UNIT 1: THE ANGLO-SAXON PERIOD

UNIT STRUCTURE

1.1 Learning Objectives

1.2 Introduction

1.3 The Anglo-Saxons

1.4 Major Literary Forms

1.5 Let us Sum up

1.6 Answers to Check Your Progress

1.7 Further Reading

1.8 Model Questions

1.1 LEARNING OBJECTIVES

After going through this unit, you will be able to:

- discuss the Anglo-Saxon period in a detailed manner
- explain the major literary forms of the Anglo-Saxon period
- explore some of the major literary works by the Anglo-Saxon writers
- gain an idea on the development of English literature starting from the Anglo-Saxon period

1.2 INTRODUCTION

The Anglo-Saxon period in the history of English literature covers the period from the middle of the 5th century CE to the Norman Conquest of 1066. Around 450 CE, three major Germanic tribes, the Jutes, the Saxons and the Angles entered the British Isles. These invaders gradually adapted to the local culture of the Celts whom they had displaced, leading to the production of a language that came to be known as Old English. Later invaders from Denmark, Norway and Sweden, the Scandinavian Vikings, made different parts of England their home and led to further modification of the language. These Germanic Anglo-Saxon tribes embraced Christianity in the 7th century and developed a literature in the written form. This literature is known as Anglo Saxon literature or Old English literature.

did not appear to have influence Old English literature. By the beginning of the fifth century, harassed by the invading Anglo-Saxons, the Romans abandoned Britain and by the middle of the fifth century, the Jutes, Angles and Saxons who came in successive bands, established permanent settlements on the island. These Anglo-Saxon tribes were barbarians and led a semi-pastoral life and basic agricultural practies.

They were war-like and many earned their livelihood through piracy, and looting and pillaging. By nature, they were also ferocious, cruel, strong, courageous and deeply loyal to their chieftains or kings, and comrades. These qualities found a strong expression in their literature. The Anglo-Saxon conquest of the British Isles took place over a period of nearly 150-200 years. While the earlier invaders initially settled on the eastern and southern shores, they gradually made in-roads into the interior of the island by defeating the early Roman invaders. In course of time, the Angles settled in the east and north, the Saxons in the south, and the Jutes, who were numerically smaller, in the region of Kent. They established separate kingdoms which were often at war with one another as well as with the Britons. The Britons tried in vain to resist the onslaught of the Anglo-Saxons and by the seventh century, the Anglo-Saxons occupied almost the entire region that is present day England.

The Anglo-Saxon conquest virtually destroyed the earlier Celtic and Roman civilisation. They burnt cities, slaughtered the inhabitants and occupied the land. Establishing themselves as masters of the farmlands, these barbaric warriors were surrounded by bondsmen and slaves drawn from among the defeated people. It is believed that many Britons were kept alive as slaves and wives. In course of time, the Anglo-Saxons transformed into a race of farmers and developed a flourishing trade with the European continent. Towards the end of the sixth century, Christian missionaries from Rome had arrived and in 597 CE Saint Augustine landed in Kent and converted the kingdom. By the middle of the seventh century, after fierce fighting, Christianity had been established in most of the Anglo-Saxon kingdoms located in the southern half of the island. In the northern part, in Ireland, meanwhile, Christianity had already been established by simple

Their storytelling was often accompanied by the harp. They also began to compose formal poetry and many minstrels also entertained at the courts of the barbarian chieftain or king or warriors during feasts with tales of heroes and battles and the achievements of their patron. Although, the majority of these popular ballads have been lost over time, some of them fired the popular imagination and developed into formal epic poetry. Very often, the minstrels composed these epics by stringing together different ballads that deal with the exploits of a single hero or with a single event. One of the most popular surviving epic is that of *Beowulf*.

Beowulf consisting of about three thousand lines is one of the most well-known Anglo -Saxon epic poems. This poem had its origins in the European continent and was carried to England in the form of ballads by the Anglo-Saxons. Portions of this epic are of Scandinavian origin probably brought to England by Danish or Norwegian pirates. It developed into a formal epic poem during the seventh and eighth century. This powerful poem narrates the story of the hero Beowulf who comes from the sea to the aid of King Hrothgar and delivers him from the monster Grendel. Following this, King Hrothgar and his people are confronted with the wrath of Grendel's mother who seeks revenge. Ultimately, the latter is also killed by Beowulf. A triumphant Beowulf returns home and his heroic deeds are rewarded by his tribe, who make him their king. However, his kingdom is threatened by a fire-breathing dragon. Beowulf dies a hero's death while killing the beast and saving his people from harm.

The picture presented in *Beowulf* of the life of the upper caste warriors belonging to the northern Germanic tribes is incomplete. One sees only glimpses of the later period of barbarism of these tribes in England and the larger continent. It is nevertheless an interesting description. War, feasting and hunting seem to be the chief occupations of Hrothgar and his lot, if the depictions by the poets/bards of his life are anything to go by. The poem maintains a grim and sombre mood throughout its deployment and very rarely betrays traces of delight in the beauty that the world has to offer. For the greater part of the poem, hardy satisfaction at performing well as a

is seen in the religious beliefs of Providence and dependence on God and Christ, where the latter replaced the kings of old.

Anglo-Saxon Prose, The West Saxon Prose Period :

This period is marked by the attacks on the Anglo-Saxons by the non-Christian Danes or Northmen who hailed from the Scandinavian Peninsula and the neighbouring coast. In the ninth century, the Danes repeatedly attacked and looted England, conquered Northumbria, destroyed the churches and monasteries, resulting in an almost complete destruction of learning. King Alfred (871-901 CE) of Wessex, the region of the West Saxons, tried to negotiate peace by ceding to the Danes the entire north-eastern part of the island. Following the restoration of peace and stability, Alfred worked hard to restore learning in his kingdom. He himself translated manuals of history, philosophy and religion from Latin into Anglo Saxon. His greatest work was the *Anglo Saxon Chronicle*, a series of annals starting with the Christian era, kept at various monasteries that recorded the most important historical events mainly of England up to the eleventh century. These chronicles are characterised by brief accounts bereft of any details except for the spirited narrative that deals with the exploits of Alfred, where the narrator is sometimes roused to the verse form. The two important extant pieces of Anglo Saxon poetry of the West Saxon period were written in the tenth century. These describe the two great battles against invading Northmen at Brunanburgh and Maldon.

The West Saxon period has produced literature of relatively little significance. Most of the writing that survives this period is generally didactic and riddled with exaggerated symbolism, in the form of religious prose – hagiographies, sermons, biblical and monastic literature. Meanwhile, several wars ravaged the country. Post Alfred's death, within fifty years, his descendants had managed to seize back England from the Danes (most of whom till the land today comprise a large segment of the 'English' race). However, towards the close of the tenth century, the Danish again emerged from the Baltic lands, unleashing death and destruction upon the Anglo-Saxons. By the eleventh century, many had entered the Christian fold. And in the beginning of the twelfth century, Canute a Christian Danish king began

The verse chronicles are marked by ingenuity in style, where romances were passed off as works of history. *Brut* is marked by its use of assonance, rhyme and similes. Robert of Gloucester's untitled verse chronicle amounted to almost twelve thousand lines. Robert Mannyng of Brunne wrote, *The Story of England* in 1338, which though highly unoriginal, is known for its alexandrine couplets. With the founding of several abbeys during this period in time, religious and didactic poetry flourished, mostly written in French, some in English. *The Ormulum* by Orm, an Augustinian monk, was intended to explain to "the ignorant" the Gospel and its interpretations. The much popular debate-verse *The Owl and the Nightingale* was written in octosyllabic couplets, and draws from the classical eclogue of Virgil and Theocritus. The poem is said to be an allegory of the clash between pleasure and asceticism – symbolised by the nightingale and the owl respectively. It has also been seen as an allegory for the clash of literary forms of courtly love poetry and religious didactic poetry.

William of Waddington's *Handling Synne* discusses among other things, the Ten Commandments, the Seven Deadly Sins, and sacrilege with well-laid examples. The anonymous poem "Cursor Mundi" provides a spiritual history of the world from the Creation to Doomsday. Middle English Romances were written in French and catered to the upper class. The use of English in this literary form commences only from the mid-thirteenth century. The romances are distinguished by the tales of knights, the supernatural, where love spurs on or acts as an excuse for the adventures of the hero.

The earliest romances were always in verse, ranging from one thousand to six thousand lines, sometimes even longer, characterised by eight syllable couplets and the use of tail rhyme – these share some similarities with the epic, but do not follow much unity of action, with the characters reduced to types. Classical history and legends provided sources for these romances. *The Matter of Britain, The Matter of Rome,* and *The Matter of France* are significant texts of this category.

Arthur and Merlin and *Le Morte Arthur* were other significant texts, the latter almost ballad-like in its narrative.

emotionalism exhibiting vivacity, love of novelty, bravery, but an impractical nature. The second characteristic is the exhibition of a delicate sensitivity to beauty and fantasy.

Ans to Q3: This had far-reaching consequences in the mediaeval period when a common religion bound Britain with Rome, resulting in spiritual efflorescence.

Ans to Q4: *Beowulf* consisting of about three thousand lines is one of the most well-known Anglo Saxon epic poems.

Ans to Q5: The Norman Conquest at the Battle of Hastings in 1066 marks the end of this early Anglo Saxon literature which would now enter into a new phase after the death of King Harold, the last Anglo Saxon ruler.

Ans to Q6: With the Norman Conquest, French emerged as the language of the elite.



1.7 FURTHER READING

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3) Sanders, Andrew. *The Short Oxford History of English Literature*.



1.8 MODEL QUESTIONS

Q1. Give a detailed explanation on the history of the Anglo-Saxon period.

Q2. Discuss the major literary forms of the Anglo-Saxon Period.

