

# **ENGLISH COMPULSORY – II**

**B.A. English**  
**Semester - I**  
**BAG - 103**



**SHRI VENKATESHWARA UNIVERSITY**

UTTAR PRADESH-244236

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# INTRODUCTION

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The subject of English Compulsory deals with two interrelated but different areas of study: Language and literature.

Literature can be described as a learning tool to develop an understanding of people, culture and tradition. It guides us to a new world of experience and helps us evolve ourselves through its literary journey. Significance in literature can be determined by looking at what the author says and how he/she says it. Literature is essential to us as it speaks in its various forms such as poetry, drama, prose and fiction. Poetry, for instance refers to that form of literature which intends to utilize imagery, symbols, rhythm and limited words to express ideas. While fiction is any narrative that deals with events that are not factual, but rather imaginary, it is often applied to the theatrical, cinematic and musical work.

Language is the heart of communication since it is the medium through which the ideas and feelings are shared with other people. A solid grip over the grammar of the language allows the person using the language not only communicate more freely but also makes the communication more interesting.

This book, *English Compulsory-II*, is written in a self-instructional format and is divided into five units. Each unit begins with an 'Introduction' to the topic followed by an outline of the 'Unit Objectives'. The content is then presented in a simple and easy-to-understand manner, and is interspersed with 'Check Your Progress' questions to test the reader's understanding of the topic. A list of 'Questions and Exercises' is also provided at the end of each unit, and includes short-answer as well as long-answer questions. The 'Summary' and 'Key Terms' section are useful tools for students and are meant for effective recapitulation of the text.

## NOTES





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# UNIT 1 EXPLANATIONS FROM STARRED TEXT

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## NOTES

### Structure

- 1.0 Introduction
- 1.1 Objectives
- 1.2 Milton, Blake and Wordsworth
  - 1.2.1 John Milton: *On His Blindness*
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- 1.4 Summary
- 1.5 Key Terms
- 1.6 Answers to 'Check Your Progress'
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## 1.0 INTRODUCTION

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In this unit, the important lines from the poems of Blake, Milton, Wordsworth, Hardy and Auden have been explained in detail. First, just after the text of the poems, a small paragraph explains the jist of the poem in terms of its genre, style and themes. Then follows the explanation of the important lines from the poems.

All of these poets have been discussed individually in separate units, later in the book so that the students can understand the poets and their background in detail.

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## 1.1 OBJECTIVES

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

- Examine the important lines from Milton's *On His Blindness*
- Describe the important lines of the poem *London, 1802* as a call to the late poet, Milton
- Discuss the reference to context of Hardy's *The Darkling Thrush* as a critique of scientific discoveries and developments
- Analyse the important lines from Auden's satirical poem *The Unknown Citizen*

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## 1.2 MILTON, BLAKE AND WORDSWORTH

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In this section, we will take up the poet John Milton from the Puritan age and discuss his poem *On His Blindness*. Further, we will study the two of the most famous poets of the Romantic Era: William Blake and William Wordsworth and discuss their poems *And Did Those Feet in Ancient Time* and *London, 1802* respectively.

## 1.2.1 John Milton: *On His Blindness*

### *On His Blindness*

#### NOTES

*When I consider how my light is spent,  
Ere half my days, in this dark world and wide,  
And that one Talent which is death to hide  
Lodged with me useless, though my Soul more bent  
To serve therewith my Maker, and present  
My true account, lest he returning chide;  
“Doth God exact day-labour, light denied?”  
I fondly ask. But patience, to prevent*

*That murmur, soon replies, “God doth not need  
Either man’s work or his own gifts; who best  
Bear his mild yoke, they serve him best. His state  
Is Kingly. Thousands at his bidding speed  
And post o’er Land and Ocean without rest:  
They also serve who only stand and wait.”*

