of Manners	Sentimental Comedy
Dialogue		
Characters		
Humour		

1.7. Prose

1.7.1. Restoration Prose :

Mathew Arnold feels that Restoration marks the real moment of the birth of modern English Prose. Because the Elizabethan prose was too intricate, involved, cumbersome for general use with long sentences, Latin syntax and numerous parentheses. In restoration prose, sentences were short and simple as the parentheses and Latin syntax went out of fashion and the style of prose became direct and lucid.

The reasons behind this change were

1. The spread of the spirit of commonsense and critical temper of mind, which proved bad for poetry but gave new force to prose.
2. Influence of science favoured clearness of thought and plainness of expression.
3. The increasing reading public who came from all walks of life.
4. Influence of French Literature which gave importance to clearness, flexibility and good taste.

John Dryden is considered as the first modern prose writer and the first modern critic. His 'Essay of Dramatic Poesy' is considered his best critical work. Dr. Johnson was another great critic of the age and prose

writer who is known for his 'Preface to Shakespeare' and 'The Lives of Eminent Poets'.

1.7.2. Emergence of Periodical essay

The English essay came into being in late 16th Century and early 17th Centuries. But, it is in the neo-classical period that it gained popularity of the masses with the emergence of a new type of essay called the Periodical essay. The reasons for development of periodical essay were

1. Marked improvement in the power and status of the middle class
2. Culture and politics ceased to be exclusive subjects of the upper class
3. Coffee houses where people gathered to drink coffee became the centres of culture.

Sir Richard Steele, later on joined by his friend Joseph Addison started a periodical called 'The Spectator' in which they published articles on all topics. Addison and Steele set themselves as moralists who would try to break both puritan fanaticism and restoration profligacy. For this they did not condemn or decry them but wrote good humouredly in witty, light and agreeable style and advocated decency and sound sense. They refined English manners domestic and social conduct and aimed at popularizing culture. They discussed philosophy, poetry and drama in an engaging way. Their method was "to enliven morality with wit and to temper wit with morality". An important feature of these essays was that they had imaginary characters who formed the members of a club called Spectator club. These characters though represented individuals, also represented typical upper and middle class groups. Through their actions and conversations, Addison and Steele tried to send messages to the reading public. This led to the critics to believe that in these essays we have modern novel in germ. The periodical essays of Addison and Steele

were followed by Johnson's 'The Rambler' Oliver goldsmith's 'The Citizen of the World' etc.

S.A.Q. What did the essayists try do in their essays?

1.8. Prose Fiction

Other than criticism and periodical essay, prose fiction also received lot of attention in the neoclassical period. John Bunyan was a great name in Restoration Prose fiction. He wrote prose allegories 'The Pilgrim's Progress' and 'The Life and Death of Mr. Badman'. They have lot of dramatic interest because their plain narrative style, dialogues, dramatic power to grasp the ordinary. Their didactic and allegorical form alone prevent them from becoming a regular novel. But they are important forerunners of the novel. Daniel Defoe was another chief prose fiction writer of the day. His 'The Life and History of Robinson Crusoe' is one of the most popular books in English. In his prose fiction he gave such realistic presentation of things that they were thought to be about real people by his readers. His plain and matter of fact tone achieves realism which makes him of the important precursors to the development of novel. Another forerunner of the novel was Jonathan Swift's 'Gulliver's Travels' which is one of the most widely read books in English. It is full of satire which was very typical of the neoclassical period.

Emergence of the Novel

The most important development of the neoclassical period is the emergence of a new genre called novel. Novel means 'new'. The reasons behind the emergence of the novel were

1. The growth of reading public, among which women formed a major part. The genre "novel" which dealt with the domestic sphere became very popular.

2. The novel gave scope to escape the limitations of classicism. In already established forms the writers could not work independently. The novel being a new form gave freedom to the individual genius to work independently.

3 The rise of the novel was part of the democratic movement in England. Other genres like epic, tragedy and romance were aristocratic in content. For, the first time, men and women of ordinary origin and their joys and troubles became the content of literature.

4. The novel gave more scope than drama to explore and treat the motives, feelings and inner life of the characters.

1.8.1. The difference between Prose fiction and Novel

One major feature of prose fiction of previous days like 'The Pilgrim's Progress' 'Donquixote' etc was that they dealt with worlds other than the real one using the eternal truths. The day to day life was disregarded. There was no time sequence nor was there any orderly plot. Novel on the other hand dealt with realistic presentation of the middle class society and their day to day problems - moral or otherwise. Plot was an integral part of the novel and the definite time scheme of the narration was also revealed in the novel. The characters unlike in the prose fiction grew according to the pulls of the circumstances.

Samuel Richardson is credited with writing the first English novel 'Pamela or Virtue Rewarded' in 1748. Pamela was written in the form of series of letters which Pamela a poor and virtuous maid writes to her parents and friends telling them about the problems she faces. Though crude and simple, Pamela is important because it is realistic and provides psychological insight into motives and feelings of the characters.

Henry Fielding is the one of the greatest novelists of the age. He started writing *Joseph Andrews* as a parody to *Pamela* but soon began to wield the genre of novel independently. *The History of Tom Jones* is his master piece. Tobias Smollet, Oliver Goldsmith, Laurence Sterne were other novelists of the age.

One striking feature of the growth of novel is that women began to play an important role in it. It became a respectable profession for them. It gave them freedom for the first time to write about their experiences - the domestic experiences which were dismissed earlier as trivial.

1.9. Summing Up:

In the present unit you have learnt the background to the neoclassical period and the reasons that led to the neoclassical movement in English Literature. You have also come to know about the salient features of poetry, prose and drama in the period. You have learnt to differentiate prose fiction from the novel. You have learnt how the social changes had led to the emergence of a new genre called the novel.

Questions: (15 Marks)

- 1) Give an account of the salient features of Neoclassicism giving examples from various genres.
- 2) Write a note on drama in neoclassical period.
- 3) Neoclassicists were traditionalists. Describe the causes which led to it as well as the results such strong traditionalism.

UNIT TWO
The Romantic Movement
[1789/1798 – 1830/1832]

Structure:

2.0 Objectives

2.1. Introduction

2.2. General Background

2.3. Origin of Romantic Movement

2.4. What is meant by Romanticism?

2.5. Salient features of Romantic Movement

2.5.1. Conflict between Individual and Social Customs

2.5.2. Conception of Poetry

2.5.3. Language

2.5.4. Subject Matter

a) poet-prophets

b) common man

c) emotions and feelings

d) return to nature

e) interest in non-rational

f) insight into childhood

g) interest in the middle ages

2.5.5. Nature of Protagonists

2.5.6. Form

a) Use of High Genres

b) Use of Ancient Metres

c) Symbolism

2.6. General Prose

2.7. Novel

2.8. Summing Up

2.0. Objectives:

This unit informs you about one of the popular movements in English Literature – Romantic Revival. At the end of the unit you will be able to

- Recognize the background which led to the revival of romanticism
- Explain the features of romantic poetry
- Distinguish romantic poetry from neoclassical poetry
- Know the features of romantic prose
- Elaborate the features of novel in Romantic Period

2.1. Introduction:

In the previous unit you have learnt about the Neoclassical Movement in English literature. In the present unit you would learn about the movement which came as a reaction against it. It is called the Romantic Movement. The romantic period or romantic revival as it is otherwise called is believed by literary critics to have started in 1789 [the out break of French Revolution] or 1798 [the publication of Wordsworth's and Coleridge's 'The Lyrical Ballads'] and ended in 1830 or 1832.

2.2. General Background:

The romantic movement in literature was part of a comprehensive general movement going on towards the end of the eighteenth century against formulas, traditions, conventions, tyranny; a movement for individuality and freedom in all aspects of life - politics, society, religion etc. The French Revolution had a major share in the change of temper of the society. It came as a prophecy of a new day and brought a thrill of fresh life through out Europe. It brought into focus, the democratic ideals of liberty, brotherhood and the rights of man. The ideals of liberty, equality and fraternity influenced not only Europe where the conditions of common man was bad but it also influenced England where conditions in

comparison were better and the whole world was filled with humanitarian enthusiasm. It made people rebel against all authority, tradition and to seek liberty in everything. Rousseau's call to go back to nature too had tremendous impact on the people. His distrust of civilization, insistence on returning to nature and call for the rights of man however low he may be changed the mind-set of the people. His saying "Man is born free but everywhere in chains" reverberated through Europe. But the progress of French Revolution belied all the promises of 1789. The Reign of Terror, the rise of Napoleon, Napoleonic wars with other countries, attempts to destroy democracy created disturbance and led to general collapse of faith and hope. So, there is visible difference between the earlier and later literature of the romantic period.

S.A.Q. What changed the attitude of the society in the late eighteenth century? <hr/> <hr/>
S.A.Q. Why do we see a change in the earlier and later literature of the Romantic period? <hr/> <hr/>

2.3.The Origin of Romantic Movement in Literature

The publication of the ‘Lyrical Ballads’ in 1798 was a landmark in the history of English literature. It marked the revival of Romantic Movement in England. The Romantic Movement was not a sudden development but a gradual gaining of popularity of certain ideas and the revolt against classicism. The romantic spirit was visible from as early as 1726 when James Thomson published ‘Seasons’. It was evident in the poetry of Cowper, Gray and Burns. The publication of the ‘Lyrical

Ballads' completely ousted classicism from the time being from the surface of English literature.

The romantic period in the nineteenth century is often referred to as Romantic Revival because there was abundance of romantic spirit earlier in Elizabethan period which was taken to extremes by the Metaphysical poets who succeeded the Elizabethans. As a reaction against the excess of romanticism of Donne and others, Dryden, Pope and other neoclassicists began to insist on reason and good sense and blocked out any sort of romantic spirit from their literature. So, the beginning of romanticism in the nineteenth century is referred to as "romantic revival". In fact, in every age, there is a war between the old and new ideas. So, this battle between classicism and romanticism is a permanent feature in literature.

S.A.Q. What was the original period which had abundance of romantic spirit?

2.4. What is meant by romanticism?

'Romance' is not merely 'love' as we understand in day to day life. In literature it is a particular mood and temper of which strong passion, sensibility, aspiration and melancholy are prominent parts. Watts-Dunton calls it as "the renaissance of wonder and mystery" as romantic spirit also includes a love of the wild, fantastic, abnormal and supernatural. Walter Pater considers romanticism to be "addition of strangeness to beauty". Romantic spirit also encompasses individuality as against conventions. Thus, romantic spirit, on the whole, is "a new attitude", a novel way of looking at life and literature.

S.A.Q. Given below is a list of qualities. Tick the qualities which come under the term romantic.

Passion Reason Supernatural Wit Fantasy Wonder Non-rational
rational conventional individuality freedom aspiration

2.5. Salient features of Romantic Movement:

2.5.1. Conflict between the Individual and Social Customs: The most prominent feature of the romantic age is the conflict between the individual and the social customs and traditions. This reaction against customs, traditions, rules and regulations is very wide spread and lead to the emergence of individualism, of which Godwin's philosophy of anarchism was an extreme form. Literature too is deeply affected by the reaction against rules and regulations and reflected the rise of individualism. In fact, Victor Hugo referred to Romantic Movement in literature as "liberalism in literature". Romantic literature is a reaction against and a break away from rule-bound neoclassic literature.

2.5.2. Conception of poetry

The neoclassicists believed that poetry is an art which though needs talents has to be perfected by long practice and by deliberate adaptation of rules and conventions from classical models. Reacting against this artful manipulation of poetry to fit into a prescribed form, romantics called for spontaneity in literature. William Wordsworth, a leading romantic poet in his 'Preface' to 'Lyrical Ballads' (which is often referred to as his poetic manifesto) defines poetry as "spontaneous overflow of powerful feelings". Though he modified the statement into "emotion recollected in tranquility" the originality, individuality and spontaneity of the poem remained as it results from the deep reflection and thought of the poet and it is free from all rules. What he meant was that the process of composition was a result of prior process of deep reflection followed by second thoughts and revisions. But, the actual composition would always be spontaneous, unforced, and free of all artificial rules.

S.T. Coleridge another romantic poet declares that each poetic work is like a growing plant which evolves its final 'organic form' according to the inherent laws of imagination and not according to any outside rules and regulations. Keats, one of the poets of younger generation of Romantics, says "if poetry comes not as naturally as the leaves to a tree, it had better not come at all".

S.A.Q. Say whether the following statements are True or False.

- 1) Keats says that it is better that poetry does not come at all. []
- 2) Coleridge compares a poem to a growing plant. []
- 3) When Wordsworth says Poetry is 'emotion recollected in tranquility, he means there is no spontaneity in composition. []
- 4) According to Coleridge there is a fixed form for all poetry. []

2.5.3. Language: The romantics went even against the poetic diction of the neoclassicists. In the place of pompous stifled circumlocutions of the 18th century, the romantics made use of "a selection of language really used by men" [Wordsworth]. But to save the material from becoming too prosaic and dull, Wordsworth says he would throw over them "a certain colouring of imagination". Thus the common is present in an unusual way. For example, Wordsworth "Daffodils"

I wander'd lonely as a cloud
That floats on high o'er vales and hills
When all at once I saw a crowd
A host of golden daffodils
Beside the lake, beneath the trees
Fluttering and dancing in the breeze.

S.A.Q. How does Wordsworth wish to make use of the language as used by men in poetry?