Q3. Write short notes on the following:

a. Anglo-Saxon Poetry

b. Oral Forms of Story-telling in early Anglo-Saxon period

c. Anglo-Norman Literature

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language. The Norman Conquest began with the defeat of Harold, last of the Saxon kings at the hands of William, Duke of Normandy at the battle of Hastings. (1066).The conquest of England by the Normans first seemed to destroy the literature and language of the English people because French was the language of the upper class, courts and schools and literature following three centuries after the battle of Hastings. However, centuries of contact with the Saxon made them accept the English language and finally English became the language of the people. The Norman people brought with them a rich cultural heritage and the practical ideals of Roman (French) civilisation to England. They were also responsible for bringing in a centralised government in England thereby developing nationality among the people that also had a major inference on the growth of a national literature. English which became the medium of literature has changed in form as it had been when the *Homilies* of **Aelfric** were written. Thus, English came to be known by the term 'Middle English'.

2.3 LITERARY FEATURES OF THE AGE

Before proceeding to a discussion of the literary features of the Medieval age, it is important for us to know about the social and political context of the Medieval age which is responsible for shaping the literary context of the period. William, the Conqueror introduced feudalism in England under which the land became the property of the King. The feudal system also implemented rules under which all 'vassals' (holders of land) owed military service to the king, thereby, affirming the strength of the monarchy. It is to be noted that the Roman Catholic Church was the unifying force of the age. It led towards the integration of belief and practice of the medieval men. Medieval literature is replete with religious writings.

Now let us proceed towards the discussion of the effect of Black Death and the Peasants' Revolt during the Medieval period. The Black Death was a bacteria-born disease and the origin of this plague was traced to the Gobi desert in Mongolia. The great Plague approximately reduced one-third of the English population thereby leading to depopulation. The cities

the individual authors seemed much less important, and therefore, many important works were never attributed to any specific person.

Development of Prose: Although, the number of prose works were less in comparison to poetry, during the late fourteenth century the foundation of English style was considerably found to be in practice. The early prose works were either experimental or ***imitative***, but the later works were both original as well as individual as those in the works of Malory and Mandeville.

Beginning on a Modern Note: As the age progresses a modern note becomes apparent. It is modern in the sense that literature has become ***complacent*** of the established order. A spirit of criticism and 'a more searching interest in man's affairs' pervaded the literature of the period.

2.4 MAJOR LITERARY FORMS

The various literary forms of the Medieval Age are as discussed below:

2.4.1 Poetry

The most predominant literary form of the Medieval Age is poetry. It may be divided into the following points for convenience:

Chronicles: Chronicles are record of facts or events, in order of date. This period comprises a number of ***verse*** chronicles. The scope of a chronicle ranges from universal to local. Personal judgments along with legendary and mythical elements were included. The chronicles are distinguished by their use of stories and inventiveness. It is important to note that these chronicles seem to fit into the romance category for its use of incredible adventures. The *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle* is the earliest example of an Anglo-Saxon or Old English chronological registry. Layamon's *Brut* is the most important of the English rhyming chronicles. It was written by Layamon, a monk of Arley Kings in Worcestershire. The 16,000 long alliterative lines of this chronicle narrates the history of Britain from the landing of Brutus to the death of Cadwallader.

The vocabulary is archaic and the poem is refined in its characteristic Anglo-Saxon bearing a French influence. Robert of Gloucester is known

peculiarities of style and manner that these three poems were written by the same author who wrote “Sir Gawain and the Greene Knight”. The “Pearl” is an intensely human and realistic picture of a father’s grief for his little daughter, Margaret. Of all the three ***alliterative*** poems, the “Pearl” is undoubtedly the finest. “Purity” moralises on the basis of Biblical stories, while “Patience” is a paraphrase of the book of Jonah. These two poems are of less interest and beauty in comparison to “Pearl”. “Sir Gawain and the Greene Knight” is one of the finest metrical romances of the age. It is popular for its mastery of plot handling, characterisation, realism and the use of alliteration.



LET US KNOW

Geoffrey of Monmouth: Geoffrey is one of the most significant authors in the development of the Arthurian legends. He was a cleric and one of the major figures in the development of British historiography. It was Geoffrey who, in his *Historia Regum Britanniae* (completed in 1138) located Arthur in the line of British kings.

William of Malmesbury: William of Malmesbury is one of the major historians of the medieval age. His best-known works are the *Gestaregum Anglorum (Deeds of the Kings of England)* and its sequel, *Historia novella (Recent History)*. These works are the record of English history from the Anglo-Saxon invasion of 449 to the period of 1142.

Biblical Noah: According to the Biblical account, Noah was the tenth of the pre-Flood Patriarchs. He was the only righteous man who pleased God in a world overtaken by corruption and evil. Noah was instructed by God to save a remnant of life by building an ark since God has planned for a catastrophic flood to destroy all life on earth. He died 350 years after the Flood, at the age of 950. He was a hero of the Christian faith.

Book of Jonah: The Book of Jonah is an Old Testament story which narrates how the prophet Jonah refused to follow the Lord. The book of Jonah emphasises on God’s patience and loving kindness, and His willingness to give a second chance to those who disobey him. However, God convinced him to obey and carry out the Lord’s plan by creating some supernatural events. Thus, Jonah did what he was asked to do by the Lord but the book ends by projecting or highlighting Jonah as a bitter man.

Chaucer's four dream visions namely, "The Book of Duchess", "The House of Fame", "The Parliament of Fowls" and the "Prologue to the Canterbury Tales". Other 14th century dream visions include John Gower's ***Confessio Amantis***. In dream vision the narrator falls asleep usually in a spring landscape and dreams of the events in which he is often guided by a human or an animal with some of the dream elements being allegorical.

Lyric Poetry:

In the original Greek, 'lyric' signifies a song rendered to the accompaniment of a ***lyre***. In some current usages, lyric still retains the sense of a poem even as it is written in a musical form. For example, the 'hymn' is a lyric on a religious subject that is intended to be sung. The lyrics are seen to mirror the history of English literature. The ***sheer*** bulk of extant anonymous lyrics demonstrate the popularity of this genre. By 1310, there was a ***collated*** collection of some forty different lyrics. The earliest lyrics composed shortly after the Norman Conquest of 1066 were shorter and frequently accompanied by musical notations, indicating that they were intended to be sung or danced to. By the end of the 14th century there was a distinct change in style and content of the lyric. Of the best known lyrics are: "Luve Rone" of Thomas de Hales (1250), 'Springtime' (1300), etc. The 12th century St. Godric (died 1170) is the earliest known lyricist. Three hymns are attributed to him including the devotional Sainte Marye Virgine, which is addressed to the Virgin Mary, asking her to receive him, defend him and cleanse him from sin so that he can be brought back to God. Geoffrey Chaucer was also a skillful lyric poet who was well-known lyric poetry namely are "To Rosemounde, Truth", "Complaint to His Purse", among others.

Ballad: A ballad is a song which tells a story and is orally transmitted and deals with a theme which is often tragic. Ballads were simple poems and were initially intended only for the upper classes. Traditional ballads are communicated orally and are simple poems compared to the literary ballads like Keats' "La Belle Dame Sans Merci". "Merrie Greenwood Men" is one of the ballads which help us in understanding about the common

are marked by features such as rapidity of narration and humour that quickly catches the interest of readers or listeners.

The Fabliau: The fabliau which flourished in England during the 14th century is a verse tale. Amusement is the main concern of a fabliau. Generally comic or sometimes satiric, a fabliau deals with characters belonging to the middle class or lower class. The ***cuckolding*** of an unsuspecting husband is one of the popular topics of a fabliau. The fabliau exploits the story for its own sake, being solely intended to amuse the listener. It illustrates no moral precept and has no ***didactic*** purpose. The fabliau, with few exceptions, is concerned with the ordinary people. The most important feature of fabliau is that it is always a humorous tale. "The Miller's Tale" and "The Reeve's Tale" by Chaucer are a few examples of fabliau.



CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Q 1: State whether true or false:

a) Poetry was the dominating literary form during the Middle English period. **(true/false)**

b) Layamon's ***Brut*** is an example of a ballad. **(true/false)**

c) *The Cursor Mundi* (1320) is a religious work of an encyclopedic nature dealing almost with all the stories of the Old and New Testament. **(true/false)**

d) A fabliau is a short comic or satiric tale in prose. **(true/false)**

Q 2: Fill in the blanks:

a) The Norman Conquest began with the defeat of Harold, last of the Saxon kings at the hands of William, Duke of Normandy at the battle of ……..

b) Chronicles are record containing facts or events, in order of ……

c) The three literary ideals which pervaded the medieval romances are love, chivalry and ……

d) "The Miller's Tale" and "The Reeve's Tale" by Chaucer are examples of ……

Q 3: What are the general characteristics of the literature during Medieval age?

is not only considered to be the predecessor of Elizabethan drama but also recognised as bearing an important tradition that held unique dramatic power.

2.4.3 Prose

During the Medieval Age, the state of prose was still in the immature stage since most of the literature of the Age found its expression through the medium of poetry. *The Ancrene Riwle* that is *Rule of the Anchoresses* (1225) is the most important of the early prose works. The book is well known for its excellent religious advice and comfort. It was written for three noble ladies who wished to live a religious life without becoming nuns or entering any religious orders. It was a ***manual*** designed to guide them in the life they had chosen. The Rule is 'moderation in everything' and a sense of broad humanity. It is worth mentioning that prose was used in the Medieval Age primarily to record information and instruct.

The Azenbite of Inwyt written by Dan Michel of Northgate in 1340 is a translation of a French work. However, it is of little importance. The prose was practical in purpose. It is interesting to note how the field of prose had extended. Sir John Mandeville's *Travels* presents a departure from the earlier prose works for its amusing quality rather than instructional value. The travels are full of incredible descriptions and ***anecdotes***. Apart from this, there was the translation of Bible which was attributed to John Wycliffe and also a prose version of Hidgen's *Polychronicon* by John of Trevisa. To conclude Wycliff's prose was not much refined or polished though at times it seemed to be precise and vigorous. Moreover, John Lydgate's ***Sermon*** was noteworthy.

2.5 IMPORTANT WRITERS

Let us discuss the notable writers of the Medieval or the Middle Age:

Geoffrey Chaucer: Geoffrey Chaucer (1340?-1400) is the most prominent writer of the medieval age and regarded as the 'Father of English Poetry' and the first of the great moderns. His works can be divided into three classes corresponding to the three periods of his life. The best known

French and Italian sources. Although he borrowed his plot, the style was his own. His greatness as a narrative poet lies in his infusion of humour. Chaucer enlarged the scope of the poet by introducing humour, pathos, excellent characterisation and minute observation. These Chaucerian features contributed towards the development of a new form and shape in English literature.