#### Reference to Context of Important Lines

*On His Blindness* is a petrarchan sonnet of fourteen lines. In the poem, Milton is remorseful that he has lost his eye-sight so early even before entering the middle age. He is fearful of the fact that due to his failed vision he will not be able to use his talent of poesy to fulfill his service towards God, though he is still very much eager to make judicious use of it. He is also afraid that the Almighty may punish him for this failure to Him by the use of his God-given skill of writing poetry. At the moments when this kind of apprehension comes to his mind, he is in anxiety of the nature of God’s justice, but what brings calm to such anxiousness is the religious conscience which soothes his soul. He realizes that God is not concerned with the service of man; nor does he get bothered whether His gifts are utilized or wasted. He is the reigning Almighty, the King of kings who has numerous angels at His service day and night, across the earth and sea. He comes to the conclusion that the service to God is not solely about active work but is also about patient relinquishment to His will and dispensation.

#### Lines 1-8

Milton’s impatience and remorseness at his blindness is reflected through these lines. We learn that he is blind (‘dark world’) in before reaching the middle ages of his life (‘Ere half my life’). It is this blindness which is restricting him (‘lodged in me useless’) in fully utilizing his poetic ‘talent’ by writing something in honour of God. He believes that God has intended man to make full use of the talent which God has bestowed on him/her or be ready for punishment (‘lest he returning chide’), and he is already very eager to serve him.

But he ‘fondly’ asks him whether it is justified that God ‘exact day labour’ from a man who from whom he has ‘light denied’ (made him blind).

In these lines, we notice that Milton's attitude of doubt ('murmur') is resolved with a moment ('soon replies'). The lines that follow awakens his conscience and restores his faith in the divine justice. He comes to the realization that God does not need man's work by way of service to him neither is he bothered whether his provided gifts are used by humans or not. ("God doth not need Either man's work or his own gifts"; who best Bear his mild yoke, they serve him best'). He is the Almighty. He is the master of all kings. His supremacy is all over the universe. ('His state Is Kingly'). He has scores of angels who are at his beck and call. ('Thousands at his bidding speed'), these angels are ready to go across land or sea at his command. ('And post o'er Land and Ocean without rest'). At his service are also others who 'only stand and wait'. They sing his praise. These people waiting at his side are equal to the active workers. So, the best service to the Almighty would be a patient and content submission to His will.

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### 1.2.2 William Blake: *And Did Those Feet in Ancient Time*

#### Text

*And did those feet in ancient time  
Walk upon England's mountains green?  
And was the holy Lamb of God  
On England's pleasant pastures seen?*

*And did the Countenance Divine  
Shine forth upon our clouded hills?  
And was Jerusalem builded here  
Among these dark satanic mills?*

*Bring me my bow of burning gold!  
Bring me my arrows of desire!  
Bring me my spear! O clouds, unfold!  
Bring me my chariot of fire!*

*I will not cease from mental fight,  
Nor shall my sword sleep in my hand,  
Till we have built Jerusalem  
In England's green and pleasant land.*

#### Reference to Context of Important Lines

This poem is inspired by the Book Revelations and the Second Coming of Jesus for the establishment of a new Jerusalem with indicative words 'Jerusalem builded' and 'chariot of fire'. This is why this poem is sometimes referred to as 'The New Jerusalem'. It is also a reference to the setting up of a new society with the onset of Industrial Revolution. The poem begins with the pleasant and calm curiosity of whether Jesus had ever walked

## NOTES

the English countryside as is the common narrative. These lines focus on the natural beauty with the 'mountains green', 'pleasant pastures' and the 'clouded hill' along with the calming divine presence with words like the 'Lamb of God' and the 'countenance divine'. But very quickly the pleasant scenes are overtaken by the aggressive calls for a war with the 'bows', 'arrows' and 'spears'. The building anger finds a platform in the last lines to wage a holy war against the 'dark satanic mills' which are trying to dominate the 'green and pleasant land'. The poem seems to indicate that the growing industrialization and its ills must be curtailed with the establishment of a new Jerusalem.