2.5.4. Subject Matter

a) Poet – Prophets: Poetry for romantics is not "a mirror of men". In the place of 'man in society' of neoclassicists, individuals became the centre of attention in romantic poetry. These individuals can be either poets or personas. More often than not, the readers are encouraged to identify the protagonist with the poet as in Wordsworth's the 'Prelude', Coleridge in 'Frost at Midnight' and 'Biographia Literaria', Byron in 'Childe Harold' and Lamb or Hazlitt in their essays. We come to know that the Opium eater in De Quincey's 'Confessions of an English opium Eater' is none other than De Quincey himself. This is because, the romantics were intensely aware of their self-ego. They often turned inward for their subject. So, most of the romantic poets declared themselves as poet-prophets. That is why much of the romantic poetry is often subjective. William Blake wrote prophetic books like 'America', 'Europe'. Shelley in his 'Ode to West Wind' pleads the west wind to scatter his thoughts among the mankind and "be through my lips to unawakened earth/the trumpet of a prophecy".

b) Common Man: Violating the basic neoclassical rule of 'decorum' which says that the serious genres should deal only with the actions of royal or aristocratic characters treated appropriately in elevated style, the romantics chose in the words of Wordsworth "humble and rustic life" and "incidents and situations from common life" because they felt that in such conditions, "the essential passions of the heart find a better soil in which they can attain maturity". Wordsworth's Micheal ['Micheal'], solitary reaper

['Solitary Reaper'], leech gatherer ['Resolution and Independence'] and Coleridge's mariner ['The Ancient Mariner'] stand testimony to the romantics' interest in the common man.

c) Emotions and Feelings: Disregarding the conventions of wit, reason and good sense of the neoclassicists, romantics indulged in emotions and feelings. The inner world of the protagonist whether the protagonist is the poet himself or a persona. Shelley in his 'Ode to West Wind' cries out "I fall upon the thorns of life I bleed". Keats talks of his heart ache "My heart aches and drowsy numbness pains" in his 'Ode to Nightingale' Coleridge in "Dejection: an ode" cries out his despair.

My genial spirits fail
And what can these avail
to left the smothering weight from off my breast ?
It were a vain endeavour,
Though I should gaze forever
On that green light that lingers in the West
I may not hope from outward forms to win
The passion and the life, whose fountains are within.

d) Return to Nature: The neoclassicists often ignored Nature in its wild form. For them, Nature meant the symmetrical gardens they had in their houses or nature as described in the classical literature. Under the influence of Rousseau, Romantics went back to the real external nature - landscape, flora and fauna. Nature is described accurately and sensuously. For example, in 'Ode to Autumn', Keats describes the autumn season and its beauty.

Season of mists and mellow fruitfulness,
Close bossom-friend of the maturing sun ;
Conspiring with him how to load and bless
With fruit the vines that round the thatch-eaver run,
To bend with apples the mossed cottage - trees'

And fill all fruit with ripeness to the core ;
To swell the gourd and plump the hazel shells
with a sweet kernel; to set budding more,
And still more, later flowers for the bees,
Until they think warm days will never cease;
For summer has o'erbrimmed their clammy cells.

But the outer scene is not described for its own sake but becomes a stimulus for the poet to engage in the most characteristic human activity i.e. deep thinking and meditation. Representative romantic works like Wordsworth's 'Tintern Abbey' or Keats' Odes are in fact poems of feelingful meditation stimulated by nature and deal with central human experiences. That's why Wordsworth says in 'Tintern Abbey'.

For I have learned
To look on nature, not as in the hour
of thoughtless youth; but hearing oft times
The still, sad music of humanity.

Wordsworth further asserts in his, what he called 'Prospectus' to his major poems that it is "the mind of man" which is my haunt, and the main region of my song".

e) Interest in the non-rational: Reason was given utmost importance in the neoclassical age. But fantasy gained recognition with the emergence of gothic novel during the last days of the neoclassical period. In the romantic age, it caught momentum and more subtle forms and feelings which were above reason began to catch the attention of the writers and poets. They were not only attracted to stories and fairies but to the unseen powers of nature. These made the romantic poetry mystical, removed from the everyday experiences of life and brought in what is called the "renaissance of wonder". Coleridge had chosen 'supernatural' as his forte while writing for 'The Lyrical Ballads'. In 'Ancient Mariner' he

studies unusual states of mind and feeling like irrational sense of guilt and depression and an urge of a guilt ridden man to confess. He also composed 'Kubla Khan' after visualising a pleasure dome in dream under the influence of opium. Thomas DeQuincey also wrote of his experiences and visions in the dreams induced by opium.

f) Insight into childhood: The importance of childhood and its perceptions became a major subject matter for the romantics. Wordsworth calls child "the father of man" in his 'Immortality Ode' because he felt "Heaven lies but us in our infancy." Charles Lamb tries to recapture the feelings of his childhood in his essays. For William Blake, child is an aspect of every human personality - the innocence which is beautiful but ignorant. Blake talks of the necessity of every human being to shed this ignorance and achieve experience meanwhile losing the innocence. In Coleridge, though there is no reference to childhood, he looks at the world with the child's sense of "wonder and novelty".

g). Interest in the Past and Middle Ages: The romantics refused the conventions of the classical models but they did not brush aside past completely. They were fascinated by the faraway and the long ago - the Middle ages. For them they were full of beauty, love, adventure and wonder. In their literature, the romantics tried to capture the medieval atmosphere of mystery, magic, superstition, supernaturalism, terror, love of adventure and romance. Their love of the past led to the revival of ballad form and emergence of the historical novel. Coleridge's 'Kubla Khan', 'Christabel', Keats' 'La Belle Dame Sans Merci' all try to capture the medieval atmosphere; so too Sir Walter Scott's novels.

S.A.Q. Fill in the Blanks with appropriate answers:

- 1) The romantics wrote about themselves in their poems because they were intensely aware of their _____.
- 2) For the Romantics the _____ were full of mystery, magic,

- superstition, supernaturalism, terror adventure and romance etc.
- 3) Wordsworth calls child _____.
- 4) _____ chose to write poems on supernatural elements.
- 5) Romantics returned to nature under the influence of _____
- 6) Reacting against the neoclassical insisting on the reason the romantics indulged in _____ and _____.

2.5.5. Nature of Protagonists:

Whether the protagonists of romantic literature are poets or personas, they are not represented as part of society; but as typically solitary figures in a long, sometimes infinitely elusive quests. Incidentally, these solitary figures are often social outcasts, non conformists, rebels and outlaws like the mariner in Coleridge's 'Ancient Mariner', the old shepherd Micheal Wordsworth's 'Micheal' Prometheus in Shelley's 'Prometheus Unbound'.

2.5.6. Form:

a) Use of High Genres: While the neoclassicists thought human beings as limited agents so restricted themselves to lesser forms of literature; The French Revolution which seem to indicate infinite social promise made the romantics believe that their age is an age of infinite possibilities and new beginnings. The romantics viewed human beings as endowed with limitless possibilities and aspirations toward the infinite good envisioned by the faculty of imagination. Wordsworth says in The Prelude "Our beings heart and home, is with infinitude and only there" and their desire is for "Something even more about to be". Blake declares, "Less than everything cannot satisfy man". What was 'Pride' for the neoclassicists was a mode of triumph even in failure for the romantics. So we find romantics attempting things great. Wordsworth's 'Prelude' is a long epic-length spiritual autobiography. Blake wrote many prophetic

visionary epics like France, America etc. Shelley wrote 'Prometheus Unbound' based on Greek drama. Keats' 'Hyperion' is a Miltonic epic.

b) Use of Ancient Metres: Another noticeable feature regarding form is that, a number of ancient metres like Spenserian stanza, ballad metre, the blank verse came back into vogue because the romantics interests in the past. Significantly they turned back not to Pope or Dryden for literary inspiration but to Chaucer Spenser, Milton.

c) Symbolism: Another important feature of the times is the use of poetic symbolism especially by Blake and Shelley. This idea of symbolism is derived from a view that all objects are charged with significance beyond their physical qualities. Shelley declares "I always seek in what I saw the likeness of something beyond the present and tangible object".

S.A.Q. Why did the Romantics choose to write in higher forms of literature?

S.A.Q. What are the popular metres used by the romantic poets?
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2.6. General Prose in Romantic Period

An important change took place in the sphere of prose - the rise of the modern review and magazine. The first magazine was the 'Edinburgh Review' in 1802 established by the Whig party. In 1809 the 'Quarterly' was started by the Tories.

These two were followed by two important magazines which were broaden and varied in their range and interest – ‘Blackwood's Edinburgh Magazine’ in 1817 and the ‘London Magazine’ in 1817 itself. These magazines had two important effects on the prose writings of the day. They are

(a) They gave great encouragement to essay writing. That's why most of the prose writers of the day were essayists than makers of books.

(b) They also gave fresh field for literary criticism especially for literary criticism on contemporary literature. In these criticisms very often they devoted themselves to the discussion of the respective principles, merits and demerits of old school and the new school of literature.

Fundamental changes took place in the form and temper of prose in the romantic period just as fundamental changes took place in poetry.

(1) The restoration prose which was the beginning of modern prose had lucidity, grace and charm but it lacked variety, warmth, colour, strong passion and deep feeling. The romantic essayists brought in strong passion and deep feeling to their essays. William Hazlitt never argues for his case as Addison and Steele did, he just presents his opinion one after another with a tremendous gusto.

(2) In the place of neoclassic rhetoric based on parallelism, romantics aimed at naturalness of style and language in their essays. The romantic essayists did not imitate the immediate predecessors but went back to pre-Augustan days for inspiration. Charles Lamb, the prince of essayists, as he was called evolved a style which is quaint and unidiomatic which suits very well the subject he has chosen. The romantic essayists would not hesitate even to use the colloquial language. For his colloquial use Hazlitt's style has been named the familiar style.

(3) In the place of public, philosophical and didactic topics, the romantic essayists turned to personal opinions and recollections to historical past of pastoral innocence Lamb's essays are his best biography. Dequincey talks about his addiction to drugs in his essays. Whatever may

be the topic the romantics dealt with; they were touched with their egotism. Thus was evolved a new variety of essay called the personal essay. Hazlitt's 'Table-talk', Lamb's 'Essays of Elia' and Dequincey's 'An Autobiography of an Opium Eater' are some of the important essays of the age.

S.A.Q. Fill in the Gaps and show the differences between Restoration Prose and Romantic Prose

	Restoration Prose	Romantic Prose
Quality	Lucidity, grace & charm	
Style		Quaint and Unidiomatic
Topics		

2.7. The Novel in the Romantic Period

The novel in the romantic period took a few more steps ahead as it gained in variety and richness of form. The neoclassical novelists tended to observe action from a distance. But, towards the close of the neoclassical period a new form of romance-the gothic novel made an appearance which was psychologically oriented and sometimes treated emotions quite minutely. It was full of terrors especially the fear that rational individuality would be overwhelmed. Horace Walpole 'The Castle of Oranto' (1765) began the vogue followed by several like Ann Radcliffe's 'Mysteries of Udolpho' (1794) Charles Maturin's 'Melmoth the Wanderer' (1820) are important. The gothic novel had in it several strands among which fascination for the Middle Ages and a sense of oppressiveness of confining social conventions are typically romantic.

The Gothic novel gradually led to the emergence of historical novel or romance. Sir Walter Scott is said to have created the historical novel. The obvious requirement of a historical novel is that it is set in the

past. But its past is different from the past of the gothic novel. The gothic novel uses the past to evoke the terror and avoid the present but Scott's novels were rooted in history and the periods in which he set his novels were very significant in history. He tried to show in his novels of recent past like 'Waverley' how people are conditioned by the historical and political circumstances of their birth. In his medieval novels Scott rescued the middle ages from the obscurantism of the Gothic novel by replacing them with the idealism, faith, nobility and chivalry of the middle ages. Thus, a romantic character in Scott's novel full of idealism seeks to impose the ideas on the real world bringing together realism and romanticism.

S.A.Q. How different is the past as used in the Gothic Novel from the past as used in the Historical novel?

The romantic element in the novel was countered by currents away from the romantic especially in the novels of Jane Austen who studied neither the past nor the far away but human nature as manifested in an ordinary English setting in her novels such as the 'The Pride and Prejudice', 'Emma' etc. Presented in realistic settings her novels do not indulge emotions. Instead the emotions are muted. As her novels are embodied in comic spirit, we get only glimpses of the deep sense of pathos and tragedy. She like Henry Fielding designs her study on definite intellectual lines but expounds it in purely artistic terms.

So, the novel in the romantic period was an expanding genre, with ever increasing popularity showing rather contrasting currents of romanticism and realism.

2.8. Summing Up:

In this Unit you have come to understand the various features of the Romantic Revival in English Literature. You have also learnt the causes behind the revival of Romanticism. You have by now been able to distinguish the neoclassical view of literature and the romantics' view of literature. You have also understood how different is the romantic prose from neoclassical prose.

Questions (15 Marks)

- 1) What was the attitude of Romantics to poetry and what are the features of their poetry?
- 2) In what way does the prose of the Romantic period reflect its general attitude?
- 3) Romantic Poetry is a reaction against the poetry of Neoclassical Period – comment.