William Langland: There is very little information about Langland. The Vision (something seen in the imagination as if in a dream) of *"Piers the Plowman"* is a poem written in verse (most of the parts written by Langland). It is narrated in the dream sequence on how most people preferred the false treasures of this world to the true treasures of heaven.

John Gower: The three major works of Gower are- *Speculum Meditantis* (written in French), *Vox Clamantis* (written in Latin) and *Confessio Amantis* (written in English). His works are noteworthy because of the illustration of the unstable state of contemporary English literature.

Sir John Mandeville: Sir John Mandeville whose identity is anonymous was a knight who crossed the sea in 1322 and travelled to many strange regions. He compiled and published a French book of *Travels* between 1357 and 1371. This French work was very popular and it has been translated into several languages, including English.

John Wycliffe: John Wycliffe was a priest who attacked many of the religious ideas of his time. He was born in Yorkshire in 1320. He wrote many Latin books in support of his revolutionary opinions. He is credited with his English translation of the Bible.

Sir Thomas Malory: He is best known for his prose work, *Morte D'Arthur*. Nearly all we know about Malory is found in the preface of Caxton, the first printer of the book. Many tales gathered around Arthur and his knights. Malory's prose expresses deep feelings in musical sentences.

writings. It was during the second half of the fourteenth century that medieval literature reached its peak.

After having gone through the unit, you will certainly gain an idea on the ways in which the Church and religion played a significant role in the literature of this period. By now you must have gained an idea on the various forms of poetry which was the dominating literary form and also on Medieval drama and prose. The distinguished writers of the Medieval age like Chaucer, Gower, Langland and others are also discussed here. Apart from this, we get to know that books were printed for the first time by Caxton during this period. We are also aware of how most of the literature produced during this period was allegorical in nature. However, a modern note appeared in the writings of Chaucer in the course of time. His *"Canterbury Tales"* is an example which set the tone of realism in literature and is a representative work of the period.



2.7 FURTHER READING

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3) Lambdin, Laura Cooner et al (Eds) (2002). *A Companion to Old and Middle English Literature*. London: Greenwood Press.

4) Long, William J. (2007). *English Literature: Its History and Significance for the Life of English Speaking World.* Delhi: A.I.T.B.S Publishers.

5) Ker, W. P. *English Literature: Medieval*. London: Williams and Norgate. (Source:www.archive.org)



2.8 ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Ans to Q No 1: a. True b. False c. True d. False.

Ans to Q No 2: a. Hastings. b. date. c. religion. d. fabliau.

UNIT 3: THE ROLE OF THE CHURCH

UNIT STRUCTURE

3.1 Learning Objectives

3.2 Introduction

3.3 The Role of the Church in Medieval Age

3.4 The Influence of the Church on English Literature.

3.5 Let us Sum up

3.6 Answers to Check Your Progress

3.7 Further Reading

3.8 Model Questions

3.1 LEARNING OBJECTIVES

After going through this unit, you will be able to:

- describe the role of the Church in the Medieval Age.
- discuss the influence of the Church on English Literature.
- highlight the growth of English drama and poetry through the Medieval Age.

3.2 INTRODUCTION

This unit takes up the role played by the Church during Middle Age in the growth and development of English Literature. The developments in English Literature what we see today, trace its origin in the Medieval Period. The Church became very powerful during Middle Age. Organised religion, linguistic system, growth of art and dramatic performances were some of the major features of the Middle Age. There was political chaos due to extreme power struggle among the leaders in the realm of the social structure during this Age. It is in this context that the Church had acquired an important place for medieval man. The Church became so dominant in their lives, that they were blinded in terms of their own rational perspectives. Most of the Codes of Conduct were drawn from the Church's Doctrine. The Church, other than imparting moral values, imposed social order that



CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Q1: Who is considered to be the father of English Literature?

Q2: Make a list of the major writers of the Medieval English Literature.

Q3: Do you think Church is responsible for the growth and development of English Literature?

Q4: Do you think Medieval English Literature is nothing but a Christian moral teaching?

Q5: State whether True or false:

a) Chaucer is the playwright of *Everyman*.

b) In "Piers Ploughman" Ploughman is the symbolic representation of Jesus Christ.

c) John Gower belongs to the Age of Chaucer.

d) Medieval Age is also known as the Age of Chaucer.

e) Monastery of Iona was founded by Columba in 563 A.D.

3.3 THE ROLE OF THE CHURCH IN MEDIEVAL LIFE

In Britain the advent of Christianity trace back to the 563 A.D, the time when the Monastery of Iona was founded by Columba in Northern England. However, 597 A.D marks the systematic conversion of Britain under the Roman Influence. The Second Latin Influence on old English marks the Christianisation of Britain. The introduction of Christianity opened the epoch of building churches and establishment of monasteries. Schools were established thus producing many learned intellectuals in Britain. Since then, the Church paved the way of progress and development through 'education' which in turn moulded the English Society.

The church affected the daily life of the people in England in every field. The prevalence of the ceremonies in all the social and cultural institution, norms and codes of conduct drawn from the church's Doctrines moulded the medieval society. The church affected human behaviour itself. It became the single most influential and powerful institution in the medieval

chanting mournful hymns. Such situation helped the church to emerge as a powerful factor and thus influenced a lot in the growth of literature.



LET US KNOW

i. The Sacraments: The Catholic Church has Seven Holy Sacraments. The Sacraments are Sacrament of Baptism, Sacrament of Confirmation, Holy Eucharist, Confession, Anointment of the Sick, Priesthood and the Sacrament of Matrimony. A Catholic Christian is entitled to have only the six Sacraments. The Sacraments of the Ordination and Matrimony are not given to a same person. A person ordained Priest is not allowed to hold the Sacrament of Matrimony.

ii. The Seven Deadly Sins: According to Christianity, there are Seven Deadly Sins which leads one to hell. These are Pride, Envy (jealousy), Anger, Sloth (laziness), Covetousness, Gluttony and Lust.

ACTIVITY 3.1



i. Read any one works of the writers of the Medieval age mentioned above. See for yourself whether they reflect the religious influence of the age.ii. Try to find out other writers of the Medieval Age not mentioned in this unit from related sources and make an assessment of them to serve your purpose.

3.4 THE INFLUENCE OF THE CHURCH ON LITERATURE

It is often said that Literature reflects the contemporary society like a mirror. A close analysis of the medieval man's existence reveals the overwhelming influence of the Church. Both the Town and the village life was directed and determined by the Church in medieval period. The Parish Church, just like the towns and the market places, became the busy centre

that only Good Deeds will stand by him on his spiritual journey engages many conflicting issues of human life. The conditions of materialism/ spiritualism, good/evil, hell/heaven and corruption /salvation, etc. as depicted in the play, teaches one to perform Good Deeds. Morality plays were immensely influential and many of the elements of the morality plays were incorporated in the later theatrical structures of the Elizabethan playwrights like Shakespeare and Christopher Marlowe. Some of the existing Morality Plays are *The Castle of Perseverance, Mankind,* etc.

Christian moral teaching became the most essential purpose of literary works during Medieval Period. Prominent writers of English Literature like Geoffrey Chaucer, William Langland, John Gower, and William Dunbar dominated the age. Their works were directly or indirectly influenced by Christian teachings. They played an important role by laying a strong foundation to English poetry. Chaucer's "The Canterbury Tales" reveals both the good and bad effects of the Church. John Gower's *The Speculum Medantis* written in Latin is an elaborate allegory of the attacks of The Seven Deadly Sins and their Offspring upon the mankind. The poet, with a purpose of presenting moral development shows the wickedness of London; its dram-shops cheating merchants and shopkeepers, its slothful monks and friars, its vulture-like lawyers, and its lazy and rebellious labourers. His *Confessio Amantis* written in East Midland Dialect covering forty thousand octosyllabic lines illustrate the Seven Deadly Sins affecting love and lovers.

The main framework of story-telling through the introduction of stereotyped characters represents every walk of society except the two extremes of upper and the lower class; Chaucer highlights the influence of the Church in medieval England. The twenty nine pilgrims travelling to the Tomb of St. Thomas Becket, is initiated by the religious implications. However, the act of story-telling and the stories move beyond religion and becomes an important part of literary agenda. Chaucer is very particular in observing the human condition. The upper class people are not bothered by the religious implication and the lower class people are innocent recipients of what is told. The complexity of religious influence upon the society is seen in the life of middle class people. Thus, through the representation of the middle class society, Chaucer vividly highlights the influence of the Church on Medieval Man's life. Events like going on a pilgrimage served



3.5 LET US SUM UP

After having gone through the unit, you have learned that the most read literary works of the Medieval Age were saturated by the religious ingredients. The literary history reveals that the origin of recent dramatic performances dates back to the Medieval Age. Great literary figure like Chaucer whom the world recognises today as the Father of English Literature lived in Medieval Age and laid the strong foundation of the English Literature. Also the influence of the Church in the growth of English Literature cannot be undermined. Translation of the Bible by Wycliffe in about 1380 into English made it possible for the common people to know the Bible by themselves. This helped in the growth of conscious reader.

Almost all the literary works of Medieval Age possess religious implications. In dramatic performances, "Everyman" an anonymous text, played an important role in moulding the society. Everyman as a text survived as one of the oldest and the best read morality plays of the time. Thus, as it is said that literature is the mirror of the society, the medieval literature is a reflection of the Christian medieval society as Christianity had a strong hold upon the medieval man. Church and religious dictates was the ultimate authority and moulded the society with Christian morality. The Christian code of conduct determined the behaviour of the people. And its extensive influence also found a significant reflection in the thematic content, style of language symbolism and the overall characteristics of literature in the Medieval period.



3.6 ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Ans to Q. 1: Geoffrey Chaucer

Ans to Q. 2: Ref to 3.4 of the unit

Ans to Q. 3: Ref to unit 3.4 of the unit.