### Lines 1-8

The first few lines are a reference to the New Testament and the questions regarding whether Jesus ('holy Lamb of God') ever walked ('those feet') about the 'England's mountain green'. There is a very strong focus on the imagery of nature and the natural environment with the use of words like 'England's mountain green', 'pleasure pastures' and the 'clouded hills'. Adding to the pleasantness of the scene are the words which are used to describe God, like 'the Lamb of God' and the 'Countenance Divine'. The latter word can be seen as a reference to the Book of Exodus where it is described that no one can see the face of God and live. Another way in which the idyllic landscape is brought to life is the manner in which Blake uses the words 'shine forth upon our clouded hills' as if to reflect the sun which bathes the hills when it shines. It is also implied that in the 'ancient' time when Jesus walked across England, only nature was present to witness the divine presence.

The last lines are a little different. This is because of the use of the terms 'Jerusalem' and 'Satanic Mills'. The word 'Jerusalem' might be a reference to the heavenly times when Jesus walked the earth, the ideal and utopic place compared to the present day 'Satanic Mills'. Notice here that this phrase is the first negative word of the stanza and the word 'mills' is directly used to refer to the pollution, exploitation and mechanization of Blake's contemporary world. The mills are 'satanic' for they are against God's heaven and the peace and green is replaced by the noisy and sooty cities.

### Lines 9-16

The calm which was broken with the mention of the 'Satanic mills' is now fully reversed with aggressive words like 'bow', 'arrow', 'spear', 'burning gold' and 'flaming chariot'. Moreover, these words are also representative of the instruments used in war. All this is reinforced with phrases like 'bring me' (which is repeated four times), 'I will not cease', 'shall have my sword sleep in my hand' and the use of exclamations. Apart from 'Jerusalem' another biblical element is the use of the phrase 'Chariot of Fire' which is known to be a reference to Elijah's ascent to heaven. The burning frustration is to wage a holy war 'we have built Jerusalem' against the 'satanic mills' in 'England's green and pleasant land'. Notice how the anger evoked in the poem is given a positive spin with the final thought in the poem 'Till we have built Jerusalem, in England's green and pleasant Land', which is a determined call for action. The narrator 'will not cease' until peace is restored to England.

### 1.2.3 William Wordsworth: *London, 1802*

#### Text

*Milton! thou shouldst be living at this hour:  
England hath need of thee: she is a fen*

*Of stagnant waters: altar, sword, and pen,  
Fireside, the heroic wealth of hall and bower,  
Have forfeited their ancient English dower  
Of inward happiness. We are selfish men;  
Oh! raise us up, return to us again;  
And give us manners, virtue, freedom, power.  
Thy soul was like a Star, and dwelt apart:  
Thou hadst a voice whose sound was like the sea:  
Pure as the naked heavens, majestic, free,  
So didst thou travel on life's common way,  
In cheerful godliness; and yet thy heart  
The lowliest duties on herself did lay.*

## NOTES

### Reference to Context of Important Lines

William Wordsworth wrote the poem *London, 1802* as a call to the late poet John Milton. It is sonnet which is written to serve two objectives: be a tribute to the genius Milton and express the sad realities of London in Wordsworth's opinion. The poem starts with a cry for help given the situation of London in Wordsworth's time, which can be remedied with the presence of someone like Milton's brilliance. Wordsworth goes on to comment how England had become 'stagnant' and 'selfish' and no more has the happiness of the earlier times. He is pleading to Milton asking for a resurrection of the good old England with the return of 'manners, virtue, freedom and power'. He calls Milton a 'star', a 'sea' and compliments his many qualities.

### Lines 1-6

In these lines, Wordsworth expresses the wish that Milton should have been 'living at this hour'. He believes 'England hath need of thee'. This is so because in Wordsworth's opinion, England has become a 'fen of stagnant waters'. It was once the home of natural skills like the religion ('altar'), chivalry ('sword'), and art ('pen'), It has forgone the old 'dower' of 'inward happiness' and given in to the terrible allure of modernity.