UNIT – THREE

The Victorian Period

Structure:

3.0. Objectives

3.1. Introduction

3.2. Background to the Literature of the Period

3.2.1. Industrial Revolution

3.2.2. Counter Movements

3.3. Victorian and Victorianism

3.4. Victorian Poetry

3.5. Features of Early Victorian Poetry

3.5.1. Loss of Faith

3.5.2. Social Issues

3.5.3. Interest in the Past

3.5.4. Preference for Narrative Poems

3.5.5. Dramatic Monologue

3.5.6. Nature

3.5.7. Influence of Keats

3.6. Later Victorian Poetry

3.6.1. Pre-Raphaelites

3.7. Victorian Novel

3.7.1. Characteristics of Victorian Novel

3.8. Early Victorian Novel

3.8.1. Condition of England

3.8.2. Shift from Action to Character

3.8.3. London

3.8.4. Form

3.9. Later Victorian Novel

3.9.1. Novel as Craft

3.9.2. Shift to Village

3.9.3. New Element

3.9.4. Characters

3.9.5. Themes

3.10. Victorian Prose

3.11. Victorian Drama

3.12. Summing Up

3.0. Objectives:

This Unit elaborates on one of the richest periods in English Literary History. It informs you about the development of various genres during the period. At the end of the unit you should be able

- Understand the socio, economic and cultural issues which influenced the writings and temperament of the writers and their writings.
- Explain the various features of poetry of the period
- Distinguish the unique qualities of the novel of the period
- Know the features of the prose of the period

3.1. Introduction:

In the previous unit you have learnt about a very prominent period in the history of English Literature. You are going to know another important period in English Literature which followed it and is equally important – the Victorian Period. The Victorian period is rather long, varied and complex period and so, to talk of general characteristics of the period is very difficult. The literature of the period is wonderfully rich and astonishingly varied as the spirit of the age was influenced by a diversity of elements.

3.2. Background to the Literature of the Period:

The Victorian period was marked by conflicting movements which carried crusades and counter crusades, attacks and counter attacks on one another. Further, movements and ideologies as diverse as Rationalism, Evangelicalism, Utilitarianism, the Oxford movement, Christian socialism, which had no connection what so ever had come together for same object at the same time attacking one another. Each one of these attacks and counter attacks was an attempt to support or counter the force of industrialization which had come to shape the life in the Victorian period.

3.2.1. Industrial Revolution: Industrial revolution was not a new thing to be seen for the first time in the Victorian period. It had started in the romantic period itself. But, the romantics were in the initial stages of the industrial revolution and so could ignore it. But by the Victorian period, the industrial revolution was in full flowering and the Victorians reaping both its good as well as bad effect could no longer ignore it.

a) Industrial revolution was the result of practical application of science which had resulted in far reaching changes in day to day life. With the introduction of steam engine, telegraph, telephone, life had changed like never before. This had led to a growing tendency to look at various aspects of life with only their utility in view. Industrial owners, and a large section of the middle class which was becoming richer day by day came under the heavy influence of the utilitarianism. This materialistic world view was furthered by the expansion of the English empire through colonization which led to unprecedented prosperity to England and gave certain sections of the society unlimited optimism about themselves and their country. This materialistic attitude had come into conflict with the existing Christian/religious world view. The result was a number of intellectuals of the time grouped themselves under two categories - rationalists and agnostics supporting industrialisation and laissez-faire (market economy); and conservatives and humanitarians

fighting against it. Yet both groups were moved to action by their moral sense and social conscience and by their desire to make their society a better place to live.

b) Although the theory of Utilitarianism was propounded by Jeremy Bentham in the romantic period itself, it came into operation in the Victorian period under utilitarian thinkers like John Stuart Mill and other thinkers like Charles Darwin and Herbert Spencer whose theories supported utilitarianism. The theory of utility can be summed up as "the greatest happiness of the greatest number that is the measure of right and wrong" i.e. the morality of an act (how far an act is good or evil) is determined by how many people would be benefitted by it disregarding the fact what we do is morally right or wrong or what does an individual or a minority would want.

c) A popular movement called Chartism agitated for electoral reforms and this led to the lower classes getting more representation in the parliament by the reform bill of 1832. So, the class distinctions which were very rigid began to develop cracks, helping those who were converting the old England of aristocracy into a new England of industrial democracy.

d) The progress of science which led to Industrial Revolution, affected not only political, economic and social spheres but affected religion, ethics and spirituality. This was done by theories of scientists and agnostic thinkers like Charles Darwin, Herbert Spencer, T.H.Huxley. Darwin's theory of evolution "the survival of the fittest" [which also supported utilitarianism] led to revolutionary ideas about man, nature, society and universe, throwing doubt on the existence of God or any supernatural authority. It promoted a mechanical approach to matters of human soul, leading to an upheaval of thought and spiritual struggle and dilemma for some sensitive individuals.

3.2.2. Counter movements: The above ideas were countered by a chain of conservative thinkers who were essentially religious but who were also conscious of the fact that the grip of religion over the men of England was losing. So, they tried to protect the religion and its values through an ideal of culture which combined the values of humanism and liberalism. They were Thomas Carlyle, John Henry Newman, Mathew Arnold and John Ruskin.

a) Thomas Carlyle decried democracy as well as market economy because they allowed men to follow their own selfish ends. Both were a hurdle in the growth of culture. Even popular education, for him, did not promote culture as it was just an education of the basics and crafts and not the education of the mind. He attacked industrialisation because he felt society was more than mere economic relationship of demand and supply.

b) John Henry Newman the leader of the Oxford movement fought against the evil influences of industrialism which encouraged irreligiousness and grossness, irreverence and non seriousness. Through the movement he tried to revive the position and functions of the church. He also advocated the cause of liberal university education to refine and humanize the industrial society of his times.

c) Mathew Arnold too was worried at the gross, superficial culture of the mass civilization of the industrial society. He also threw light on how the materialistic attitude had affected the culture of the day. Culture, i.e. achieving total perfection by getting to know the best, was not an individual activity for Arnold but a society's concern. He also advocated liberal education for the masses to control the philistine tendencies.

d) Ruskin too talked of the need for humanising the utilitarian values. So, he proposed a philosophy of art; revival of medievalism in literature and attacked democracy and market economics.

3.2.3. Whatever is the philosophy they proposed or the stance they took, for or against industrialization, both the conservatives and the

utilitarians had one thing in common i.e. the desire to change the society for the better and make the layman's life worth living.

S.A.Q. Say whether the following statements are True or False.

1. Industrialisation started in the Victorian period only. []
2. The Middle Classes came under the influence of utilitarianism.[]
3. Darwin's theory of evolution was in conflict with the religious beliefs.
[]
4. Class distinctions became very rigid. []
5. Carlyle believed that education promotes culture. []
6. Newman tried to revive education through Oxford Movement.[]
7. Culture, for Arnold, is achieving total perfection. []
8. Both the supporters of industrialization and the opponents were driven by a desire to change the society for the better. []

3.3. Victorian and Victorianism:

Earlier, critics used to believe that the Victorian age is an age of complacency, unqualified optimism and undiluted confident faith in the progress of man. But recent studies have shown it to be a period of change and growth, complex and contrasting elements affecting it very different ways. That is why the terms 'Victorian' and 'Victorianism' are used in different senses. The word 'Victorian' refers to things and issues relating to the period while 'Victorianism' is a derogatory term referring narrow-mindedness, sexual priggishness, and social snobbery especially of the middle classes. The Victorian age is an age of social interests and practical ideas. Literature as we know is deeply influenced by society and in turn influences society. Therefore, we see realism is a predominant feature of Victorian literature be it poetry or novel.

3.4. The Victorian Poetry

The literary scene during the Victorian period was no doubt dominated by novel. But its achievement in the field by poetry was not insignificant. The period may not have begotten great poets as in the romantic period; it did have a number of poets who not only carried on the poetic tradition in English but also made significant contributions to it.

We see two distinct generations of poets in the Victorian period - the early Victorians poets like Alfred Lord Tennyson, Robert Browning and the later Victorian poets called the Pre-Raphaelites likes D.G. Rossetti, William Morris and Swinburne.

3.5. Features of Early Victorian Poetry

If Wordsworth and Coleridge had to address themselves primarily to the questions of poetic diction, the early Victorian poets addressed themselves mainly not to the medium but to the matter of poetry. Being very conscious of the problems facing his society, the Victorian poet could not remain in isolation like the romantic poets. Poetry for them in the words of Mathew Arnold is "criticism of life". It is the duty of the poet to stay away from partisan attitude and remain disinterested and arrive at the truth in terms of experience of life than as a didactic exposition of a moral or precept. Tennyson, Browning and Arnold adopted both direct as well as indirect methods of offering "criticisms of life".

3.5.1. Loss of faith/crisis of faith/Problem of faith

One of the most trying problems faced by the Victorians was what came to be called the loss of faith or crisis of faith. The doctrine of evolution proposed by Darwin completely revolutionized all ideas about nature, man and society which resulted in an upheaval of thought. The new theories of science came into conflict with the old faith of Christianity. The conservative Victorians not only habitually clung to

Christian faith but also believed that the ills of industrialization could be remedied only through faith. But the meticulous documentation with which Darwin and other scientists presented their theories could not but make dents in their faith. Darwin proved that instead of being a chosen creation of God, man was just a species coming after a series of modifications to earlier species; it is not the good or the evil that survived but the fittest survived. So questions were raised about the existence of God, soul, immortality, self and its identity, nature and the Universe. This crisis got reflected in all the major works of the early Victorian poets, but the expression takes different shapes in different poets.

The best poetic expression to this loss of faith is given by Mathew Arnold in both his subjective as well as objective poems like 'Dover Beach', 'Empedocles on Etna', 'Scholar Gypsy'. He felt the loss acutely and experienced and expressed loneliness, uncertainty, insecurity, restlessness, instability because of the loss. For example in "The Dover Beach" he says

earth's shore
furl'd;
roar,
edges drear

The sea of faith
Was once, too, at the full and round
Lay like the folds of a bright girdle
But now I only hear
Its melancholy, long withdrawing
Retreating, to the breath
of the night-wing, down the vast

And naked shingles of the world
To him the world without faith is a "Darkling plain where ignorant armies clash by night". Tennyson in his 'In Memoriam', which is a tribute to a dear friend who died, also mentions problem of faith. Tennyson was

aware of the scientific thinking as well as the need to affirm faith overcoming the tortuous suffering and doubt. While expressing his private grief moves on to issues of larger significance and tries to overcome the suffering and doubt by this affirmation "the mills of God run slowly but surely". Browning too was aware of the problem as he makes the girl in "Pippa Passes" assert through her song "The Year's at the spring God's in his heaven, All is well with the world". Interestingly, she is overheard by four parties who are at that time involved in tragedy or near tragedy.

S.A.Q.1. What is loss of faith?

S.A.Q. 2. Which poet gave expression to the loss of faith in his poetry?

S.A.Q. Who affirms faith in his poetry?

3.5.2. *Social issues*

Apart from the loss of faith, the early Victorian poets addressed themselves to other social issues and material realities of the day. Tennyson in his "Lady of Shalott" makes the lady watch in her mirror "the shadows of the outside world". His 'Princess' actually deals with women's higher education against the back drop of medievalism. Though intensely aware of the problems brought in by the progress of science, his 'Locksley Hall' presents his acceptance of science and commerce. Tennyson was not alone in dealing with social issues; Elizabeth Barret Browning in her 'Aurora Leigh' accommodated in the frame work of a love story, social and political issues of the time.

Robert Browning, no doubt had portraits of Renaissance priests and painters, dukes and duchesses etc. But these portraits were mundane and material. All his imaginary persons invariably dealt with his ideas, his concerns and his passions.

S.A.Q. What social issues figured in the Victorian poetry?

3.5.3. Interest in the past or retrospective medievalism

Another feature very common among the early Victorian poets was to look to past not to escape the present but to present indirectly the values, dilemmas and problems of the contemporary world through past and also to offer an ideal for the contemporary people.

Tennyson's 'The Idylls of the King' tells the story of the medieval king Arthur and his Knights of the Round Table but the values it represents are subtly Victorian. So were his 'Morte d' Arthur' and 'Ulysses' where old tales are loaded with contemporary morality. Mathew Arnold used a seventeenth century legend of a German Scholar to offer an ideal of culture, of the wholeness and harmoniousness of personality so much difficult to acquire in the Victorian age of science and industry in "Scholar Gypsy". Arnold contrasts the past and the present in this manner:

O born in days when wits were fresh and
clear,
And life ran gaily as the sparkling Thames;
Before this strange disease of modern life,
With its sick hurry, its divided aims,
Its heads of o'er taxed, its palsied hearts was rife -
Fly hence, our contact fear!

Arnold's 'Empedocles at Etna' and 'Sohrab and Rustam' present the ideals of man hood and gentlemanliness which are meant to provide and ironic contrast to the utilitarian and agnostic ideals of the Victorian era.

S.A.Q. How unique is the Victorian use of the past?

3.5.4. Preference for narrative poems

The Victorians keen awareness of the social issues and concerns and their use of the past to present contemporary world all led to their preference for the narrative poems. This preference for action is emphasised by Mathew Arnold in critical theories also. The recourse to narrative poems may also be due to competing with the novel which dominated literature of the period. Tennyson's 'Maud', 'Ulysses', 'The Idylls of the King' Browning's 'The Ring and the Book', Arnold's 'Sohrab and Rustum' all dealt with narratives and were poems of action. But that doesn't mean that subjective lyrical poetry was completely disregarded. Tennyson's 'In Memoriam', Arnold's 'Dover Beach' are some of the finest lyrical poetry of the day.

S.A.Q. Why did the Victorian poets give preference to the narrative poems?

3.5.5. Dramatic Monologue

One of the greatest poetic achievements of the period is the emergence of dramatic monologue as a major poetic genre of the day in

the hands of Browning and Tennyson. In a dramatic monologue a single person, who is not the poet himself, utters the entire poem in a specific situation at a critical moment. The speaker addresses and interacts with one or more people whose presence is felt from what the speaker says. The poem is so organised that the speaker unintentionally reveals his temperament and character. Browning perfected this poetic form and his "My Last Duchess", "The Bishop Orders his Tomb", "Andrea Del Sarto" all stand testimony to it, presenting very memorable characters like the characters in the novels of Dickens or Thackeray.

S.A.Q. Who is the master of Dramatic Monologue? <hr/> <hr/>
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3.5.6. *Nature*

If the romantic age was an age of idealism, the Victorian period was an era of realism. So, one experiences a shift from solitude to society, concepts to issues, from spiritualism to pragmatism and from Nature to Industry.