Ans to Q. 4: Ref to unit 3.4 of the unit

Ans to Q. 5: False

5. a): True b) True c) True d) True e) True

Ans to Q. 6: Ref. 3.3. of the unit

Ans to Q. 7: Ref. 3.4 of the unit

UNIT 4: THE RENAISSANCE I

UNIT STRUCTURE

4.1 Learning Objectives

4.2 Introduction

4.3 The Intellectual Context

4.4 Impact of the Renaissance on English Literature

4.5 Let us Sum up

4.6 Further Reading

4.7 Answers to Check Your Progress

4.8 Model Questions

4.1 LEARNING OBJECTIVES

After going through this unit, you will be able to:

- discuss the **Renaissance** as a major period in the revival of learning.
- explain how the period of 'Reformation' and 'Humanism' stemmed from the Renaissance.
- gain an idea on the ways in which the multiplicity of the Renaissance spread across Europe and how it influenced English Literature.

4.2 INTRODUCTION

The **"Renaissance"** first began as a cultural movement in Italy in the 14th century with renewed interests, in the fields of Classical learning and spread about a century later to the rest of Europe. You will be interested to know that the word **Renaissance** (***Rinascimento*** in Italian), means **"rebirth"** or **"to be reborn"** and it refers to the rebirth and the revival of learning. It also refers to the concept of **"enlightenment"** and how the Renaissance is likened to the emergence of man into the "light" of knowledge of the New world, from the assumptions of the Dark ages. The revival of classical antiquity started with the **fall of the Byzantine Empire** who were considered as the "**librarians of the world**" for their great collections of classical manuscripts and the great number of humanist scholars that resided in Constantinople, who had to flee to Italy after their homeland was

Renaissance scholars and artists reacted strongly against the medieval conventions in theology, literature, art, history, philosophy and all fields of learning and intellectual life. From the late 15th century, the invention of the printing press facilitated the widespread dissemination of knowledge but you must note, that the changes of the Renaissance took time and were not uniformly experienced all across Europe.

Taken as a whole, the Renaissance could be viewed as an intellectual approach in studying the secular and the worldly, through the revival of classical learning and the novel approaches to thought. There was a time when many Greek and non-Greek intellectuals fled to Italy during the 1453 **siege,** when the Ottoman Turks had captured Constantinople (now known as Istanbul) causing the fall of the Byzantium Empire. Historians often argue that these **émigré** intellectuals who had brought with them precious manuscripts in ancient Greek, had helped in fuelling the Renaissance. Some even mark the end of the Middle Ages with the fall of the Roman city and the Empire.

During this time, the money provided by the rich patrons, helped in the growth of interest and creativity in the liberal arts. From the 14th to the 16th century, wealth was brought into Italy through expansion of trade and commerce in Asia and Europe. Silver mining in Tyrol increased the flow of money and similarly the luxuries of the East brought home during the Crusades or the Holy Wars, added to the prosperity of the Italian cities of Genoa and Venice. The wealth in turn enabled the rich patrons like the Medici, an Italian Banking family to sustain geniuses and promote art and culture. **Lorenzo De Medici** promoted an enormous amount of art work and encouraged his own country men like **Leonardo Da Vinci**, **Sandro Botticelli** and **Michelangelo Buonarroti** to commission works from Florence's leading artists.

Throughout this early modern period, Humanist scholars shaped the intellectual landscape. **Humanism** was more a method of learning and different from the medieval scholastic mode. The Humanists adopted an empirical approach to assess the value of the ancient original texts. It is important to note that the Humanists based their education on the study of

In the 1330s Petrarch referred the ancient or '**antiqua**' to pre-Christian times and the new or '**nova**' to the Christian times. By the 15th century there was a self awareness and knowledge about the transformations of the time that were taking place among the intellectuals, the writers, scholars, artists and architects in Italy. They were using phrases such as '**modi antichi**' meaning 'in the antique manner' and '**alle romana et alla antica**' meaning 'in the manner of the Romans and the Ancients.' Thus, in employing the humanist mode of study, the Renaissance scholars searched with a new focus on the aspects of realism and human emotions in art.

There was a revival of **Neo-Platonism** which incorporated the works and the teachings of Plato, Aristotle and other Greek philosophers. The ideals of the harmony of the Universe and the possibilities of perfection in mankind that it contained had opened up the humanist ways of thinking. **Marsilio Ficino** and **Giovanni Pico della Mirandola** were the primary figures who brought together strands of mystic thought and Christianity together with an emphasis on Platonic ideas. Although it was dominant during the Renaissance, humanists did not reject Christianity although there was a difference in the way intellectuals approached religion as reflected in several areas of cultural life.

The Greek Christian works including the **Greek New Testament** which were brought back from Byzantium to Western Europe engaged the Western scholars. This new engagement with the great classical religious texts was promoted by humanists **Lorenzo Valla** and **Erasmus**. This paved way for the **16th century Protestant Reformation** which was initiated by **Martin Luther**, **John Calvin** and other early Protestant reformers who protested the fake doctrines, rituals, malpractices within the Church and the systemic corruption of the Church's Roman hierarchy. The focus on the Bible also called for the importance of education because some form of basic literary knowledge would familiarise the people to its teachings.

The importance of this movement was huge because the centuries of religious faith, attitudes and beliefs were suddenly replaced by a new way of thinking. **Protestantism** had originated with **Martin Luther's 95**

the opening worlds. It was not as if the new world rejected the old but it built upon the foundation of the old, with a new focus on man's abilities. In the case of new discoveries, the English physician **William Harvey** on the basis of a 16th century work in Italy, discovered the circulation of blood in the human anatomy in 1628. The Englishmen who made an impact in exploration and navigation of the seas were **Sir Francis Drake**, **Sir Richard Hawkins**, **Sir Richard Grenville**, **Thomas Cavendish** and **Richard Hakluyt**. The visual arts were less significant in the English Renaissance than the Italian Renaissance. The dominant art forms of the period were **literature and music**.



LET US KNOW

University Wits: The generation educated at Oxford and Cambridge Universities were collectively and popularly known as the University Wits. The names include Christopher Marlowe, Robert Greene, George Peele, Thomas Nashe and Thomas Lodge. Their works contributed to a wider popular appeal and using their poetry to make theatre, they breathed life into old classical models by dramatising issues and conflicts of the time and ushering in a new audience to the Renaissance theatres. Christopher Marlowe who was a major Elizabethan dramatist was considered the greatest of the group. The University Wits were the chief contributors to the rich heritage of pre-Shakespearean drama.



CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Q 1: State whether True or False:

a. Renaissance began as a cultural movement in Italy in the 14th century **(true/false)**

b. The Medieval world was a more homocentric in nature**.** **(true/false)**

c. The invention of printing press facilitated the widespread dissemination of knowledge. **(true/false)**

known as the father of English Literature today. Shakespeare along with the dramatists **Marlowe, Webster** and **Jonson** took English theatre to newer heights. Among the leading poets were **Sidney**, **Spenser**, **Donne**, **Milton** and the prominent prose writers were **Bacon**, **Nashe**, **Raleigh**, **Browne** and **Hooker**.

You must note that the Reformation and the century's cultural conflicts and changes were important in re-defining English literatures multiple identities. The **Authorised Version of the Bible (1611)** and the language of the ***Book of Common Prayer*** **(1549)** were also central to the interests of the time and had enduring effects on the English consciousness. The prayer book also served as a model of English prose and the Bible led to the development of contemporary Linguistics. The tradition of English literature gained strength and importance with the coming of the printing press by the mid 16th century. All the Tudor monarchs of the century were highly educated and so were most of the nobility and Italian literature had a considerable following and also provided much of the source of Shakespeare's plays**.**

Queen Elizabeth was herself a product of Renaissance humanism trained by **Roger Ascham** and wrote poems at critical moments of her life. There were women writers like **Anne Askew**, **Elizabeth Carey**, **Emilia Lanier**, **Martha Moulsworth** and **Lady Mary Wroth** but they were not well known or widely received during the period. This was because the male canons dominated English Literature.

The Tudor period saw the popularity and growth of the **Sonnet**, a fourteen lined form both as independent poems and part of sequences. It drew some major exponents like **Shakespeare**, **Spenser, Sidney, Drayton** and **Daniel**. It was **Wyatt** and **Surrey** who had originally brought the Italian form of the sonnet to England and it was made popular in the continent by Francesco Petrarch. This Italian sonnet form had Shakespearean and Petrarchan variants in the Renaissance period. Surrey was also responsible for suggesting the potential of **blank verse** in English poetry.

There was interestingly the development of **travel writing** too, with works by the major geographer of the time, **Richard Hakluyt's** titled *The Principall Navigations, Voiages, and Discoveries of the English Nation* (1589)

it defined the ideas of the Renaissance, through the wide dissemination and cross-fertilisation of knowledge across continents. The unit provides you an idea of the intellectual context of the time while also discussing the Humanist emphasis on the combination of intellect and physical body.



4.6 FURTHER READING

1) Carter, Ronald and Rae, Mc. John (ed). (1991). *The Routledge History of Literature in English.* Britain and Ireland: Routledge.

2) Choudhury, Bibhash. (2005). *English Social and Cultural History: An Introductory Guide and Glossary*, New Delhi: Prentice Hall of India.

3) Daiches, David. (2007). *A Critical History of English Literature*. *Volume 1,* New Delhi: Random House.



4.7 ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Ans to Q No 1: a. True.

b. False.

c. True.

d. False.

Ans to Q No 2: a. Moral Philosophy.

b. Martin Luther.

c. 1485

d. Lorenzo Valla.

Ans to Q No 3: Renaissance peaked in Italy in the 16th century and took place much later in England The beginning of English Renaissance in taken to be Battle of Bosworth. During this time, the Englishmen made wide discoveries and explorations and gradually dominant art forms of the Renaissance began to develop.

UNIT 5: THE RENAISSANCE II

UNIT STRUCTURE

5.1 Learning Objectives

5.2 Introduction

5.3 Major Literary Forms

5.4 The Renaissance Ideal

5.5 Let us Sum up

5.6 Further Reading

5.7 Answers to Check Your Progress

5.8 Model Questions

5.1 LEARNING OBJECTIVES

After going through this unit, you will be able to:

- discuss the major literary forms of the English Renaissance.
- learn more about some of the important writers of the Renaissance and their works.
- explain the Renaissance ideal and the Renaissance man.
- appreciate the emergence of the Renaissance from the Medieval Ages.