### Lines 6-14

Wordsworth begins a new line with the admission of the reality that English people are 'selfish'. His desperation to be saved is reflected through the expression 'Oh! Raise us up, return to us again'. He continues to the pleading for help by saying that there is a need for 'manner, virtue, freedom and power' to be taught to the selfish men again.

In the next lines, he actually praises Milton by likening him to a star ('his soul was like a Star'). The words 'dwelt apart' is to perhaps imply that he was different from the rest: his contemporaries and the humans even now. He further goes on to describe his voice as being similar to the 'sea' which is to say that he was 'pure as the naked heavens, majestic, free'. The use of 'star' and 'sea' as similes of nature might be seen as saying that his qualities were ever so natural. He ends his praise by saying that his constitution and soul was so full of 'cheerful godliness' that even when he did the 'lowly duties' he did not lose his shining qualities.

### Check Your Progress

1. What does Milton realize at the end of the poem, *On His Blindness* after a brief moment of anxiety over not being able to serve God? Mention the lines.
2. Mention what 'satanic mills' refer to in the William Blake's poem *And Did Those Feet in Ancient Time*?
3. List the words through which Wordsworth describes the qualities of Milton in *London, 1802*.

## NOTES

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### 1.3 HARDY AND AUDEN

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In this section, we will discuss *The Darkling Thrush* by the Victorian poet Thomas Hardy and *The Unknown Citizen* by the modernist poet W H Auden.

#### 1.3.1 Thomas Hardy: *The Darkling Thrush*

##### Text

*I leant upon a coppice gate  
When Frost was spectre-grey,  
And Winter's dregs made desolate  
The weakening eye of day.  
The tangled bine-stems scored the sky  
Like strings of broken lyres,  
And all mankind that haunted nigh  
Had sought their household fires.*

*The land's sharp features seemed to be  
The Century's corpse outleant,  
His crypt the cloudy canopy,  
The wind his death-lament.  
The ancient pulse of germ and birth  
Was shrunken hard and dry,  
And every spirit upon earth  
Seemed fervourless as I.*

*At once a voice arose among  
The bleak twigs overhead  
In a full-hearted evensong  
Of joy illimited;  
An aged thrush, frail, gaunt, and small,  
In blast-beruffled plume,  
Had chosen thus to fling his soul  
Upon the growing gloom.*

*So little cause for carolings  
Of such ecstatic sound  
Was written on terrestrial things  
Afar or nigh around,*

*That I could think there trembled through  
His happy good-night air  
Some blessed Hope, whereof he knew  
And I was unaware.*

*Explanations From  
Starred Text*

## NOTES

### Reference to Context of Important Lines

*The Darkling Thrush* by Thomas Hardy can be said to be a very suggestive critique of the rush of scientific discoveries and developments which dominated the Victorian Era. The poem can be said to be a reflection of Hardy's gloomy thoughts given the heavy use of the imagery reflecting the end of the year, day, even perhaps the century. This is indicated through the use of words like 'desolate', 'frost', 'spectre-grey', 'tangled', 'broken lyre' etc. It is then no wonder, that this poem was earlier known as 'The Century's End, 1990'. The poem involves the speaker in the action who is leaning 'upon a coppice gate'. He is observing the events of the nineteenth century ('Century's corpse outleant'). The century is a 'corpse' now not just because it is ending but also because something in the events has led to the death of the century. Due to the surge of scientific discoveries, there was observed a decline in religious faith which is also partly out of Hardy's personal beliefs too. The 'aged thrush' then comes forth as a contrast not only to the author but also to the narrator of the poem and the 'growing gloom' in the poem. This difference in the joy which is far beyond the limits of sadness felt by the thrush and of which the narrator is 'unaware' is the focus of the poem. But this realization too is an ambiguous end to the poem, where questions arise as to what is actually the narrator feeling: whether he is optimistic or still as gloomy as before.