Because of the loss of faith, because of the change that has come about in the attitude of the poets, nature which was once kind, sublime, an image of the universal spirit for the romantics became neutral for the Victorians. The difference is evident when we compare two poems written on Dover beach one by Wordsworth and another by Arnold. First let us take "By the Sea" a poem by Wordsworth -

It is a beautiful evening, calm and free;
The holy time is quiet as a nun
Breathless with adoration; the broad sun
Is sinking down in its tranquillity;
The gentleness of heaven is on the sea;
Listen ! The mighty being is awake,

And doth with his eternal motion make
A sound like thunder - everlastingly,

Mathew Arnold's "Dover Beach" no doubt starts as serenely as the poem
of Wordsworth

The Sea is calm to night
The tide is full, the moon lies fair
Upon the straits

but gradually there is change in the tone of the poet as he begins to see in
it a reflection and reminder of his own spiritual conflict.

Listen! You hear the grating roar
Of pebbles which the waves draw back and fling,
At their return, up the high strand,
Begin, and cease, and then again begin,
With tremulous cadence slow and bring
The eternal note of sadness in

Gone is the organic relationship between man and nature seen in the
romantics. In fact it becomes symbolic of the alienation of the poet from
nature. The minute, sensitive pictorial description of nature still continues
in the Victorian period especially in the poems of Tennyson but it is no
longer held on the high pedestal as before. It forms just a background or
setting to explore the issues.

S.A.Q. How different is the nature as seen by the romantics and as seen by
the Victorians?

3.5.7 Influence of Keats

Keats among the romantics was great influence on Victorian poets. His tradition of rich texturing and ornate melodious verse was followed closely by Tennyson among the Victorian poets. Tennyson in his "Lotus-Eaters" writes

Music that gentler on the spirit lies,
Than tired eyelids upon tired eyes.

3.6. Features of later Victorian Poetry

Unlike the early Victorian poets, the later Victorians were not burdened with larger social issues like utilitarianism or industrialization, faith or agnosticism, socialism or market economy. They turned instead to pursuit of art. The most prominent among the later Victorians were the Pre-Raphaelites. In 1848, a group of English artists including D.G. Rossetti, William Holman Hunt and John Millais started a Pre-Raphaelite brotherhood. Their aim was to replace the reigning academic style of painting by returning to the truthfulness, simplicity and spirit of devotion found in painters before Raphael. As these were equally proficient in literature, a movement in literature developed on the lines of painting movement. This literary movement included poets like D.G. Rossetti, his sister Christina Rossetti, William Morris and Algernon Swinburne.

3.6.1. Salient feature of pre-Raphaelitism are

a) The Victorian England was growing more and more to be a materialistic and utilitarian society. In order to escape the drab and ugliness of the contemporary society, the Pre-Raphaelites turned to the good old days of chivalry, romance adventure, heroism of the medieval times. Rossetti's 'The Blessed Damozel' and 'Sister Helen' breathe medieval atmosphere. No doubt, poets before Pre-Raphaelites have used

medievalism but what makes their poetry unique is how they mingle medievalism with technical skill.

b) Pre-Raphaelites were primarily painters so their poems often presented beauty in a meticulous unfaltering fashion of a painter.

The sun was gone now; the curled moon was like a little feather

Fluttering far down the gulf; and now

She spoke through the still weather

Her voice was like the voice of the stars

Had when they sang together.

c) Pre-Raphaelite poetry was marked by sensuousness as they try to present their sense of reality through evolving various senses. But unlike a sensualist, a Pre-Raphaelite poet mixes the sensuality with spirituality

d) Pre-Raphaelite poetry is known for rich melody as they deliberately sought melody sometimes at the expense of sense the melody reached supreme heights in the poetry of Swinburne as in 'Atlanta in Calydon'

e) Pre-Raphaelites believed in Art for Art's sake in that they appear more related to Keats than to any other romantic poet. They loved beauty and to present that beauty they employed lavish imagery along with use of archaic words, artificial poetisation

f) Going against the prudery and hypocrisy of the period and began to express sexual passion more explicitly. But this sexual passion is often mingled with suggestive symbolism.

S.A.Q. Which of the following words are suitable for the Pre-Raphaelite poetry?

Sensuousness Prudery Pictorial Quality Spirituality melody
hypocrisy

Rich imagery Science archaic words realist imagery art for art's sake

3.7. The Victorian Novel

The novel was already established as a major genre of literature before the Victorian period. In the Victorian period it acquired a special place - it became the most popular form of literature with ever increasing reading public. The magazines made it even more popular by publishing it in a serial form. Writers coming from different backgrounds, different interests, and different orientation to life began to write novels. So, novel became a vehicle of amusement, social criticism and a means to spread ideas of different schools of philosophy, for everyone used the novel to project their ideas through novel so as to reach wider audience. But in the hands of great artists like Dickens, Thackeray, George Eliot and Hardy it became more than a mere vehicle of ideas. Thus, the novel absorbed a very large part of the creative energy of the period.

3.7.1. General Characteristics of the Victorian novel

(1) The Victorian novel, like the Victorian poetry was characterized by realism. No doubt, 'realism' is an inherent feature of the novel which distinguishes it from earlier romances. But there is remarkable difference between the realism of the neoclassical novel and the realism of the Victorian novel. The realism of the neoclassical novel is a matter of general truths while the realism of the Victorian novel (of the late 19th cent.) is a matter of individual authenticity i.e. the neoclassical novelist had the tendency to cast his characters in the general categories of prodigal son, unwise youth, a conservative father etc. while the Victorian novelist like Dickens cast his characters by their singularity and individuality. Further, the Victorian novel, under the impact of science changed from picaresque - giving details of unrealistic, romantic adventures of a picaro - to become more realistic and analytical and presenting the every day life of people not the romantic and the far away.

(2) Though realism was a major feature of the Victorian novel, it also had the romantic element reflecting the revival of the romanticism in the Victorian period. Novels of Bronte sisters like Charlotte Bronte's 'Wuthering Heights', Emily Bronte's 'Jane Eyre' have strong strands of romanticism.

(3) Another tendency which has been noticed during the Victorian period was a tendency for specialisation. Earlier novelists like Fielding, Smolette tried to give a complete and comprehensive picture of life. But, in the Victorian period, certain aspects of life are picked up for special treatment by the novelists. Thus the Victorian period saw the novels of the sea [Fredrick Marryat's novels], novels of clerical life [Trollope's novels] novels of factory life (Mrs. Gaskell's novels). There were subdivisions according to geographical areas. For example Hardy's novels are Wessex novels. Thus, the Victorian novel displayed the varieties of matter and treatment which became an index of its many sided interests and elements.

But, the Victorian novel too like Victorian poetry displayed certain unique features in its early and later periods so that there is marked difference between the novels written by the early novelists and later novelists.

S.A.Q. In what ways is the Victorian novel different from the Neoclassical novel?

S.A.Q. Was there no romantic element in the Victorian novels?

3.8. The Early Victorian Novel

3.8.1. Condition of England: Like their counterparts in poetry, the early Victorian novelists were concerned with "the condition of England". They chose for their themes the specific contemporary problems of the Victorian society caused by the predominance of industrialization and utilitarianism. So, they wrote about them sometimes as satirists, sometimes as humanists and sometimes as moralists. So, we see Dickens addressing the corruption in workhouses, the inhumanity of Poor laws in 'Oliver Twist'.

3.8.2. Shift from Action to Character: The Victorian early novels also displayed a significant shift from action to character. We find the novels of Dickens and Thackeray a gallery of memorable characters who are defined with definite strokes. Though some of them are shown in psychological depth, most of them are given unique personal features such as Uriah Heep in 'David Copperfield'.

3.8.3. London: Another distinguishing feature of early Victorian novels is that they were largely centred on life in London. Dickens' 'Oliver Twist', 'Bleak House', 'Our Mutual Friend' etc., all depict the life of London. Thackeray's 'Vanity Fair' is a satire on the vanities of city life its sham, hollowness, corruption etc.

3.8.4. Form: The early Victorian novel was rather formless. The reasons for this lack of organization was the fact that they were published as serials for magazines first and later on collected to form a book. The novelist was primarily entertainer and reformer so while writing a serial had to keep in mind the fact that he had to retain the interest of the readers from one issue to the next which led to formlessness. Dickens one of the greatest novelists of all times, the most popular, is at times incoherent because he was catering to the whims and fancies of his reading public while writing the novel.

3.9. The Later Victorian Novel

3.9.1. *Novel as Craft*: The later Victorian novelists like George Eliot, George Meredith, and Thomas Hardy were more 'literary' than the previous generation. They had more academic flavour in their writings and more poetic imagination. They showed greater depth of characterization and greater intensity of presentation. They were very conscious about the craft of fiction and wrote novels on deeper passions of life.

3.9.2. *Shift to Village*: The later Victorian novelists shifted their attention from the city to the village. They wrote on the semi-pastoral rural England being annihilated by the utilitarian attitude and industrialization. Example: the novels of George Eliot, Thomas Hardy.

3.9.3. *New Elements*: Though the later Victorian novel continued to be realistic, new elements crept in, which changed the very spirit and structure of novel in England. Psychology was introduced by George Eliot in the form of analysis of character and situation. Meredith introduced rhythm, tone and structure, while Hardy introduced naturalism in the form of character as destiny.

3.9.4. *Characters*: The characters that we come across in the later Victorian novels are self-reliant with a strong sense of moral responsibility for their actions. Dorothea in the George Eliot's 'Middlemarch', Clara in Meredith's 'The Egoist', Tess in Hardy's 'Tess of the D'Urbervilles' seek rational explanations of things and look very modern.

3.9.5. *Themes*: If the early Victorian novelists shied away from a serious treatment of love and sex, the later Victorians made love, man-woman relationships as central preoccupations of the novel. These novelists tried to probe the various aspects of love between the opposite sexes ranging from infatuation, harlotry to serious involvement and self-fulfillment.

S.A.Q. Fill in the gaps in the table to show the differences between the early Victorian and later Victorian novels.

	Early Victorian Novel	Later Victorian Novel
Theme	Conditional of England	
Form		
Setting		village
Characters	Memorable characters	

3.10. The Victorian Prose

Like its poetry and novel the Victorian prose was also shaped by the spirit of realism. If the romantic prose reflecting that age was highly imaginative the Victorian prose addressed the contemporary problems of religion, philosophy, politics and art. The Victorian prose differed from its predecessor in the fact that the problems and issues were dealt with not in the form of imaginative composition but in the shape of an argument or debate. The prose pieces like the novels were quite long (often book length) written in a language and style literary enough.

The Victorian prose writers fall into two groups - Thomas Carlyle, John Ruskin, Cardinal Newman, Mathew Arnold forming the early Victorian prose writers while Walter Pater, Oscar Wilde, R.S. Stevenson consisting the later generation. Just like their counter parts in poetry and novel, the prose writers of early period were concerned about ideas and problems of the age. Ruskin's 'Unto this Last', Carlyle's 'Sartor Resartus', 'Chartism', Arnold's 'Culture and Anarchy' fought against the industry, the utilitarian ethics and political democracy. But they adopted a style which was ornate, full of medieval metaphors and rhetorical structure.

The later Victorian prose writers were rather indifferent to the theological, political, social and economic issues of the day. They made 'writing' as the sole business of their lives. They raised the slogan 'art for art's sake'. Walter Pater's 'The Renaissance' and 'Imaginary Portraits'; Oscar Wilde's 'Intentions' and

R.L.Stevenson's 'An Inland Voyage' are memorable prose writings of the day. Pater's dedication to art as a substitute for religion, Wilde's insistence on prose as architecture, Stevenson's rendering of pleasures of imagination brought back the prose essay to tradition of the nineteenth century. The later Victorian prose is marked by purity of diction, unrhetorical structure and concrete writing.

3.11. *The Victorian Drama*

The Victorian drama was very insignificant compared to the poetry and novel and even prose written during that period. Much of the creative energy of the time as it has been already mentioned was concentrated on novel and poetry. Not that no body tried their hands at drama. Tennyson for example, wrote historical plays Queen Mary, Harold the Falcon, Beckett etc. Browning too wrote poetic plays namely Strafford, Laura, A Soul's Tragedy etc. But none of the poets had the talent for dramatic action and dialogue.

The only thing that succeeded on the Victorian stage were the prose comedies of Oscar Wilde whose 'Importance of Being Earnest', 'Mrs. Arbuthnot' were marked by witty dialogue than character or action.

But towards the close of the Victorian period, due to the efforts of W.B.Yeats, John Synge and other Irish writers there was a revival of drama. But the full flowering of the drama could be seen only in the twentieth century in the hands of G.B.Shaw.

3.12. *Summing Up:*

From this unit you have learnt not only about the features of Victorian poetry, Victorian novel but also how to distinguish them from the poetry of the previous periods. You have also understood the differences within the Victorian period which make it such a complex period.

Questions: (15 Marks)

- 1) Victorian Period is not just a continuation of the Romantic spirit of previous period.- comment.
- 2) Novel is the major genre in the Victorian period reflecting the concerns of the period – elucidate
- 3) What are the features of early Victorian poetry and why are they different from the feature of later Victorian poetry?

UNIT – FOUR

Symbolism

Structure:

4.0. Objectives

4.1. Introduction

4.2. What is Symbolism?

4.3. What are Symbols?

4.3.1. Conventional or Public Symbols

4.3.2. Personal or Private Symbols

4.4. Symbolism in English Poetry

4.5. Symbolist Movement

4.6. Symbolist Movement and English Poets

4.7. Summing Up

* * *

4.0. Objectives:

In this Unit you are going to learn about Symbolism and Symbolist Movement. At the end of the unit you should be able to

- Know what is a symbol
- Understand what symbolism is
- Mark the features of Symbolist Movement

- Differentiate between the use of symbolism by the Symbolist Poets and other poets
- Notice the influence of Symbolist Movement on English Poets.