5.2 INTRODUCTION

In continuation with the previous unit, the present unit takes up the major literary forms of the English Renaissance which are namely, Early Tudor and Elizabethan poetry, the Elizabethan sonnet tradition, Renaissance prose (fictional and non-fictional) and Renaissance drama. Through the discussion of these major literary forms, the learner will also gain a glimpse of some of the prominent writers of the Renaissance period. The unit thus, provides a broad idea on the flowering of literary forms and trends during the period of the Renaissance in the history of English literature.

tradition with a definite English character. His first major pastoral was *The Shepherd's Calendar* (1579) which ran into many editions and drew from the classics such as Theocritus's *Idylls* and the *Eclogues* by Virgil. It concerns with the loss of the golden ages of the past and the themes of love, morality, ethics and God. It is also one of the few Elizabethan texts experimenting with English diction. **Pastoralism** was one of the themes to dominate English Renaissance of which *The Shepherd's Calendar* was an example. However, Spenser's six books of *The Faerie Queene* which was a prologue to the same, the reference to Elizabeth, remains his masterpiece. The first book of the poem is about Redcross the holy knight, the second on Guyon, the knight of temperance, the third and the fourth centres on the female knight Britomart's quest for her future husband Arthegall. The fifth book continues the same story with emphasis on friendship and the sixth book deals with the adventures of Calidore against the Blatant Beast.

Spenser's other works include the two sonnet collection of 1595, *Amoretti* and *Epithalamion* (a marriage song), the autobiographical pastoral *Colin Clout's Come Home Again* (1595), *Four Hymns* (1596) and *Prothalamion* (double betrothal)(1596). **Philip Sidney**, who contributed as a writer of romance, literary critic and dramatist wrote the first major text of English criticism, *An Apology for Poetry* (1595). His Arcadia (pub.1926) explores the potential of an evolving form of the romance. **Walter Raleigh** was as versatile and his work *Cynthia* remained incomplete and in fragments.

The poetry of the two Elizabethan greats **William Shakespeare** and **Christopher Marlowe** was remarkable. Shakespeare's *Venus and Adonis* (1593) and *The Rape of Lucrece* (1594) present great drama in verse. Marlowe drew from Ovid's *Metamorphosis* to create his verses in *Hero and Leander* that reflected the genre of the **long poem.** The appearance of long poems either individual or in collections like **Thomas Lodge's** *Glaucus and Scylla* (1589), **Michael Drayton's** *Endimion and Phoebe* (1595) or **John Marston's** *Metamorphosis of Pygmalion's Image* were familiar to the Elizabethan readers.

Learning (1605). Bacon's works which he called " dispersed meditations" dealt with various themes such as law, science, history, government, politics, ethics, religion, colonialism, society and the individual. These meditations which were often only a page –long, raised questions on the traditional concepts and assumptions and also provided a remarkable insight into the issues of the time. The same issues are reflected in the works of theologian **Richard Hooker**, whose *Of the Laws of Ecclesiastical Polity* (1593) advocating intellectual liberty in place of extreme dogma, was one of the first major prose classics in Modern English**. John Lyly,** who was influenced by Boccacio, introduced the **euphuistic style** through his works *Eupheus* (1578-80), *Anatomy of Wit* (1578) and *Eupheus and his England* (1580). **Robert Greene** continued the same in his works *Eupheus, his Censure of Philautus* (1587).He also wrote prose romance *Menaphon (*1589) and pamphlets such as *Groatsworth of Wit*, *Brought with a Million of Repentance* (1592).

Thomas Dekker was a prolific writer of pamphlets that centred on low life in London and contemporary social life. His best satirical work is considered to be *The Gull's Horn Book* (1609) and his pamphlets include *The Seven Deadly Sins of London* (1606), *The Bellman of London* (1608) and *Lantern and Candlelight* (1608). **Thomas Nashe** who is remembered today for his fictional work *The Unfortunate Traveller* (1594) had critiqued the contemporary superficial romances in his prose work *The Anatomy of Absurdity* (1589). **Philip Sidney** reacted and defended against the abuse of poetry in his work *An Apology for Poetry* (1595) which is also one of the first critical works in English, presenting the aesthetic principles central during the Renaissance. Sidney also wrote Arcadia that survives in two versions, the first known as the old Arcadia.

Travel writing also became a popular genre of the period and **Walter Raleigh** wrote his ambitious *The History of the World* (1614) among other works such as *A Discovery of the Empire of Guyana* (1596) and *A Report of the Truth of the Fight about the Isle of Azores* (1591).

The period also exhibits a fascination with books on manners such as *The Courtier* (1561) translated from Castiglione's work, which focuses

revenge tragedy. **Robert Greene's** works saw the return of the folk comedy along with romantic adventure, magic, and country jests. His *The Comical History of Alphonsus* and *King of Aragon* (1587) are full of **stage directions**, the first instance of such detailing in an Elizabethan play.

A prolific playwright and University Wit, **George Peele** wrote the historical *The Battle of Alcazar* (1589), *The Love of King David* and *Fair Bathseba* (1594), *The Arraignment of Paris* (1584) and the famous *Old Wives' Tale* (1590), a combination of farce and romantic folk tale. **Thomas Lodge** is known for the two plays that drew from classical themes, *The Wounds of* Civil *War* (1586) and *A Looking Glass for London and England* (together with Robert Greene, 1594). **Christopher Marlowe**, the greatest of the University Wits, introduced the popularity of the **blank verse** in Elizabethan drama. He was consistent in his use of dignified themes and his serious drama was characterised as **Marlovian**. Marlowe's short career includes his first historical play *Tamburlaine* (1587), *The Jew of Malta* (1590), *Dido, Queen of Carthage* (together with Thomas Nashe, 1585) and the popular *Doctor Faustus* (1592). Based on the German legend of Faust, the brilliant play Doctor Faustus deals with the theme of the Renaissance intellect and individuality.

Thus, the development of pre-Shakespearean drama was subject to major influences drawn from outside the native tradition. The 16th century was a time, when the social demonstration of English nationalism and Protestantism was presented on the public platform of a diverse theatre.

The 16th century was the golden age of the English drama

John Heywood's *The Four PP* that dates from the early 1540s was the precursor of the realistic comedies. The early 16th century saw secular performances, some of which were initiated by the school masters were influenced by the classical models of Plautus and Terence. **Nicholas Udall's *Ralph Roister Doister*** (1541) based on Terence's *Eunuchus* and *Miles Gloriosus* is usually considered to be the first English comedy. The **Senecan model** which was very different from that of the English practice with its grand speeches, gory elements, supernatural aspects, influenced the English playwrights. This was adopted in the play *Gorboduc* (1561) by

The satiric comedies are also seen in his other plays *Cynthia's Revels* (1600), *The Poetaster* (1601) and the power of his comedies are seen in works such as *Volpone* (1605), *The Silent Woman* (1609), *The Alchemist* (1610) and *Bartholomew Fair* (1614). Jonson was the major Elizabethan playwright to adhere to the **idea of unities** and was also a successful writer of **masques**, which was a common feature in Shakespeare's work.

John Webster's careful use of language in his tragedies of bloodletting revenge finds expression in two of his best works *The White Devil* (1612) and *The Duchess of Malfi* (1613). **John Marston** who tied up with a boy's company wrote *The Dutch Courtesan* (1604) and *The Malcontent* (1604) which deal with disguise, fraud and duplicity. **Thomas Dekker** was a successful dramatist who collaborated with several contemporary dramatists and a versatile artist who wrote pamphlets and masques too. *The Shoemaker's Holiday* is considered to be his masterpiece. The other playwrights of the **early Jacobean period** were **Thomas Middleton**, known for his comedies; **Thomas Heywood**, known for his domestic tragedies; **Francis Beaumont** and **John Fletcher**, the dramatist duo of the King's Men and **John Ford**, known for his tragedies. The playwrights who had collaborated with several other playwrights were **Henry Chettle**, **Anthony Munday**, **Philip Massinger** and **James Shirley**, also considered to be the forerunner of the Restoration Comedy of Manners. You would be interested to know, that during the early years of English stage history, many of the theatres were located outside the city walls of London. This was because the authorities did not permit theatrical activity inside the city. The London theatres in the Elizabethan age occupied the south bank of the river Thames and the northeast part, through Finsbury field. The theatre house Blackfriars where many of Shakespeare's plays were staged was placed within the walls of London. The **theatre houses** of the time were the first playhouse **The Theatre** (opened in 1576), **Red Lion** (1567), **Globe Theatre** (1599), **The Rose** (1587), **The Fortune** (1600), **The Red Bull** (1661) and **Blackfriars Theatre** (1597).The **theatre companies** were **Leicester's** (1576-8), the **Queen's** (1583-89), the **Admiral's Men** (1590-91) and the **Lord Chamberlain's Men** (1594-6).

many talents. The idea of a universal education was central to achieve the **polymath** like quality. That is why the word **University** was used to describe **a seat of learning** and at this time the Universities which were highly regarded did not specialise in specific areas but provided a broader education. After the students received such an education, they could choose to master a specific field.

During the Renaissance, **Baldassare Castioglione** wrote in his *The Book of the Courtier* about how an **ideal courtier** should have polymathic traits and the attitude or **Sprezzatura** to achieve the same. With such an attitude a courtier was to have a detached and calm attitude, possess good oratorical skills, recite poetry, be athletic, be well versed in the Humanities and Classics and be able to paint with many other talents. The Renaissance ideal differed slightly from the "polymath" ideal, in its emphasis on more than intellectual development. The **Renaissance man** represented a person who strived to "develop his capacities as fully as possible" both mentally and physically.