### Lines 9-16

After the gloomy and in a sense dying description of the surroundings in which the narrator is leaning on a gate; he moves to specifically describing what he is doing there. He describes that the land in front of him has 'sharp features' as if like a map of the century's activities and events. It has the 'century's corpse outleant' which is a reference to the century that has gone by. The poet uses the word 'outleant' although it does not actually mean anything, which is possibly to suggest that his experience cannot be expressed through the limited words already in our vocabulary. Note the fact that the poet has only referred to things up till now, and has personified the inanimate with different adjectives of death. He is using nature and elements of nature to describe his thoughts. He refers to the unsuccessful process of germination which is another way of denoting death and ends the stanza on the very note of gloominess ('fervourless').

### Lines 25-32

He is unable to figure out in these lines as to why ('little cause') the thrush's 'carolings'. This is a contrast to the dreary surroundings which had been earlier described. The poet calls the 'carolings' an 'ecstatic sound'. This sound of happiness or jubilation is compared to the 'terrestrial things', which is again reflective of the animate and the inanimate objects. He is trying to find the source of such happiness because he cannot understand it given the environment and later concludes that it is perhaps a 'blessed hope' he knew and he was unaware of. These lines could also be said to be a reference to the coming of a new era, a positive incoming of a new century with new poets as opposed to poets like Hardy who belonging to the old era were oblivious of this fact.

### 1.3.2 W.H. Auden: *The Unknown Citizen*

#### Text

#### NOTES

(To JS/07 M 378  
This Marble Monument  
Is Erected by the State)  
He was found by the Bureau of Statistics to be  
One against whom there was no official complaint,  
And all the reports on his conduct agree  
That, in the modern sense of an old-fashioned word, he was a  
saint,  
For in everything he did he served the Greater Community.  
Except for the War till the day he retired  
He worked in a factory and never got fired,  
But satisfied his employers, Fudge Motors Inc.  
Yet he wasn't a scab or odd in his views,  
For his Union reports that he paid his dues,  
(Our report on his Union shows it was sound)  
And our Social Psychology workers found  
That he was popular with his mates and liked a drink.  
The Press are convinced that he bought a paper every day  
And that his reactions to advertisements were normal in every way.  
Policies taken out in his name prove that he was fully insured,  
And his Health-card shows he was once in hospital but left it cured.  
Both Producers Research and High-Grade Living declare  
He was fully sensible to the advantages of the Instalment Plan  
And had everything necessary to the Modern Man,  
A phonograph, a radio, a car and a frigidaire.  
Our researchers into Public Opinion are content  
That he held the proper opinions for the time of year;  
When there was peace, he was for peace: when there was war, he went.  
He was married and added five children to the population,  
Which our Eugenist says was the right number for a parent of his  
generation.  
And our teachers report that he never interfered with their  
education.  
Was he free? Was he happy? The question is absurd:  
Had anything been wrong, we should certainly have heard.



## Reference to Context of Important Lines

Explanations From  
Starred Text

*The Unknown Citizen* is a satirical poem by the poet W.H. Auden in 1939. It is based on a regular citizen or a common man in a state controlled by the government. Auden in the poem describes a citizen for whom a monument has been erected as an example of a citizen with no faults. Auden in the poem critiques the modern society and its functioning. He describes that the man had been found by different institutions to be a person who pays all his dues, belongs to a union who has no extreme views, is friendly with his co-workers, is hardly ever sick, is in good charge of his finances, does not hold any personal views on anything, never supports war but is ready to give it all when called to fight a war, has the right number of children and so forth. But in the last two lines of the poem, the narrator asks whether all the description suggests that the 'Unknown citizen' is happy. The sources of these information are the statistics which do not reveal the happiness of a person. Auden tries to depict that in the totalitarian socialist state, there will be no utopia, the individual would be just a part of the crowd.