4.1. Introduction:

In the unit which preceded this one you have studied about the Victorian Period a prominent period in English Literature. Now you are going to learn about two terms which are related yet quite different from each other. The first term which we are going to learn is *Symbolism*. Once we learn about Symbolism we can understand better the aims and features of Symbolist Movement which was primarily a movement in French Literature but which had influenced English poetry a lot. Let us know more about them.

4.2. What is Symbolism?

‘Symbolism’ as a literary term can be defined as an attempt to communicate unique personal feeling with the help of symbols, which give rise to various connotations. In other words, *Symbolism* is a way of telling personal feeling by using symbols.

4.3. What is a symbol?

A symbol in literature refers to a word or phrase which signifies to an object or event, the object or event in its turn signifies something or has a range of reference. For example "Rose" refers to a flower. It also signifies beauty and innocence. "Sunrise" is an event; it, in turn, suggests birth even hope for future. "Trishul" is a weapon; it also suggests Shiva as Trishul is his weapon. Because of this suggestive quality, symbols convey more meaning than ordinary words. So, they give the language a rich texture.

S.A.Q. You have learnt what a symbol is. Now can you think of any other symbols which are frequently used in literature of your mother tongue or in day to day life?

There are two types of symbols:

- a. Conventional or traditional or public symbols
- b. Private or Personal symbols

4.3.1. Conventional or traditional or public symbols

These are stock symbols which are in general use in a culture. The meaning and connotations are determined by the particular culture. For example, "the cross" is a symbol for Christ and his sacrifice and this meaning is determined by the Christian culture. In the same way, flute and peacock feather is a symbol for Krishna in Hindu culture. But there are certain symbols which have gained universal acceptance like 'white dove' suggesting 'peace'.

4.3.2. Private or personal symbols

Poets sometimes use symbols from their personal experience to suggest their impressions and feelings. But, to make their symbols meaningful for the readers, they try to exploit the widely shared associations between the object or event and a particular concept to create a private symbol. For example, a poet can make 'sunset' a symbol for death or 'climbing' for 'effort'. Sometimes, the poets repeatedly use certain symbols whose significance or multiple connotations they themselves generate. For example, the symbol of 'Byzantium' in W.B. Yeats' poetry. Byzantium was a flourishing empire in and around Turkey where there

were huge libraries storing the culture and civilization of Europe. So, Yeats used as a symbol for intellect in his 'Sailing to Byzantium' and then in his 'Byzantium' it becomes the symbol for the world of the dead as well as the world of art or creation.

So, symbolism refers to an oblique or indirect mode of expression with the help of symbols which suggests much more than what is actually described or asserted.

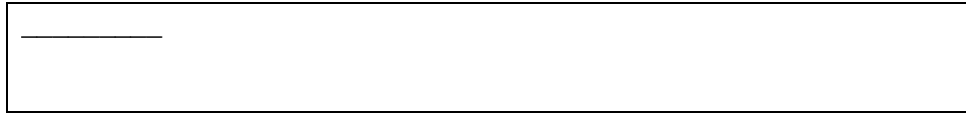
4.4. Symbolism in English Poetry:

Various poets in the Romantic period used repeatedly private symbols in their poetry. Shelley repeatedly uses the symbols of morning star, evening star, boat moving upstream etc. Blake however exceeded all other romantics in his sustained symbolism, in both his lyrics as well as his long prophetic books. Blake invents new symbols like 'tiger' in the poem 'Tyger' and at the same time makes use of conventional symbols with new meaning as in "O Rose thou art sick".

O Rose, thou art sick
The invisible worm
That flies in the night
In the howling storm
Has found out they bed
Of Crimson joy,
And his dark secret love
Does thy life destroy.

Here, 'rose' is a flower. But much more than it, it refers woman. The rose does not suggest happy innocence here but only vulnerability.

S.A.Q. You have learnt what is a conventional symbol and private symbol. Now tell whether the example given above from the poem of Blake is a conventional symbol or a private symbol.



4.5. Symbolist Movement:

But the term Symbolist Movement refers to a literary movement started by French writers like Charles Baudelaire and other poets like Arthur Rimbaud, Paul Verlaine, Stephane Mallarme and Paul Valery. Baudelaire started writing his poems in a symbolic mode influenced partly by American poet Edgar Allan Poe and partly by an ancient belief called ‘Correspondences’.

4.5.1. Correspondences: The ancient belief states that there is an inherent (in born) systematic analogies between the human mind and the outer world and also between the natural world and spiritual world. That's why Baudelaire says "Everything, form, movement, number, colour perfume, in the spiritual as in the natural world is significative, reciprocal, converse, correspondent". In other words if there is a form in the natural world it will certainly have a similar form in the spiritual world.

4.5.2. Symbolists and Symbolism: French symbolists, as they believed in ancient belief of ‘Correspondences’, exploited an order of private symbols in poetry to get rich suggestiveness in the place of explicit signification or outward description. When they were replacing explicit signification, the symbolists were reacting against the Naturalist school of writers headed by Emile Zola. They were reacting against the precision and exactitude of the naturalists i.e. the precise way they recreated the exact picture of the object they tried to present. In the place of exact description of external circumstances like the naturalists, the symbolists laid emphasis on the treatment of sensations or vague fleeting impressions that pass before the mind's eye. For this they withdrew from the outward life and concentrated on inner experience which they presented through symbols. So, mysticism came to be a major subject matter of symbolists

making familiar mystery and trying to harmonise our instincts which make our religion, passion and art.

S.A.Q. Fill in the blanks to show how far you are able to understand Symbolist Movement.

Symbolists used _____ symbols.

Symbolists were reacting against _____.

Symbolists gave preference to _____ than exact picture of the object.

Symbolist writing dealt with _____.

4.6. English Poets and French Symbolists:

The French symbolists are important to students of English literature for the influence they exerted on poets not only in England and America but throughout Europe. Arthur Symons, Ernest Dowson belonging to the movement called Decadence and modern poets like W.B.Yeats, W.H.Auden, Dylan Thomas, Ezra Pound, Hart Crane, e.e.cummings, Wallace Stevens came under the influence of the French symbolists and their poetry bears witness to it.

William Butler Yeats (1865-1939) used symbols extensively in his poetry under the influence of French symbolists. His early symbolism was simple, traditional and elementary as in "Innisfree" poem. Gradually, his symbolism became more personal, complex and suggestive even though he was still rooted in Irish mythology and legend. For example, "Rose" in his later poems is not only a symbol of beauty of women, of Maud Gonne, and also Ireland. As Yeats matured, the symbols also got complex, the example of 'Byzantium' has already been given in personal symbols. But Yeats' symbolism differs from that of French symbolists. It is modified by his belief in magic. It is affected by Irish mythology and legend. Yeats' symbols have a definite visual form which we do not find in French

symbolists. For example, his famous poem 'the Second Coming' stands testimony to it.

S.A.Q. In what way was the symbolism of W.B. Yeats different from the symbolism of the Symbolist Poets?

Dylan Thomas also makes an extensive use of symbols as he wants to convey complex psychological states like inner darkness and a sense of guilt and its consequences. Dylan Thomas' symbolism is affected by Freud's symbols along with the French symbolists. He makes use of the Bible, Freud and Surrealism as the sources of his symbolism. For example, "Poem in October".

W.H.Auden believed that the modern age is a spiritual ice age and the spiritual death can be conveyed only through imagery and symbols. In his early poems like "In Times of War", he uses geography and landscape to symbolize spiritual and mental state. Journey becomes a symbol for difficulty of finding one's way. The Spanish civil war becomes a symbol for war within each individual; firing and bomb for human greed.

T.S. Eliot makes use of symbolist technique not to express fleeting emotions but to express a complex decadent meaningless civilization. Eliot's symbols are predominantly traditional but they are ambivalent. Allusions, quotations, myths and legends all acquire symbolic significance.

4.7. Summing Up:

In this you have learnt what symbols are and how repeated use of them in a work of literature becomes symbolism embedded in that work. You have learnt to distinguish the symbolism as used by other poets and

the symbolism as used by the French Symbolists. You have come to know how in what way they have influenced English poets.

Questions: (15 Marks)

1. Describe in detail the origin and features of Symbolist movement.
2. Is there any difference between Symbolism and Symbolist movement

UNIT FIVE

Modernism

Structure

5.0. Objectives

5.1. Introduction

5.2. Definition and Date

5.3. Precursors to Modernism

5.4. Causes for Emergence of Modernism

5.4.1. World War

5.4.2. Spiritual Upheaval

5.4.3. Isolated Self

5.5. Main Features of Modernist Works

5.5.1. Radical Break from the past

5.5.2. Feeling of Inadequacy of literary forms

5.5.3. Obscure and Ambiguous

5.5.4. Allusions

5.5.5. Avant-Guard

5.5.6. Reaction against Realism and Naturalism

5.5.7. New Critical Outlook

5.6. Modernist Poetry

5.6.1. Content

5.6.2. Form

5.6.3. Obscurity

5.6.4. Irony

5.6.5. Language

5.6.6. Complex Imagery

5.6.7. Rich Texture

5.7. Modernist Drama

5.7. Expressionism

5.8. Modernist Fiction

5.8.1. Background

5.8.2. Reasons behind the Reaction

5.8.3. New Narrative Techniques

5.8.4. Subject Matter

5.9. Summing Up

* * *

5.0. Objectives:

This Unit explains to you one of the unique tendency in literature of the Twentieth century literature called Modernism. After you finish reading the unit you should be able to

- Understand the reasons behind the emergence of Modernism
- Know the basic assumptions of Modernism
- Differentiate the features of Modernism from other movements which preceded it
- Apprehend the reasons for the ambiguity and difficulty of Modernism
- Mark the unique features of Modernist poetry
- Notice the new narrative techniques used in Modernist Fiction

5.1. Introduction:

In the earlier Units of this block you have read about certain movements popular during a particular period. They were called movements because the works of that particular period showed certain common features. You are going to learn, in this unit, about Modernism which cannot be called a movement in strict sense as it has too many divergent views represented in it. It is also different from the earlier periods in another sense too – it revolted against all basic assumptions of the previous literature. Let us know in detail about it.

5.2. Definition and Date:

Modernism is an international tendency seen in all creative arts in the early twentieth century. It is not called a movement as it does not show any uniform style, all over the world. It is international because it originated simultaneously in cosmopolitan circles like Berlin, Paris, London, Prague, Moscow, New York and Chicago.

The meaning of the term "Modernism" underwent change and revision and now

the term refers to the new and distinctive features in subjects, forms, concepts and styles of not only literature but other arts like painting, music, architecture, dance etc.

Critics often quarrel over the dates of modernism. Some critics feel, it began in 1890s and continued still 1950s. Others see it as a phenomenon of the first three decades of the twentieth century. But all critics agree that the peak point of modernism or High Modernism as it is otherwise called, started in 1922, because the year 1922 saw the publication of several modernist works like T.S. Eliot's 'The Waste Land', James Joyce's 'Ulysses' Virginia Woolf's 'Jacob's Room' and several others.

S.A.Q. Is Modernism a literary movement alone?

5.3. Precursors to Modernism:

Some of the people who came to be considered as precursors (somebody who comes before somebody or something great) to Modernism are prominent persons from various branches of knowledge who by their pioneering work questioned the traditional beliefs and assumptions. They are Psychologists like William James, Sigmund Freud, anthropologist James. G. Frazer, Philosophers like Nietzsche and Karl Marx and scientists like Einstein. James' concept of 'waking mind', Freud's analysis of dreams and unconscious, Karl Marx's concept of class war and other revolutionary ideas completely changed the thought process of the people in the twentieth century.

5.4. Causes for the Emergence of Modernism:

Apart from the above mentioned people, the other factors responsible for the emergence of modernism are:

5.4.1. World War: The catastrophe of the First World War had shaken people's faith in ideals, beliefs and social order of western civilization. It also brought to their minds a fear that all civilizations may break up if their own highly valued European civilization had come to a breaking point. The large scale loss of life, prolonging of war over several years shattered their faiths and beliefs. It was such a traumatic experience that they found it difficult to have any integrated (complete) view of man and civilizations. This fear was expressed by W.B. Yeats in his "The Second coming", "Things fall apart and centre cannot hold".

S.A.Q. Why did the First World War leave people shaken?

5.4.2. *Spiritual Upheaval*: The trauma felt after the war, was even more terrific because the upheaval was not merely social, political and economic upheaval, it was a spiritual upheaval. In spite of loss of faith felt by the writers of the Victorian period, there was faith in general progress of mankind in the Victorian period because England as well as Europe saw material progress (increase in wealth) due to Industrial Revolution. There was even a complacent attitude among people that nothing can happen to them. The world war shattered this complacent attitude towards life. When they saw wholesale destruction of life, in the absence of a faith or philosophy to sustain them, the people felt an utter sense of loss and spiritual vacuum. The result is isolation and loneliness.

5.4.3. *Isolated Self*: In the absence of a sense of direction, guidance of any sort, the potentialities of self, which were held rather high during the Romantic period, came to be questioned. The romantic self is a confident self; the Victorian self due to loss of faith is a troubled self. The modern self with no mooring is an isolated shattered self groping through a sense of meaninglessness and loneliness.

5.5. Main features of Modernist Works:

Given below are some of the features of the Modernist writings which would establish for you the uniqueness of Modernism. But, there are no universal applicable characteristics or features for all modernist works. But all of them share certain broad features. They are:

5.5.1. *Radical Break from the Past*: Modernist works often display tendencies which are deliberate and radical break-away from the traditional bases of not only the western art but of western culture in general.