Leon Battista Alberti said that, **"a man can do if he wills"** and he himself was gifted in many fields. He was a Roman Catholic priest, architect, sculptor, painter, poet, scientist, mathematician, inventor, an archer and a skilled horseman. The common term 'Renaissance man' is used to describe a person who is well-educated or who excels in diverse fields and subjects. There were exemplary figures like Leonardo da Vinci, Michelangelo, Galileo, Copernicus and Francis Bacon among others, who defined the concept of the Renaissance man, excelling in multiple fields of Humanities and the Sciences.

List of some of the prominent literary figures of the English Renaissance:

Francis Bacon, Thomas Dekker, John Donne, John Fletcher, John Ford, Ben Jonson, Thomas Kyd, Christopher Marlowe, Philip Massinger, Thomas More, Thomas Nashe, William Rowley, William Shakespeare, James Shirley, Philip Sidney, Edmund Spenser, John Webster, Thomas Wyatt.



5.8 MODEL QUESTIONS

Q 1: What were the major trends in English poetry during the Renaissance?

Q 2: Assess the significance of the Elizabethan stage and the Elizabethan drama.

Q 3 : Write a short note on the following:

a. Practitioners of Tudor poetry

b. William Shakespeare and Shakespearean Drama

c. John Webster as a dramatist

Q 4 : a. What is meant by the Renaissance ideal?

b. Who is considered as a 'polymath'?

*** *** ***

God. They aimed at personal **righteousness** and civil liberty. The Puritan regime was very severe and thus, repressed many natural pleasures. In the year 1642, theatres were closed under Puritanism. They remained closed until the restoration of Charles II in 1660.

The period from 1660 to 1700 is known as the Restoration age. The Restoration age is marked by the restoration of Charles II and the beginning of a new era both in the life and literature of England. The change of government from the Commonwealth to Kingship changed the mood of the entire nation. Moral earnestness and decorum, the two most important features of Puritanism were thrown away during the Restoration replacing the importance of natural instinct. The age witnessed social transformation as the earlier atmosphere of freedom was restored and this gave way to licentiousness in the society of the time. There was also a stern reaction against the morality of the Puritans. Now let us discuss the literary features of the Restoration age.

6.3 LITERARY FEATURES OF THE AGE

There was a literal break away from old standards in literature similarly just as the society has shifted away from the restraints of Puritanism. There was also a rapid development of science during the Restoration age. The emphasis on science led to the foundation of the Royal Society in 1662. This society included all the scientific and literary men of the age. Its main objective was to discuss and investigate scientific questions. This growing interest in science led to a rational inquiry and an objective outlook. Apart from this, the Restoration age also witnessed political upheaval. The political life was marked by the rise of two political parties- the Whigs and the Tories. The Whigs sought to limit the power of the monarchy in the interest of the people and the Parliament. On the other hand, the Tories supported the Divine Right theory of the king and restrained the power of the people. The political scenario gave impetus to the writers of the period. Political **affiliation** was present in almost all the writers of the age. The various literary tendencies that prevailed during the restoration age are as follows:

representative of the new ideas that were to dominate English literature till the end of the eighteenth century.

Rise of Neo-Classicism: The writers of the restoration period 'exhibited a strong traditionalism' which was evidenced in their great respect for classical writers, that is, the writers of ancient Greece and Rome. These classical writers were thought to have achieved excellence in literature and thus the term 'classic' became applicable to any literary work that had met the standard of the classical antiquity. Hence, the term 'neo-classic' came to refer to these writers. Rules were thus established and the writers tacitly agreed upon the rules and principles in accordance to what they chose to write.

Realism: The literature of the period was marked by realism. The Restoration writers were concerned with the life, manners and fashion of the London society. They represented men exactly as they were. However, the early writers of this period sought to paint pictures of a corrupt court and society, emphasising more on the vices than virtues.

Formalism: The literary tendency was towards simplicity of expression and directness. The writers **eschewed** extravagance of thought and language which were the general tendencies of the Puritan age. Formal style of writing, emphasis on close reasoning, usage of short sentences- all these were the literary features of the age. It is largely due to Dryden that this formal style was developed by the writers.

The Prevalence of Heroic Couplet: Literature during the restoration age witnessed the adoption of heroic couplet, that is, two iambic pentameter which rhyme in pairs: aa, bb, cc and so on. It was Chaucer who first used this verse form in his *The Canterbury Tales* and *"The Legend of Good Women".* However, in Chaucer the form was less important than the poetical thought. Whereas 'form' was the main focus of the restoration writers. Heroic couplet was the dominant literary fashion. But in the hands of Dryden and other restoration writers it became "closed"- that is, each couplet/pair of lines was to contain a complete thought which needs to be clearly stated. This mechanical closed couplet was a domininant practice for a full century in England excluding all other forms of poetry.

the Panther" are the two doctrinal poems by Dryden. As a lyric poet, his fame rests on '*Song for St. Cecilia's Day*' and '*On Alexander's Feast*'. His poetry had an enormous influence on shaping neo-classical literature in the eighteenth century. It was his influence and example which lifted the heroic couplet for many years as the accepted measure of serious English poetry. Besides Dryden, the only other considerable poet of the age is Samuel Butler. During the early years of restoration age, *doggerel* verses ridiculing Puritanism were the most popular form of literature. His '*Hudibras*' is a satire on the Puritans. It is plainly modeled upon Don Quixote of Cervantes. Sir Hudibras is a Puritan knight who undergoes many absurd adventures with Ralpho, his Independent squire, to put down all innocent pleasures. In Hudibras and Ralpho, the two extreme types of the Puritan party- Presbyterians and Independents- are ridiculed mercilessly. The poem is composed artfully and the metre of the poem is remarkable. When the poem had appeared in public in 1663, it became an instant success. A second and a third part, continuing the adventures of Hudibras were published in 1664 and 1668.

The poetry of Pope must be mentioned as he was also considered as the greatest poet of the early eighteenth century. His poetry was didactic and satiric in nature, bearing a style which was polished, refined yet artificial. His many poems include "Pastorals", "An Essay on Criticism", "Windsor Forest", "Dunciad" and "The Rape of the Lock" among others which reflect the spirit of the age. His excellent use of heroic couplet is evident in "Epistle to Arbuthnot".



LET US KNOW

Cavalier Poets : The poets of the middle of the seventeenth century are divided into two groups- the religious poets and the secular poets/cavalier poets. **Robert Herrick**, **Thomas Carew**, **Sir John Suckling** and **Richard Lovelace** are known as the Cavalier poets. Their poetry had leanings towards the court unlike the Puritans. However, poetry was not used as propaganda by them. They were lyrical poets and their poems generally dealt with love, beauty and war. Except Herrick who wrote both secular and religious poems, the other Cavalier poets wrote only secular poems.

relevance and transcultural context as its concern. Among other restoration tragedians are- Thomas Otway, Nathaniel Lee and Nicholas Rowe.

The Restoration Comedy or Comedy of Manners

Restoration comedies are comedy of manners and morals of fashionable society. The comedies expressed a reaction against Puritanism and sexual repression that it had attempted to enforce. The dissolute court life of the period was reflected in restoration comedy which drew its inspiration from the native tradition that had flourished before the closing of theatres in 1642, particularly from the works of **Beaumont** and **Fletcher** and **Ben Jonson**. In the restoration comedies, marriage and adultery was treated with **cynicism**. The characters in the plays owed much to the courtiers, ladies of fashion, citizens and wives. These comedies were devoid of romantic passions and sentiments. It replaced emotion by **wit**; and poetry by concise prose. These plays also showed a satirical observation of life and manners of the upper class society. In these plays the follies of the refined gentlemen are exposed. Everything vulgar was eschewed, for example, a 'whore' was called a 'mistress' and a 'pimp' was called a 'friend'. The cult of refinement is carried to an extreme. In these plays, plots and sub-plots are intricate and numerous and is centred upon intrigues. These plays throw a reflection of an open contempt for the ordinary standards of morality. The setting is provided by the fashionable parks, clubs, taverns and drawing rooms of the aristocratic people.

It is important to know that the Restoration Comedy was the expression of people who endeavoured to readjust their values after a great upheaval. The subject of the relationship between man and woman was of prime importance. Sexual **intrigue**, thus, forms the dominant theme. The eminent writers of comedy of manners are- William Congreve, George Etherege, George Farquhar, Sir John Vanbrugh and William Wycherley. To name a few, Wycherley's *The Country Wife* (1675), Congreve's *Way of the World* (1700) were well-known plays of this period.

A remarkable feature of the play is that it contributed towards a change in the social structure like the presence of actresses on stage by giving women a chance to earn a living in a profession and making them

c) Since religious and political disputes continued to dominate English life even after the restoration of the monarchy, therefore, restoration poetry seemed to be dominated by political and religious infighting. **(true/false)**

d) Restoration Comedy drew its inspiration from the native tradition which had flourished before the closing of theatres in 1642. **(true/false)**

Q 2: Fill in the blanks:

a) The Restoration writers turned to the ancient writers, particularly to the ……. writers for guidance and inspiration.

b) The theatres reopened after their official closure in …….

c) Dryden's poem namely ……. is an attack on a former friend, Thomas Shadwell.

d) …… also came to be known as the 'Love and Honour Drama'.

Q 3: Write a note on Restoration Comedy.

6.4.3 Prose

The Restoration marked the beginning of modern prose. Though prose writing of the period was not great in bulk, it showed a profound change in style. The spread of the spirit of critical temper of mind and the love for definiteness and clarity contributed to the development of English prose. Various political parties and growing interest in day-to-day activities encouraged journalism which needed simple and straight forward prose style. Precision and lucidity are the essential elements of good prose style and the growing interest in rationalism contributed to it. As a prose writer, **Dryden** had a remarkable influence. The general subject of his prose was literary criticism. His influence was mainly seen in writing naturally without depending on literary ornamentation. His criticisms were generally used as prefaces or introductions to his poetry instead of independent works. The most well-known of his prose works are- preface to "The Fables", "Of Heroic Plays", "Discourse on Satire" and "The Essay of Dramatic Poesy" (1668). His "The Essay of Dramatic Poesy" is in the form of a discussion among four characters and one of them was Dryden himself. Most of the major

events like the Great Plague of London, the Second Dutch War and the Great Fire of London.