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### Epitaph

The epitaph is our initiation into the reading of the poem. The poet uses it to set the stage for action, that is to say to explain to the readers that the poem is about to be very dramatic and Undo like in nature. The group of numbers at first do not make sense to the readers, but the next line, 'This monument is erected by the State' seems to give a context that it is like a memorial for someone, who this person is, is still unknown. The use of the word 'State' without any particular name has a very ominous and authoritative feel to it. The readers somewhat understand that perhaps it is a number to denote a person, but this lack of a proper name both gives a picture that the person has no unique persona and is perhaps a reference to the numerous tombs built of soldiers in the time for their participation and sacrifice in the war. It is ironic because these soldiers wanted a name for the life they laid down, but all they received was a collective 'unknown' memorial.

### Lines 1-5

These lines finally answer the readers' questions as to who is the monument for. The use of the words 'He was found by the Bureau of Statistics' first alerts the audience as to why he was 'found' by the Bureau of Statistics. The next few lines about 'no official complaint' and all 'conducts agree' then tells us that he has been following all the rules. He is given the title of a 'saint' in the modern sense because whatever he has done has served the 'Greater Community'. This line makes the readers perceive that maybe the unknown citizen has done a great deal for the society. Up till now, none of these deeds are revealed and this is what makes these lines very important to the readers; for until now we are assuming that his deeds are heroic.

### Lines 21-23

These lines are representative of the effect of a totalitarian state. 'Our research into Public Opinion are content' reflects the invasiveness of the state in the actions of its citizen. The censorship and the monitoring of the thoughts is to avoid any rebellion. The state is somehow shown to have been successful in their control as they can see that the man who they are showing as an example on observation was found to have 'held the proper opinions for the time of the year'. 'Proper opinions' again is an implication to the agreeable narrative and thoughts which are allowed to the public. The lost individuality is

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showcased through the lines ‘When there was peace, he was for peace; when there was war, he went.’ These lines by the poet also unravel an important point about asking questions, for if the public never questions, the state has free reigns to do whatever they please. The war referred to here could be both the World War I or the World War II which had broken out at the time of this poem’s conception.

### Lines 28-29

These lines are the ultimate climax of the poem. After having described the characteristics of the ‘Unknown citizen’, Auden asks the readers whether all this information which could be statistically collected is in fact enough to judge whether a person is happy or not. He himself admits that the question is absurd, which is also a reference to the psyche which the wars and the totalitarian states have on the minds of the common people. The question ‘Was he free?’ reflects the level of pervasiveness of the government into the lives of the citizens; a government which collects all the information of the public. Auden comments on the structure of the political socialist state which groups the people together and diminishes their individuality. The last line is the final critique of the modernist society, it is equally a sad and chilling reminder of the fact that the humanist element is certainly lost in the state, for the government is relying on statistics to judge human emotions.

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## 1.4 SUMMARY

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- *On His Blindness* is a petrarchan sonnet of fourteen lines. In the poem, Milton is remorseful that he has lost his eye-sight so early even before entering the middle age. He is fearful of the fact that due to his failed vision he will not be able to use his talent of poesy to fulfill his service towards God, though he is still very much eager to make judicious use of it.
- Milton in the poem *On his Blindness* comes to the conclusion that the service to God is not solely about active work but is also about patient relinquishment to His will and dispensation.
- *And did those feet* is a poem by William Blake inspired by the Book Revelations and the Second Coming of Jesus for the establishment of a new Jerusalem.
- ‘And did those feet’ seems to indicate that the growing industrialization and its ills must be curtailed with the establishment of a new Jerusalem.
- William Wordsworth wrote the poem *London, 1802* as a call to the late poet John Milton. It is sonnet which is written to serve two objectives: be a tribute the genius Milton and express the sad realities of London in Wordsworth opinion.
- *The Darkling Thrush* by Thomas Hardy can be said to be a very suggestive critique of the rush of scientific discoveries and developments which were dominating the Victorian Era.
- *The Unknown Citizen* is a satirical poem by the poet W.H. Auden. It is based on a regular citizen or a common man in a state controlled by the government. Auden tries to depict that in the totalitarian socialist state, there will be no utopia, the individual would be just a part of the crowd.