5.5.2. *Inadequacy of Existing Literary Forms*: So, in literature doubts were raised about the adequacy of conventional literary methods to express, harsh dissenting (disagreeing) voices of Post-war period. The way a work is arranged in traditional literature was based on certain assumptions - that there is a stable social order and the world is, if not completely, at least partially understandable. That is why traditional poetry was written in regular metre and a fixed rhyme scheme. Drama was divided into regular divisions like acts and scenes. In novels, though society was criticised, but its class structure was never questioned. So, such literary modes which had as their basis such assumptions are no longer suitable for modern period and cannot adequately express the disintegration, the futility, anarchy of the contemporary world. So, they experimented with new forms and styles which would express not only contemporary disorder but also be a contrast to the order and integration based on religion and myths of cultural past. So, modernist writers continuously experimented with style and form and did self-conscious manipulation. Because of this deliberate break up from the past, Herbert Read calls modernism "not so much a revolution which implies a turning over, even a turning back, but rather a breakup, a devolution some would say a dissolution. Its character is catastrophic".

S.A.Q. What was the basic assumption of the traditional literature? <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/>
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5.5.3. *Obscurity and Ambiguity*: Modernist literature is often difficult, obscure and ambiguous, because its attempt to deviate from the traditional way of expression and also due to their attempt to express the disorder and anarchy of contemporary society. This ambiguity is also because of the complexity of ideas to be communicated. To suggest complex ideas, modernist writers make use of idiosyncratic (a person's particular way of doing something) use of language, images and symbols. They also felt that communication between individuals is difficult in the absence of common frame of reference. "To speak is to address the deaf" says a character in a modernist novel. That's why, a French critic Roland Barthes describes modernist literature as "problematics of language".

5.5.4. *Allusions*: Apart from idiosyncratic use of language, image and symbol. Modernist writers, poets and novelists are extensively allusive i.e. they make allusions (references), sometimes acknowledged, sometimes not, to a variety of myths, legends and texts making their works even more difficult. For example, T.S. Eliot's 'The Waste Land' opens with the line making their works "April is the cruellest month". It is an allusion to Chaucer's poem "April is the sweetest month".

5.5.5. *Avant-garde*: Another prominent feature of modernism is the phenomenon called avant-garde. The term is a military metaphor. It means advanced guard. It means that a group of artists and writers deliberately took upon themselves the duty to "make it new". They violated the conventions and proprieties not only of art and literature but even in the social discourses. Along with creating new artistic forms and styles they introduced hitherto neglected and forbidden subject matters. The avant-garde artists presented themselves as alienated from the established order of every kind and thus asserted their autonomy (independence) from such orders. Their aim is to shock the sensibilities of the conventional reader and to challenge the norms and morals of the

dominant bourgeois (middle class) culture. 'Imagism' is an avant-garde movement. Once it itself became rather old fashioned imagist poets stopped writing in that way and searched for 'new' ways.

S.A.Q. Is Imagism part of Modernism?

5.5.6. Reaction against Realism and Naturalism: Modernism in fiction and drama was a reaction against the Realism and Naturalism especially against the representationalism or 'mimesis' as it is called associated with these movements. So, Modernist novels and plays do not give us the feel of 'verisimilitude' or illusion of reality.

5.5.7. New Critical Outlook: Modernism not only changed the approach of writers towards literature. It also challenged the approach of critics and readers. Works written in a new style based on a completely new concept about literature naturally required new critical theories. So, modernism gave rise to a number of critical theories and approaches like structuralism, post structuralism, deconstruction etc.

Modernism is not a single concerted movement. It involves in itself various other movements like Imagism, Vorticism, Surrealism, and Expressionism. They are related to one another in that they broke away from traditional literature. So, Modernism is a blanket term for a tendency seen in the twentieth century in not only literature but all arts.

S.A.Q. Say whether the following statements about Modernism are True or False:

1) Modernists found the forms of traditional literatures inadequate. [

]

2) Modernist works are difficult to understand only because of the

complexity of thought to be conveyed. []

3) Modernist writers use in their works a common language. []

4) Modernist writers allude very extensively. []

5.6. Modernist Poetry

5.6.1. Content: a) Modernist poetry is a reaction against the traditional poetry which was familiar to the readers in its form, content, syntax and versification. The traditional poetry had quatrains, couplet dividing its form; it had regular versification, stanzas had rhyme schemes; the content was often love, idealism, landscape etc. Modernist poets reacted against this. But modernist poetry was more of an immediate reaction against Georgian poetry which preceded it. Georgian poetry was parochial (narrow, limited, regional), solid and unironic i.e. straight forward celebrating English rural life particularly of the home countries.

b) Modernist poetry often presents the spiritual vacuum, sterility, incoherence felt by the writers after the First world war. It also reflects the crisis of the self. For example, Eliot in his 'Waste Land' presents London as a waste land where nothing spiritual can ever grow. Men in the modern world are "Hollow Men".

5.6.2. Form: a) But, it is not as much in the content as in the technique that the modernist poets made radical changes. A major part of traditional English poetry was written in iambic pentametre. So, Ezra Pound says the first heave of modernism is "to break the pentametre". In the place of pentametre, modernist poets preferred free verse.

b) Free verse, though printed in lines, is not organised into metre or into recurring feet of iambic or anapestic etc. It will not have end rhymes. The length of the line depends on repetition, balance, variation of words, phrases and clauses. An extreme form of free verse is pattern poem or concrete poetry i.e. the text of the poems take the shape of the object which it describes or suggests. For example, e.e.cummings' poem on Grasshopper called "r-p-o-p-he-s-s-a-r-r". In extreme cases, words are

chosen not for the reasons of sense and meaning but because of the pattern that they make on the page and how they sound.

5.6.3. *Obscurity*: The fragmentation and innovation in structure i.e. lines of variable lengths and stanzas of variable size, results in the poem being 'difficult' and 'obscure'. The breaks in poetic structure and lack of linguistic coherence is linguistic acting out of the destruction that took place or in other words, the poets intend to show literally and symbolically on paper the disintegration of society.

5.6.4. *Irony*: Irony is a major feature of modernist poetry. Words, allusions, images all are chosen in such a way that they give irony. For example, T.S. Eliot in his *Waste Land* describes a woman at her modern dressing table.

The chair she sat in, like a burnished throne
Glowed on the marble

It is an ironic allusion to Shakespeare's description of Cleopatra's magnificent barge in 'Anthony and Cleopatra'.

The Barge she sat in, like a burnished throne
Burn'd on the water.

5.6.5. *Language*: For a modernist poet, the language in the poem becomes the most important point of the poem. The process of writing poetry becomes the object (aim) of poetry. So, the way the poem is constructed, the words used in it, the various connotations of the words and the ironic implications all become the poem.

5.6.6. *Complex Imagery*: Modernist poetry often employs complex images, symbols, metaphors taken from various sources, myths of various cultures and civilizations. Taken from private reading and experience, they refer to a variety of texts from a variety of languages. For example, 'The Waste Land' ends with the line "Shantih, shantih, shantih".

5.6.7. *Rich Texture*: These ironic images, symbols, metaphors give the poems a rich texture but at the same time making it difficult to understand. They also give the necessary connection between seemingly unconnected

stanzas. For example, the recurring symbols of drought and flood representing death and rebirth give unity to 'The Waste Land'.

S.A.Q. Fill in the Blank boxes to give information about Modernism

Content	
Syntax	Broken
Versification	

S.A.Q. Fill in the Blanks

- 1) Modernist poets reacted against _____ poetry.
- 2) _____ give unity to a Modernist poem.
- 3) Breaks in poetic Structure are intended to show _____.

5.7. Modernist Drama

Modernist drama came as a reaction against the realistic and naturalistic drama which was popular in the preceding age.

5.7.1. Expressionism: Expressionism is one modernist tendency seen in drama. It was at its height between 1910 and 1925. It was actually a movement in all visual arts especially prominent in drama.

Prominent people who influenced expressionism were symbolist poets like Arthur Rimbaud, Charles Baudelire, Russian novelist Dostoevsky, Philosopher Nietzsche and more than anyone else Swedish dramatist August Strindberg.

Expressionism aims at presenting a personal vision usually a troubled, tensely emotional vision of human life and society. This is often done by either exaggerating or distorting the features of the external world. So, expressionism presents violent extremes of moods and feelings. It presents characters as individuals all alone and afraid in an industrial, technological and urban society which was disintegrating into chaos.

The other characteristic features of expressionism are:

1. The characters are anonymous human types than individualised characters.
2. Plot is replaced by episodes full of intense and rapidly oscillating emotional states.
3. Dialogues are fragmentary, often exclamatory utterances, full of incoherent sentences and phrases.
4. Masks are employed as well as stage machinery like light and sound effects are extensively used.

Example: Eugene O'Neill, the American dramatist's play Emperor Jones is a good example of expressionism.

Although, expressionism did not last long, it left a deep impact on the drama that succeeded it both in America and England especially on the plays of Arthur Miller and the Theatre of the Absurd.

S.A.Q. Fill the gaps in the table to show what you know about Modernist Drama

Vision of Society	
	Lonely, terrified
Dialogue	
Plot	

5.8. Modernist Fiction

5.8.1. Background: Before the advent of modernism in fiction, representationalism or mimesis of realism and naturalism had been extensively used. Realistic fiction is written in such a way as to give the effect that it represents life and social world as it appears to common reader, evoking in him/her a sense that the characters might in fact exist in real life. This sense is achieved by describing minutely all details. Naturalism is even more accurate description of life than realism.

Reacting against these tendencies modernist fiction writers tried to experiment with new subjects, new style and technique of fiction. So, the term modernist fiction refers to the emergence of new subjects, new style, and new techniques in fiction.

5.8.2. *The Reasons behind the Reaction*

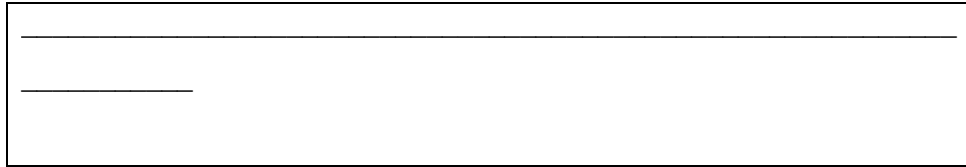
(1) Reaction against realism and naturalism was based on a rethinking of relationship between fiction and reality i.e. all that is real as against illusion.

Modernist novelists believed that the individual always perceives or understands reality through his or her own consciousness [Not so very novel idea but for the first time thought of in relation to fiction writing]. So, for them the contents and structure of consciousness (of an individual) is the only accessible reality. This view was developed under the influence of

- a) William James, the psychologist who said that all reality can be described in terms of subjective (an individual's own) experience
- b) Freud who said that all mental phenomenon have meaning.
- c) Henri Bergson who distinguished between scientific time which is nothing but mathematical abstract and real duration which is our direct experience of time flowing. [To illustrate, if we find a class boring the 60 minute period appears too long but if the class is interesting 60 minutes pass away in a jiffy! That's difference between scientific time and real duration]. He said scientific time is illusion and the real duration is real.

S.A.Q. What were the modernist fiction writers reacting against?

S.A.Q. How do people perceive reality according to Modernists?



5.8.3. *New Narrative Techniques*: As a result, modernists felt uncertainty about everything. They became aware of too many possibilities. So, in their fiction, as against single perception of realism, they sought different perceptions of reality. So, in the place of chronological sequential narrative (telling about the events in the order in which they occurred) and accumulation of details of social and public life, modernist fiction writers developed

(a) Narratives based on dreams, fantasies, chains of association. For example, the central incident in E.M. Forster's 'A Passage to India' is the attempted rape of Miss Quested by Aziz. But, later on in the novel Miss Quested herself is not sure whether it actually happened or she had only a fantastic dream.

(b) Narratives based on manipulating reader's experience of time by disrupting narrative chronology. R.K. Narayan's 'The Guide' for example opens with Raju, fresh out of jail taking refuge in an ancient shrine. It is only later we come to know of his childhood and his affair with Rosie that he reaches the ancient shrine after serving a jail term.

(c) Narratives based on the nature of consciousness of one or more characters. The story of 'Kantapura' is told based on the nature of consciousness of an old woman Achakka. That's why the novel acquires the quality of a purana.

(d) Narratives ordered by symbols, metaphors. Melville's Moby-Dick centres around a whale which is a symbol for our unconscious.

(e) Narratives which use stream of consciousness technique. Stream of consciousness, a term coined by William James in Psychology, is now a mode of narration which undertakes to reproduce without narrator's intervention the full spectrum and the continuous flow of a

character's mental process, in which sense perceptions mingle with conscious and half conscious thoughts, memories, expectations, feelings and random associations. James Joyce's 'A Portrait of a Youngman as an Artist' and Virginia Woolf's 'To the Light House' are written in this mode. Another related term is "Interior Monologue". It is sometimes used in the place of stream of consciousness. But some critics treat it as different form which undertakes to present the course and rhythm of consciousness precisely as it occurs in the character's mind i.e. the mental process is not even given grammatical sentences or logical order. In Interior Monologue the author does not intervene. But he has to convert some non-verbal sense perceptions, mental images and feelings into verbal equivalents.

(f) Narratives where one scene or highly detailed account of a particular occurrence told from the point of view of different characters. While viewing events through their eyes, we share the limitations of their knowledge and distortions of their view point. Thus, the characters themselves become the centre of interest. It also gives raise to irony. William Faulkner's 'The Sound and the Fury' presents the scene of death and burial of a grand mother from the point of view of three of her grand children revealing the limitations of the narrators, and giving a glimpse into their secrets as well.