John Evelyn's diary is a finished product in terms of style. His style which is very simple and lucid is replete with accurate information. But his diary is less amusing than Pepys. The diary of Evelyn also contains details of incidents such as the Great Fire. His diary was written with an 'eye on the public.'



LET US KNOW

The **Great Fire of London** was an extremely uncontrolled fire that traversed from 2nd to 5th September 1666. This intense fire destroyed major parts of London.

Prose dominated the literary scene mainly after the Restoration age which is said to have ended roughly in 1700. Alexander Pope, Jonathan Swift, Joseph Addison and Richard Steele were some of the eminent prose writers of the age of Reason. Some of the factors behind the growing demand of prose writing were the political condition, new publishing houses and the new morality. The rise of the two political parties has already been mentioned above. Thus, political **pamphlets** were written extensively. It is worth mentioning that the interest in politics raised the number of readers which led to the setting up of new publishing houses. The immorality of the Restoration age was replaced by a new attitude to life and morals. Swift's most noteworthy book is *The Battle of the Books* (1704). The theme of this book is the strife between ancient and modern authors. *A Tale of Tub* (1704) which is a religious allegory is another of his well-known works. He is the greatest English satirist whose writings are marked by originality, directness and vigour. Both Addison and Steele contributed essays in the periodical magazines, namely, the *Tatler* and the *Spectator*. Steele's essays are didactic and aimed at reformation of the society. Unlike Addison, he was incapable of irony and lacked the humour of Addison. The essays of Addison reflected the life of the period in which they were written. Satire as a literary form predominated literature during the early eighteenth century. Dr. Samuel

obtained a license to become a preacher. He is well-known for *The Pilgrim's Progress* (1678) and it is interesting to note that this work was written during his imprisonment. It is one of the best known allegories which had been translated extensively (*into 108 languages*). His other important works are *The Life and Death of Mr Badman* (1680) and *The Holy War* (1682). Most of Bunyan's works are allegorical in nature. His style was very unique and is shaped by Biblical influences. Bunyan was definitely one of the greatest prose writers of the Restoration period.

Aphra Behn: Aphra Behn (1640-1689), is a prolific dramatist of the Restoration period. She was born in Canterbury. *The Forc'd Marriage*, *The Rover, The Dutch Lover, The Town Fop,* etc. are some of her well-known plays. She was the first female writer of her time and is chiefly remembered for her novel *Oroonoko* (1688), which dealt with an enslaved African prince.

Jonathan Swift: Jonathan Swift (1667-1745) was born in Dublin of English parents. His first important work is *The Battle of the Books* (1704) which is a satire on the literary controversy of the classics and modern literature. His next work *A Tale of a Tub* (1704) is a religious allegory and a satire on the various churches. Swift's work mainly aimed at improving the condition of the oppressed people. His most famous work, *Gulliver's Travels i*s a delightful book. Swift was also the greatest satirist of his time. His attacks were very critical of the society at large and pointed out the faults of humanity.

Alexander Pope : Pope was born in London in the year 1688. He is the representative poet of his age and was the undisputed poet of his generation. He was deformed and this bodily infirmity led him to be educated privately. He wrote his first poem, "Pastorals" (1709) when he was just sixteen years of age. His second poem appeared in 1711, namely, "Essay on Criticism". His other poems also include "Windsor Forest" (1713) and "The Rape of the Lock" (1712). Pope also has translations to his credit. He translated the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey.* His "Essay on Man" is a philosophical poem and is a discussion on man's place in the world. As you know that imitation of the ancients is a characteristic feature of the period, Pope's *Imitations of Horace* is an important work in this context. Pope has based

The tremendous social reaction against the constraints of Puritanism is a significant factor of the Restoration age. Thus, writers focused on realism, formalism and literature became concise and formal. For example, the use of heroic couplets enables the writers to lay emphasis in the form of writing. This unit has also acquainted you with the most prominent figures of the Restoration age like John Dryden and others. The unit will enable you to gain a broad idea on the Restoration age as an age of transition from the enthusiasm and dynamism of Renaissance literature to the formalism of the Augustan age, the dominant forms of which were satire, heroic couplets and comedy of manners.



6.7 FURTHER READING

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2) Albert, Edward (1979). *History of English Literature*. (5th edition) New York: Oxford University Press.

3) Choudhury, Bibhash. (2005). *English Social and Cultural History: An Introductory Guide and Glossary*. New Delhi: Prentice Hall of India.

4) Long, William J. (2007). *English Literature: Its History and Significance for the Life of English Speaking World.* Delhi: A.I.T.B.S Publishers.



6.8 ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Ans to Q No 1: a. True

b. False

c. True

d. True

Ans to Q No 2: a. Latin

b. 1642

c. “Mac Flecknoe”

d. The Heroic Tragedy

Ans to Q No 3: Restoration comedies are a reflection of the manners and morals of fashionable society. It drew its inspiration particularly from the

UNIT 7: THE NEOCLASSICAL AGE I

UNIT STRUCTURE

7.1 Learning Objectives
7.2 Introduction
7.3 The Socio-Intellectual Context
7.4 Literary Features of the Neoclassical Age
7.5 Let us Sum up
7.6 Further Reading
7.7 Answers to Check Your Progress
7.8 Model Questions

7.1 LEARNING OBJECTIVES

After going through this unit, you will be able to:

- discuss the Neoclassical Age in English Literature.
- define the term Neoclassical.
- learn how the Neoclassical age derived its character from the Enlightenment and Scientific Rationalism that was prevalent across Europe.
- grasp the various literary features of the Neoclassical age.
- explain the reasons for which eighteenth century literature predominantly reflects the supremacy of logic and reason.
- appreciate the trends in the age of prose and reason.

7.2 INTRODUCTION

The Neoclassical Age is an era that has produced literary creations excelling in both reason and form. The term Neoclassical Age refers to the first half of the eighteenth century literary period of England when the poets and critics imitated the works of the classical Latin poets and critics and the Latin literature that flourished in the Roman Empire. There was a new revival of interests in the Classics during this period and hence the nomenclature “Neoclassical” is justified. It was a matter of pride for the

literature of the Age of Johnson varied from the literature of the Age of Pope with regard to matter, spirit and form.

7.3 THE SOCIO-INTELLECTUAL CONTEXT

To trace the socio-intellectual context of the Neoclassical age, we definitely need to refer to the Enlightenment and the Scientific Rationalism that was brewing all over Europe. Europe had seen remarkable achievements in the scientific field in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries. These scientific enterprises made way for the logical thought processes and thinkers started believing that reason can substantiate faith. The Renaissance in the sixteenth century Europe was the time when art forms mingled with science. A revolution in scientific thought was witnessed all over Europe and England had also felt its impact. There was a spurt of scientific writings. Astronomy, physics, mathematics, chemistry and the medical sciences had seen many pioneering works. A fascination for the human body was vividly seen in the art works and Leonardo da Vinci is the most famous example. This European intellectual phenomenon called the Enlightenment made huge impact in the social and cultural life of the eighteenth century. Intellectual discourses evolved and philosophers and thinkers laid much emphasis on 'reason' to prove their arguments. The Enlightenment placed human reason at the apex of all thought processes. The Enlightenment thinkers tried to organise knowledge into one composite whole and held strongly to the view that there is nothing in this world that could not be explained by reason. In other words, the Enlightenment brought in its fold "diverse areas like politics, state, individual, economy, culture, equality, reason, and faith in the abilities of the human spirit. The Neoclassical age thus consequently cherished reason and intellect and became the age of reason.

The Neoclassical Age also evolved as a reaction to the Restoration Age. As the Restoration period was known for the corruption, moral depravity and irrational sentimentalism, the Age of Pope or the Age of Neoclassical literature showed a general disapproval of these. The works of this age displayed an attempt of the writers to usher in moral regeneration and

GLOSSARY

Coffee houses: In the later part of the seventeenth and early part of the eighteenth centuries coffee houses became very popular in England. The coffee house culture was responsible for the introduction of tea and coffee in England. The earliest coffee house started in Oxford in 1650 and the first London Coffee House started in 1652. Every coffee house had different groups of people frequenting it. Within a short time the coffee houses became centres where news was circulated. These coffee houses were also known for many business transactions. In the latter part of the eighteenth century, London had more than five hundred coffee houses. As the entry fee was just a penny, the general public could have easy access to these where they read newsletters, talk and gossip over a cup of coffee. These coffee houses became communication centres which provided a platform for gathering and disseminating news. The coffee house culture had an impact on the literary productions of the age. This coffee house culture was a primary reason for the popularity of the periodical essay.

Text Box:

Satire: Satire is defined as the art of "diminishing or derogating" a subject in literature by making it look ridiculous and evoking the feelings of amusement, contempt, scorn or indignation. Satires are created with a purpose of correction. It acts as a corrective of human vice and folly. Satire was a major literary form in the eighteenth century. The members of the two political parties, Whig and Tory, employed important writers of the age to create satirical writings to ridicule their political opponents.



GLOSSARY

Conformity: Behaviour or action that follow the accepted rules of society.

Didactic: Telling people and teaching them do what is right through moral teachings.

Milieu: The social environment.

Nomenclature: Naming things.

Overtone: An emotion or attitude that is suggested.

Pamphlets: A very thin book with a paper cover that contains information about any subject.

7.4 LITERARY FEATURES OF THE NEOCLASSICAL AGE

The literature of the Neoclassical age, like the literature of all other ages display certain features. These literary features are prominent enough to give this age its own flavour which can be characterised as follows:

precision. In the hands of Alexander Pope, the Heroic Couplet became polished; Pope pruned whatever seemed irregular and rough.

Satirical and Didactic Writings: Satire as a form of literature became very popular during the Neoclassical age. In the hands of the poets of this age, satire reached newer heights. During the earlier period, that is, the Restoration period, satire as a prominent form of literature had already gained ground in the hands of Dryden. John Dryden and his disciple and successor Alexander Pope are the two names which are inseparable in the history of classicism in English Literature. Their satiric talent which they expressed with the help of the Heroic Couplet remain unmatched.

As most of the writings of the Neoclassical age was satirical, a strong didactic or moral overtone is commonly noticed. This was a kind of poetry with argument and criticism of politics and personalities. The satires of this age were social, political and even personal. Writers tried to express good sense or the love of the reasonable, and with the supremacy of logic and reason, the works of this age were didactic. These works tried to send a moral message and thus establish propriety in society.

Reflection of Social and Political Life of the 18th Century: A feature specific to the literature of this age in the words of Pope is "to follow nature". However, nature here does not mean the natural environment. It means human nature and Pope believed that "the proper study of mankind is man". Hence, the satires of the eighteenth century beautifully portrayed human nature and the manners of society thus reflecting the socio-political life of the age. We see a fine reflection of the social and political life of the eighteenth century in Alexander Pope's "The Rape of the Lock".

The Growing Reading Public and the Emergence of Prose Style: Right from the days of the Enlightenment and the Renaissance, the awareness on the need of education was seen in the English society. Eighteenth century England saw a rapid spread of education among the common masses. This accounted for a wide appeal and popularity for the periodical literature which was written in the prose form. Thus, the Neoclassical age saw the emergence of the periodicals, journals and newspapers, leading to the growth of the conversational prose style.

dramas. Geoffrey Chaucer in *The Legend of Good Women* and *The Canterbury Tales* first used this verse form in English. The heroic couplet was extensively used by Alexander Pope who composed all his verses using this form. It was in his hands that the heroic couplet was polished to its best. In the closed heroic couplets, used by the Neoclassical poets, two lines serve the function of a stanza.



7.5 LET US SUM UP

In this unit, you have gained an idea about the Neoclassical age and why it is such a relevant period in the history of English Literature. The Neoclassical age was the age of logic and reason. The Enlightenment that spread all across Europe was the primary reason for the scientific rationalism of the eighteenth century. The early eighteenth century was called the Neoclassical age because the poets and critics of this period imitated the works of the Classical Latin writers of the Roman Empire and they had complete faith in the rules and laws prescribed and practiced by the Classical poets.

The unit gives you an idea of the socio-intellectual context of the age and the popularity of education among the common masses. With the growth in awareness among the reading public, the publication of the periodical journals and newspapers flourished. Prose writings became a prominent literary form. In this unit, you also learnt about the political and social milieu of the Neoclassical age. The growth of the coffee houses and the opinions that flowed from the discussions in there greatly shaped the literature of this age. The unit will enable you to gain a better idea on the important literary features of this age.



7.6 ANSWER TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Ans to Q1: a. False b. False. c. True.

Ans to Q2: a. Alexander Pope b. Satirical c. Pope; Johnson

UNIT 8: THE NEOCLASSICAL AGE II

UNIT STRUCTURE

8.1 Learning Objectives

8.2 Introduction

8.3 Major Literary Forms in the Neoclassical Age

8.4 The Age of Prose

8.5 Important Writers

8.6 Let us Sum up

8.7 Further Reading

8.8 Answers to Check Your Progress

8.9 Model Questions

8.1 LEARNING OBJECTIVES

After going through this unit, you will be able to:

- discuss the literary forms of the Neoclassical Age.
- explain the major forms of literature prevalent in the Neoclassical Age.
- learn the ways in which satirical writings became much popular.
- learn the various forms of satirical writings of the age in prose and poetry
- grasp the reason for which the eighteenth century is also known as the 'age of prose'.
- appreciate the emergence of periodical essays and novels as popular forms of prose writings of the age.

8.2 INTRODUCTION

In the previous unit, the learner was familiarised with the socio-intellectual characteristics of the Neoclassical age together with its literary characteristics that adhered to the principles of classicism and supremacy of logic and reason. The present unit will introduce you to the major literary forms and the major writers of the age who significantly contributed to the bulk of literary treasures through their prose works.

creation "*The Rape of the Lock*". This was a poem where Pope followed the grandiose epic style and views through the "epic perspective a quarrel between the belles and elegant of his day over the theft of a lady's curl". The subject matter of the poem was very commonplace but it was being expressed in the grand epic form; hence it was a mock epic or mock-heroic poem. The rhyming style that was popular among the Neoclassic writers was the **heroic couplet**. The **closed heroic couplet** was best suited to enhance the satiric element of the mock-heroic poem. Almost the entire body of writings of the Neoclassical poetry of the early eighteenth century was written in the closed heroic couplet.

Poetry in the neoclassical age had its own grandeur. Although, the prominent figure was Alexander Pope yet, it was John Dryden who inspired the neoclassic poets. It was Dryden who adopted the satiric mode by imitating the Classical ancients. The major works of John Dryden are ***Mac Flecknoe*** , ***Absalom and Achitophel***, ***Hind and the Panther***, ***Alexander's Feast***, ***The Secular Masque***, ***Annus Mirabilis***, ***Heroic Stanza's on the Death of Oliver Cromwell***', and several others.

The major works of Alexander Pope are ***Pastorals***, ***An Essay on Criticism***, ***Windsor Forest***, ***The Rape of the Lock***, ***The Dunciad***, ***Essays on Man***, ***Moral Essays***, ***An Epistle to Dr Arbuthnot***, ***Satires and Epistles of Horace Imitated***, to name a few. Apart from Dryden and Pope, the other names that must be mentioned in the sphere of neoclassical poetry are James Thomson and Samuel Johnson. Thomson's poetry gives a new direction to the Augustan poetry. Along with political satire and social conditioning in Thomson's poetry nature occupies center-stage. Thomson's famous work ***The Seasons*** was written in four phases- ***Winter*** (1726), ***Summer*** (1727), ***Spring*** (1728), and ***Autumn*** (1730). Thomson's *The Seasons* is believed to be the first major 'nature' poem in English language. Thomson's works are known for the sense of thematic orientation in which the poem is structured. In ***To the Memory of Isaac Newton*** (1727), Thomson stuck to the intellectual climate of the times and expressed the union of God and reason. ***Liberty*** and ***The Castle of Indolence*** are the other well known poems of Thomson.

burning issues of those times. *The Tatler* was launched by Steele and Addison had joined as a contributor later on.

The Spectator followed the *The Tatler*. ***The Spectator*** was also launched by Richard Steele in collaboration with Joseph Addison. An important feature of *The Spectator* was the fictitious club named '**The Spectator Club'**. Much of the narrative of the journal was designed and organized through 'The Spectator Club'. The characters of this club were imaginary representations of various sections of the contemporary society like men of commerce, the army men, the town dwellers and the country folk. These characters were placed in different situations and discussions were created on selected topics. This new mode of presenting views through the characters of a club was a new idea and many believe that it had inspired many future novelists. The essays published in *The Spectator* were sometimes grave and serious and at other times they were witty.

The Novel: The novel evolved as a major literary form in the hands of the eighteenth century novelists. Daniel Defoe's ***Robinson Crusoe*** is considered as the first instance of the proper English novel though beginnings of the English novel were traced in earlier experiments in fictional narratives and travelogues. His novels ***Robinson Crusoe*** and ***Moll Flanders*** were in the form of narratives that focused on the protagonist's movement and fortunes. Defoe's next work ***Roxana*** is more sophisticated than his earlier works but they follow the same plot movement. Daniel Defoe's other works are ***Colonel Jack***, ***The Memoirs of a Cavalier***, ***Captain Singleton*** to name a few.

Samuel Richardson is another major novelist of the eighteenth century. Richardson tried to inculcate morality in society through the medium of his novels. His first novel ***Pamella*** was a huge success. In his novels like ***Pamella*** and ***Clarissa Harlowe*** he tried to reveal the feminine heart. Richardson's other major novels are ***Clarissa or The Adventures of a Young Lady*** and ***Sir Charles Grandison***. Jonathan Swift is a major novelist of the eighteenth century whose satirical writings provided a different view. Swift's most famous work ***Gulliver's Travels*** is often read as children's tales but at a deeper level they were designed to represent the corruption

form. The scientific writings and the periodicals and journals required a form of writing which could express their ideas and arguments with clarity and the prose form was the best medium. Thus, the Neoclassical age saw the emergence of the periodicals, journals and newspapers, leading to the growth of the conversational prose style.

There were certain socio-political aspects that resulted in the development of the prose style in the eighteenth century. After the Glorious Revolution of 1688 in England, constitutional monarchy and Parliamentary democracy was established and the power and influence shifted into the hands of the politicians which were till then exercised by the king and the courtiers. The two political parties, the Whig and the Tory were always at loggerheads. These parties used the literary abilities of many important personalities placed at high positions in the state to advance their cause. These litterateurs were kept in good humour by the politicians and in return they created satires in pamphlets to ridicule their opponents. There was a rapid growth in satirical writings and along with poetry, prose emerged as a strong medium of expression.



LET US KNOW

Horatian and Juvenalian Satire : Satire has been broadly divided by critics into formal or direct satire and **indirect** satire. In formal satire the "satiric *persona*" speaks in the first person. Formal satire **is further divided into two types Horatian and Juvenalian satires.**

Horatian satire derives its name from the great Roman satirist Horace. The speaker in Horatian satire is presented as an urbane character who is witty and tolerant man of the world who gets amused at the spectacle of "human folly, pretentiousness, and hypocrisy." The language used in Horatian satire is relaxed and informal. Horatian satires aim at evoking a wry smile from the readers at human failings and absurdities. Alexander Pope wrote all his satires in the Horatian form.

Juvenalian satire derives its name from the great Roman satirist Juvenal. The speaker in Juvenalian satire is a character who is a serious



8.6 LET US SUM UP

In this unit, you have learnt about the major literary forms of the Neoclassical age. The Neoclassical age was known for the satirical forms of writing. You have also learnt about the most famous writers of satire and their works. These writers laid much importance on form and used a characteristic diction popularly known as the neo-poetic diction. The unit gives you an idea on why this age is known as the age of prose and how prose became a major form of literature. The important forms of prose writings like the periodical essays are discussed in this unit. You know about the major contributors in this field and their works. You are now aware that the novel had gained popularity as a major literary form in this age. This unit gives you an idea of the important novel writers of this age and their major works.



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8.8 ANSWER TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Answer to Q1: a. True. b. False. c. True.

Answer to Q2: a. Whig Tory b. Heroic c. Daniel Defoe. d. fictitious