(g) Narratives which distinguishes between the narrator and the reflector i.e. the person who narrates the story and the person whose point of view is presented. In Joseph Conrad's 'the Heart of Darkness', the narrator is middle aged sceptical Marlow sailing on the Thames but he presents the view of young, idealistic Marlow sailing on the Congo.

(h) Narratives where the narrator is unreliable, the perceptions, interpretations, evaluations presented by the narrator do not coincide with the implicit opinions and norms manifested by the author and which he expects the reader to share. Mark Twain makes use of this in his Huckleberry Finn. Huck Finn assumes 'King' and 'Duke' who occupy his

raft to be real king and duke. But we know very well from the novel that they are nothing but imposters.

S.A.Q. Do we find the author's or novelist's comments in the modernist narratives?

Whatever maybe the narrative technique, the results of all these modernist techniques are

(i) Irony: Irony is generated because the reader sees more than the narrator or characters whose point of view is presented.

(ii) Plot losing importance because, it is not what happens that matters but who felt what. So, the character gains all the attention.

S.A.Q. What is the result of the use of new narratives techniques in Modernist Fiction?

5.8.4. Subject matter: Often modernist fiction writers are accused of ignoring historical social realities. But a sense of living in a period of historical crisis is an important aspect of modern fiction. But it is not the history of chronological incidents but the history of development of human consciousness and unconscious life in which the individual's relation to his/her partner, family work, society reflects the large scale cultural change as we see in D.H. Lawrence's novels. Further, the disintegration, fragmentation, violence, nihilism, despair all part of twentieth century experience and the need to face it is another prime

subject matter as in James Joyce's 'Ulysses'. Fascination with the unconsciousness and fear of confronting it is another subject matter. A sense of threat because unprecedented changes taking place in the society is also dealt with in modernist novels.

<p>S.A.Q. Does the modernist novel show awareness of the contemporary world?</p> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/>
<p>S.A.Q. What sort of history is reflected in the modernist novels.</p> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/>

5.9. Summing Up:

In this Unit you have learnt in detail various aspects of Modernism. You would by now be able to distinguish the works of Modernism from other works. You have also understood the reasons for the difficulty involved in reading a modernist work.

Questions: 15 Marks

- 1) In what ways does Modernism differs from other movements that preceeded before it.
- 2) Elaborate on the features of Modernist poetry.
- 3) What are the various narrative techniques that Modernist novelists made use of and why did the make use of them?

UNIT SIX
Imagism [1912-1917]

Structure

6.0. Objectives

6.1. Introduction

6.2. Definition

6.3. Imagists

6.4. Aims of Imagism

6.5. Features of Imagism

6.5.1. Free Verse

6.5.2. Brevity

6.5.3. Presentation of the Subject

6.5.4. What is a poem for an Imagist

6.5.5. Haiku

6.6. Decline of Imagism

6.7. Ezra Pound

6.8. Summing Up

* * *

6.0. Objectives:

The unit will make you familiar with one of the shortest but one of the important movements in English Literature. When you finish reading the Unit you should be able to

- Know the causes for the Emergence of Imagism
- Understand the aims of the Imagists
- Mark the uniqueness of the features of Imagism
- Notice the differences between imagism and other movements

6.1. Introduction:

While studying Modernism you have been told that Imagism is an avant-garde movement started as part of Modernism. In this unit you are going to read in detail about Imagism and its features and the reasons for its decline.

6.2. Definition:

The term 'imagism' refers to a concerted poetic movement, planned and practised by some poets in England, but more in America in the early decade of the twentieth between 1912-1917 under the influence of the poetic theory of T.E. Hulme. T.E. Hulme was an anti-romantic and was against the decayed romanticism of the Victorian period. He accused the poets of that age especially Swinburne of using words to obscure emotions instead of clarifying them. Hulme was also a supporter of modern classicism.

S.A.Q. Why did T.E. Hulme decry the poetry of Victorian period? <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/>
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6.3. Imagists:

Ezra Pound was the first leader of Imagists. Along with him, F.S. Flint, Richard Aldington, H.D. [Hilda Doolittle], Ford Maddox Ford, Amy Lowell and William Carlos Williams, formed the Imagist group. Pound along with Flint wrote about the aims and objectives of their movement in Poetry magazine in 1913 and it came to be called as the imagist manifesto. Later, he brought out the first Imagist anthology of poems 'Des Imagistes' in 1914. After 1914, Amy Lowell assumed the leadership of the group when Pound left the movement calling it "Amygism". Amy Lowell brought out three more anthologies all entitled Some Imagist Poets in 1915, 1916 and 1917.

6.4. Aims of Imagists:

Whether they were under the leadership of Pound or Lowell, the imagists exhibited a strong influence of T.E.Hulme and they reacted against what they called "rather blurry, messy, sentimental mannerish"

poetry of the previous era. They were against the sloppy (careless and sentimental) diction of Victorian poetry and the employment of loose simile and flaccid representation. Instead the imagists aimed at:

(a) Abandoning conventional poetic versification. Pound himself declared that the first heave of modernism is "to break the pentametre".

(b) Choosing any subject disregarding social taboos and conventions.

(c) Creating rhythms according to the subject

(d) Using common speech and not poetic diction.

(e) Presenting an image which is "hard clear and concentrated" [an image is a picture made out of words] i.e. to present an image which carries meaning in a concentrated manner.

(f) To be as brief as possible

(g) Freeing verse from too much emotion and insist on intellectuality.

6.5. Features of an Imagist Poem

6.5.1. In Free Verse: An imagist poem is in free verse. It is not written according to a particular metre but creates its own rhythms.

6.5.2. Brevity: An imagist poem is often a short one as the imagists insisted on 'brevity'. "Less is more" is their motto. Their brevity is a reaction against the loose simple and flaccid representation of the poetry of the previous era. Their condensation is a reaction to Victorian verbiage. This brevity or condensation helps them to free the poem from sentiment.

For example,

O fan of white silk
clear as frost on the grass
You also are laid aside.

The above imagist poem which describes briefly a silk fan carries very briefly the same grief and lamentation as any Victorian elegy. But it is totally free from sentimentality.

S.A.Q. Why did the imagists insist on brevity?

6.5.3. Presentation of the Subject: Often the subject of an imagist poem is a single concentrated moment of experience presented as precisely tersely as possible without a comment or generalization. This is often done through an image or metaphor because for them an 'image' presents "an intellectual and emotional complex in an instant of time i.e. an image is a group of connected things which includes intellect as well as emotion. Sometimes, this concentrated moment of experience is presented by juxtaposing a description of an object with that of a second and diverse object. For example,

The apparition of these faces in the crowd
Petals on a wet, black bough.

6.5.4. What is a poem for an Imagist: For an Imagist, the poem 'is' (means) the relationship between the phrases, how they build into image which does not come from individual words or vague feelings but from the ways in which the component elements of the poem relate to each other. For example

Whirl up, Sea -
Whirl your pointed pines,
Splash your great pines
On our rocks
Hurl your green over us
Cover us with pools of fir

In the above poem, words like ‘whirl’, pines, rocks, hurl all together create the image of the waves splashing across the rocks.

6.5.5. *Haiku*: Apart from T.E. Hulme, the imagists were also influenced by Japanese lyrical form called "Haiku" or "hoku". Haiku tries to present the poet's impression of a natural object or scene viewed in a particular season in exactly 17 syllables ordered into three lines of five, seven and five syllables. For example,

- (a) For the child who won't
stop crying, she lights a lamp
in the autumn dusk

-
Kawah
igoshik
ekigod
o

This haiku shows a mother's efforts to comfort her child by lighting a lamp as the sky grows dark. It is not only the mother's care but also her loneliness and futility of her actions is reflected.

- (b) To the sun's path
the hollyhocks lean
in the may rains

-

Matsuo Basho

This haiku describes the beauty of spring and captures the beauty of hollyhocks in spring rain.

This short form is difficult to follow in English. So, Imagists have loosed the rules and pattern a little. But they desire to finish the entire poem in one sentence as in ‘The Great Figure’ by William Carlos William :

Among the rain
and lights

I saw the figure 5
in gold
on a red
fire truck
moving
tense
unheeded
to gong clangs
siren howls
and wheels rumbling
through the dark city.

The poem is in single sentence as the poet wants us to see it as a single image. The image is an image in motion. The fire truck does not stay still for long to give us a clear focused picture. W.C. Williams carefully records the actual experience of our seeing a fast moving object - not as a whole but in bits and pieces. The gold number 5 painted on the truck is seen before the truck itself is seen.

S.A.Q. Are Japanese Haiku and the Imagist poem similar? Give reasons.

6.6. Decline of Imagism:

Imagism as a movement was a very short lived one being in vogue for only five years from 1912-1917. It was too restricted a movement to flourish for long. Even Ezra Pound had felt the restriction and so left it. Soon, the movement spent itself. But, imagism as a movement is very important for a student of literature because, it marked the beginning of

modernism in poetry and it left an indelible influence on all major poets of the twentieth century. W.B. Yeats, T.S. Eliot, Wallace Stevens are some important poets who came under the influence of Imagism especially, the way they represented precise, clear images.

S.A.Q. Why didn't the Imagism flourish for a longer period of time?

6.7. Ezra Pound:

Of all imagists, Ezra Pound (1885-1972) alone got lasting fame not only as a poet but as one who helped other writers to achieve their best work. Born in U.S.A., he lived in London, Paris and Italy. He was held as a war prisoner and remained in prison till 1958. As a poet Pound was always a centre of controversy because of his determination to be different. He also translated works from a variety of languages like Italian, Latin, Provençal. Under the influence of Japanese haiku, he re-established the verse epigram in English. For Ezra Pound, poetry was the embodiment of melody, images and provocative thought.

'The Cantos' is his major work. He divided much of his time writing and revising it but left it unfinished. It carries a vast survey of human history. He presents a personal often fragmented experience in compact imagery.

Questions : 15 Marks

Show Imagism as an avant garde movement in Modernism.

Question: 10 Marks

What are the aims and features of Imagism?

UNIT – SEVEN
Feminism and Feminist Criticism

Structure

7.0. Objectives

7.1. Introduction

7.2. Background

7.3. Precursors to Feminist Criticism

7.4. Modern Feminist Criticism

7.4.1. Beginnings

7.4.2. The Movement

7.5. Basic Assumptions of all Feminists

7.5.1. Patriarchal Western Culture

7.5.2. Concept of Gender

7.5.3. Classics and Patriarchal Ideology

7.6. Feminists from the English Speaking Countries

7.6.1. Resisting Reader

7.6.2. Distorted Images of Women in Literature

7.6.3. Gynocritics

7.7. French Feminism

7.7.1. Helene Cixous

7.7.2. Luce Irigaray

7.7.3. Julia Kristeva

7.8. Recent Developments

7.9. Conclusion

7.10. Summing Up

* * *

7.0. Objectives:

This Unit familiarizes you on a much contested subject – Feminism and Feminist Literary Criticism. When you finish reading the unit you will be able to

- Understand the concept of Feminism and Feminist Criticism
- Know the concept of Gender
- Appreciate the Feminists attempt to bring equality of women in all fronts
- Become sensitive to Gender related issues
- Learn to differentiate the Feminist Criticism from other Literary Criticisms
- See the differences between the various Schools of thought within Feminist Criticism

7.1. Introduction

Feminism and Feminist Literary Criticism are unlike the rest of the movements that you have read till now, in the sense that they do not belong to any particular country or to a period and they question the very tenets which had governed the writing of literature and their evaluation till then. Let us know more about them.

Feminism and feminist criticism have been much contested terms in recent years. Broadly speaking, feminism is concerned with the marginalization of women, i.e. women being relegated to a secondary position in the society by the patriarchal culture. Feminist literary criticism is a distinctive and concerted approach to literature which deals with how power imbalances due to gender in a given culture are reflected in or challenged by literary texts.

Feminist literary criticism is inseparable from feminism which seeks social, political, legal and cultural freedom and equality for women. If the political feminism talks of imbalance of power at various levels of society, feminist literary criticism talks of power imbalances as reflected in literature.

S.A.Q. In what way is Feminism related to Feminist Criticism?

7.2. Background

Feminist literary criticism started as a concerted approach only in the late 1960s. But behind it lies two centuries of struggle for the recognition of women's cultural role and achievements and for women's social and political rights. Books like Mary Wollstonecraft's 'A Vindication of the Rights of Women', John Stuart Mill's 'The Subjection of Women', Margaret Fuller's 'Women in the Nineteenth Century' reflect this struggle.

7.3. Precursors to Feminist Criticism

An important precursor in feminist criticism is Virginia Woolf, who in addition to her novels wrote essays on women like 'A Room of One's Own' and 'Professions for Women'. In these essays, she discusses about the cultural, economic and educational disabilities which women face in patriarchal culture and society, which prevents them from realizing their productive and creative possibilities.

A much more radical precursor was Simone de Beauvoir, a French woman who wrote a seminal book 'The Second Sex'. In this book, she presents a critical analysis of the cultural identity of woman. She asks the question "What is a woman? How is she constructed differently from men?" She answers - "She is constructed differently by men". What she means is that in patriarchal culture, man is the dominating subject [i.e. from his point of view the world is seen] and man represents humanity. Woman is seen as the negative object "the other" i.e. man describes woman as something which he is not and doesn't want to be. For instance,

we come across the word 'man kind' to represent the entire humanity, so also the use of pronoun 'he' when we are referring to human being in general. That's why de Beauvoir says "One is not born a woman but becomes one". Her statements have become fundamental issues of modern feminism. She also presents in her book, the great collective myth of women in the work of many male writers (i.e. how male writers create myths about women).

S.A.Q. What are reasons for women not achieving their aims according to Virginia Woolf?

S.A.Q. Are women different from men according to de Beauvoir?

7.4. Modern Feminist Criticism

7.4.1. Beginnings:

In America, modern feminist criticism was inaugurated by Mary Ellman's 'Thinking about Women' (1968). In her book, she wittily and very deftly discusses the derogatory stereotypes of women in literature written by men and also how some women writers present alternative subversive points in their own writings. But, the feminist criticism got a big boost with the publication of Kate Millet's 'Sexual Politics'. By "politics", Millet refers to the mechanisms that express and enforce the relations of power in society. She analyses western social arrangements and institutions and comes to a conclusion that they are indirect ways of manipulating power in such a way that the subordination of women and

dominance of men continues. She also attacks Freud's Psychoanalytic theory for its male bias. She analyses selected passages by famous writers like D.H. Lawrence, Henry Miller, Norman Mailer, Jean Genet reveals how these writers aggrandize (to make great) their aggressive phallic (male) selves and degrade (to make somebody less respectful) women as submissive sexual objects in their fictional fantasies.

S.A.Q. How according to Kate Millet subordination of women continues?

7.4.2. The Movement:-

Since 1969, there has been an explosion of feminist writings so much so that the feminist movement showed "the urgency and excitement of a religious awakening" in the words of Elaine Showalter. There is no single theory or vantage point for the movement as feminists in different countries adapted various critical theories like psychoanalytic, Marxist and different strands of post-structuralist theories to propose their own theory.

Whether it is the English or French or American feminist criticism based on the Marxist, or psychoanalytic or post structural interpretations, various feminist theories share certain assumptions and concepts. Based on these concepts the feminist critics explore the factor of sexual difference and privilege in production of literature and the form and content, the reception and the critical analysis and evaluation of works of literature.

7.5. The Basic Assumptions of all Feminists:

7.5.1. Patriarchal Western Culture: All feminists believe that Western civilization is pervasively patriarchal i.e. it is male centred and

controlled. It is organised and conducted in such a way that women remain subordinate to men in all spheres of life - familial, religious, political, economic, social, legal and artistic. In all the writings since the Bible in Hebrew and Greek philosophical writings, man is seen as the human norm and woman is defined by negative reference to man, 'the Other'. She is seen as a kind of 'non-man' who lacks male organs, male powers and male character traits which have achieved the most important scientific and technical achievements and major works of civilization and culture. Women in the process of their growing up and socializing are taught to internalize the conscious and unconscious idea of male superiority and thus, derogate their own sex and cooperate in their own subordination and marginalization in society. Ibsen's 'A Doll's House' shows how Nora is made to behave like a child, a squirrel before her husband.

S.A.Q. Why do we call the Western civilization as patriarchal? <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/>

7.5.2. *Concept of Gender*: Feminists believe that one's sex i.e. male or female is determined by one's anatomy or organs of the body. But, gender, the traits which we call masculine or feminine in identity or behavior, are largely cultural constructs. In short, culture and civilization create what is to be masculine and what is to be feminine. As the culture and civilization have been pervasively patriarchal, Simone de Beauvoir says "One is not born, but rather becomes a woman". By cultural process, masculine has come to be identified with active, dominating, adventurous, rational, creative; the feminine in complete contrast has come to mean passive, acquiescent, timid, emotional and conventional.

S.A.Q. You have read about gender. Now tell which one do we get by birth – sex or gender?

7.5.3. *Classics and Patriarchal Ideology*: The feminists further assume that all those writings which are traditionally considered great are those writings, till very recently, written by men and for men. They are pervaded by the patriarchal ideology. A typical great literary work focuses on male protagonists - Oedipus [Sophocles' 'Oedipus Rex'], Ulysses, Hamlet [Shakespeare's 'Hamlet'], Tom Jones [Henry Fielding's 'Tom Jones'], Faust [Goethe's 'Faust'], the musketeers [Alexander Dumas' 'The Three Musketeers'], Captain Ahab [Melville's 'Moby Dick'], Huck Finn [Mark Twain's 'Huckleberry Finn'], Leopold Bloom [James Joyce's 'Ulysses']-these male protagonists show masculine traits, masculine ways of feeling and follow masculine interests in masculine fields of action. To these male characters, female characters, if at all they play a role, play a marginal and subordinate role. They are shown as complementary to male roles or as opposition to masculine desires or enterprises, as Penelope in Tennyson's 'Ulysses'. Such works lacking in autonomous female role models implicitly address to male readers. The female reader is either left as an outsider or is made to identify herself with the male subject, against her own self and assume male values and ways of perceiving, feeling and acting. It is believed by feminists that the traditional aesthetic categories and criteria for analyzing and appraising literary works are also infused with masculine assumptions, interests and ways of reason; even though they are presented as objective, disinterested and universal. So, the way selections are made, rankings are given for literary texts have in fact been tacitly but thoroughly gender biased.

S.A.Q. What role do female characters play in the so called classics, according to feminists?

7.6. Feminists from English Speaking Countries - Their Work

Feminists from English speaking countries like England and America are mainly interested in reconstituting the ways we deal with literature because they want to do justice to the female point of view, female concerns and values.

7.6.1. The Resisting Reader: One important way of reconstituting the ways we deal with literature, according to them, is to make woman a resisting reader. Judith Feterly in her book 'The Resisting Reader' says that resisting reader is one who resists the author's intentions and desires to bring to light and counter the covert (hidden) sexual bias written into a literary work.

7.6.2. Distorted Images of Women: Another prominent procedure is to identify recurrent and distorting images of women especially in the novels and poems written by men. Feminists notice that the images of woman fall into two antithetical patterns. On the one hand, the images are idealized projections of men's desires like Madonna, the muses of the arts, Dante's Beatrice, the pure innocent virgin "the Angel in the House" of Coventry Patmore. On the other hand, the images are demonic projections of men's sexual resentments and terrors like Eve and Pandora as sources of all evil; destructive sensual temptress like Delilah and Circe or malign witch or castrating mother.

S.A.Q. Feminists find two kinds of images of women in literature written by men. They are _____ and _____.

All feminists do not simply dismiss all the literature written by men as biased. Some feminists do identify male writers who in their view, have managed to raise above the sexual prejudices of their time and understand and represent the social and cultural pressures which force women to take a negative or subsidiary social role. To such category belong authors like Chaucer, Shakespeare, Samuel Richardson, Henrik Ibsen and G.B. Shaw.

S.A.Q. All are feminists against the men's literature?

7.6.3. Gynocriticism : - A number of feminists concentrate on women as a writers in their attempt at the revisioning the ways how the literature is dealt with. Elaine Showalter calls it 'Gynocriticism'. It is a criticism which concerns itself with developing a specifically female framework to deal with literature written by women. Patricia Meyer Spacks' 'The Female Imagination' on English and American novels of the last three hundred years; Ellen Moer's 'Literary Women' on major women novelists and poets in England, America and France; Elaine Showalter's 'A Literature of Their Own' and Sandra Gilbert and Susan Gubar's 'The Mad woman in the Attic' come under this category

(a) One important concern of gynocritics has been to identify feminine subject matters in literature by women like domesticity, pregnancy, gestation, nurturing etc.

(b) Another important concern was to uncover in literary history a female tradition - how women writers derived inspiration and support from earlier women writers and in turn became inspiration for later women writers.

(c) Gynocritics also try to show that there is a distinctive mode of experience i.e. a woman's way of thinking, feeling, valuing and perceiving oneself and the outer world. One aspect of this attempt is to specify the traits of a woman's language or separate feminine style of speech and writing even sentence structure, characteristic figures and imagery.

(d) Some gynocritics began to study a great number of women's domestic and sentimental novels which were either perfunctorily noted or derogatorily dismissed from standard histories even though they were very popular at the time of their production.

(e) One of the most important goals of gynocritics as well as other feminists has been to enlarge, reorder or in some extreme cases displace the literary canon i.e. the works which have come to be termed as classical.

Feminist studies, thus, has led to the raise of the status of many women authors hitherto neglected or completely overlooked by scholars and critics like Anne Finch, Elizabeth Barret Browning, Aphra Ben, Kate Chopin etc.

S.A.Q. Fill in the Blanks and show how far you have understood the concept of Gynocriticism.

Gynocriticism is concerned with

- 1) Developing a _____ to deal with literature
- 2) Identifying _____ in literature by women.
- 3) Studying _____ which have dismissed from standard literary history.

4) Reordering the _____ to give place to women writers.

7.7 French Feminism

If English speaking feminists are engaged in empirical and thematic studies of writings by and about women, the French feminists have been dealing with the theory of the role of gender in writing, based on post-structuralist theories and Jacques Lacan's reworking of Freudian psychoanalysis. While English speaking feminists were dealing with demonstrable and specific evidence of the male bias in language (words such as 'mankind' for all human beings), the French feminists go a step further claim that all western languages are irredeemably male - engendered, male constituted and male dominated.

The French feminists accept Lacan's view that all discourse [all verbal construction in both written as well as spoken] is 'Phallogocentric' i.e. it is centred and organized through the implicit reference to phallus (man) both as its prime signifier and power source. They also believe that phallogocentrism manifests itself not only in vocabulary and syntax but also in its rigorous rules of logic and in its tendency for fixed classifications and oppositions and in its criteria for what is traditionally consider to be valid evidence and objective knowledge.

S.A.Q. According to French feminists what are the ways the phallogocentrism appear?

So, the basic problem of French feminist is how to establish the possibility of woman's language which does not get automatically appropriated (get mixed and therefore changed) into the phallogocentric language. Because such an appropriation would force women to accept the linguistic features which impose marginality, subservience and even linguistic non-entity on women. Various French feminists have tried to solve this problem.

7.7.1. Helene Cixous

Cixous uses Jacques Lacan's idea of pre-linguistic stage of a child to posit her idea of *écriture féminine*. Lacan talks of pre-oedipal stage of a child where it sees itself as a part of mother. He calls it the 'Imaginary'. When father breaks this blissful relationship; the child enters the symbolic mode. With the symbolic mode, the child learns the differential system of language of the father. The unity felt by the child with the mother is suppressed. That is why Lacan calls language as 'phallogocentric'. Cixous talks of the existence of *écriture féminine* or feminine writing in its early stages in the imaginary mode. The *écriture féminine* is unified and abolishes all categories and is open ended. The mother is at the centre of this feminine writing. So, the 'Imaginary' is the realm of feminine. Once the child acquires the differential language of the father, this vital source of language is tamed and codified by the laws of the father. So, in Cixous' view, this pre-linguistic and unconscious potentiality shows up in all those texts which abolish all repressions, undermine and subvert the fixed signification, the logic and closure of phallogocentric language of men and open out into a joyous free play of meanings.

7.7.2. Luce Irigaray

Irigaray, on the other hand, says woman's writing can evade male monopoly and the risk of appropriation into existing system, if it establishes as its generative principle the diversity, fluidity and multiple

possibility inherent in the structure and erotic function of female sexual organs and the distinctive nature of female experience as against the monolithic phallus.

7.7.3. Julia Kristeva

Kristeva talks of the existence of a "chora" or pre-linguist, pre-oedipal and unsystematized signifying process which she called "semiotic". This process is centred on mother. It is repressed as we acquire the father controlled, syntactically ordered, logical language which she names "symbolic". But the semiotic process is present in the symbolic realm but as an absence or contradiction. The semiotic process breaks in a revolutionary way as heterogeneous destructive causality (as found in the avant-garde poetry whether written by men or women) which disrupts and dispenses the authoritarian "subject" and comes out of the oppressive order and rationality of standard discourse which is the product of the law of the father and pushes women to a negative and marginal status.

7.8. Recent Developments:

In recent years, a number of feminist critics have used post-structuralist concepts to challenge the basic concepts like the idea of "woman". This they do because they point out the existence of differences and contrary views within supposedly monolithic patriarchal culture. Further, they emphasize the inherent linguistic instability in the basic concept of woman or feminine as they realise that race, class, nationality and historical situation bring diversity to female identity. Black feminists and lesbian feminists are accusing the earlier feminists to have developed idea only with reference to white upper class women, which in practice becomes a part of patriarchal power. Judith Butler in two influential books, has opposed the notion that the feminist movement requires a feminine identity i.e. the essential factors that define woman as a woman. She says the fundamental features which define gender are social and

cultural productions that produce the illusory effect of being natural. Butler proposes that we consider gender as a "performative" - that to be masculine or feminine or homosexual is not something one is, but a pre-established condition that one repeatedly enacts.

7.9. Conclusion

Feminist criticism is very recent in origin. But it has been expanding in volume and range every year. There exist a number of specialized feminist journals and publishing houses. Universities are offering courses in women's literature, Women's Studies and feminist criticism. Women's writing is getting an ever-increasing attention in anthologies, periodicals, and conferences. Of all the critical and theoretical innovations of recent decades, Feminism which deals with effects of sexual difference in writing, interpretation and assessment of literature seems to be the most prominent one, with enduring effects on literary history, criticism and academic instruction.

7.10. Summing Up

In this Unit you have come to understand various concepts related to Feminism and Feminist Criticism. You have also learnt the philosophical background to them. You have come to know the different theories that Feminists of different propose.

Questions: 15 marks

- 1) What are the basic assumptions that feminists share?
- 2) What is Gynocriticism? What are the views that are proposed under it?
- 3) How do French Feminists differ from the English Speaking Feminists?

Questions: 10 Marks

- 1) Write a note on the precursors to Feminism.
- 2) Briefly write on the French Feminists

3) What work has been done by the Feminists of English Speaking countries?

Suggested Reading for Block Two:

Glossary of Literary Terms (seventh edition) by M.H. Abrams

History of English Literature by H. Hudson

A Background to the Study of English Literature by B. Prasad

A Critical History of English Literature by David Daiches

Concise Cambridge History to English Literature Ed by G. Sampson