## 1.5 KEY TERMS

- **Sonnet:** It is a poem of fourteen lines using any of a number of formal rhyme schemes, in English typically having ten syllables per line.
- **Petrarchan sonnet:** It is a type of sonnet which has 14 lines and a slightly flexible rhyme scheme. The first eight lines, or octave, almost always follow an 'abbaabba' rhyme scheme, but the rhyme scheme of last six lines, or sestet, varies.
- **Epitaph:** It is a phrase or form of words written in the memory of a person who has died, especially as an inscription on a tombstone.
- **Thrush:** It refers to a small or medium-sized songbird, typically having a brown back, spotted breast, and loud song.

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## 1.6 ANSWERS TO 'CHECK YOUR PROGRESS'

1. In the end of the poem *On His Blindness* Milton realizes that 'God doth not wait God doth not need Either man's work or his own gifts; who best Bear his mild yoke, they serve him best. His state Is Kingly. Thousands at his bidding speed, And post o'er Land and Ocean without rest: They also serve who only stand and wait.'
2. The 'satanic mills' in Blake's poem *And Did Those Feet in Ancient Time* refer to the nineteenth century industrialised society which through its noise, pollution and exploitation is overtaking the idyllic landscape of England.
3. *In London, 1802* Wordsworth makes use of the words like star, sea and naked heaven to describe the qualities of Milton.
4. Hardy describes the Thrush with terms like aged, frail, gaunt, small, and in blast-beruffled plume in the poem *The Darkling Thrush*.
5. *The Unknown Citizen* was published in 1939.

## 1.7 QUESTIONS AND EXERCISES

### Short-Answer Questions

1. Which form of poetry is used in Milton's poem *On his Blindness*?
2. Mention the terms which indicate a plea for help in the poem *London, 1802*.
3. What is the narrator's reaction to the song sung by the Thrush in *The Darkling Thrush*?
4. How do the authorities know that the unknown citizen is a modern man?

### Long-Answer Questions

1. How does Milton come to the realization that God is not concerned with how the humans use their talent?
2. Describe the manner in which the narrator prepares for war in the poem *And Did Those Feet in Ancient Time*.
3. Discuss the way in which Wordsworth describes the qualities of Milton.

### Check Your Progress

4. How does Hardy describe the thrush in the poem *The Darkling Thrush*?
5. When was *The Unknown Citizen* published.

4. How is death and coldness portrayed in Hardy's 'The Darkling Thrush'?
5. 'The Unknown Citizen' presents a critique of the modern society.' Discuss the statement.

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### 1.8 FURTHER READINGS

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# UNIT 2 POETRY

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## 2.0 INTRODUCTION

Right from the middle of the seventh century to the present day, English poetry has witnessed the creation of some of the most enduring poems in Western culture. Renaissance marked the beginning of English poetry. This was followed by the age of Victorian poetry. The Victorian poets had a precise scientific approach to life. They were interested in the occult and even dwelled on the pathological.

The early twentieth century was characterized by significant artistic change and was dominated by the repercussions of World War I and World War II. The artistic concerns of modernism had an impact on the themes and techniques of writing of this age. The readership of English literature multiplied and so did the range of the literature itself. In this unit, you will study the prominent works of poets, like Philip Sidney, John Milton, William Blake, Robert Browning, Thomas Hardy, and so on.

## 2.1 UNIT OBJECTIVES

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

- Prepare a brief biographical sketch of Philip Sidney, George Herbert, John Milton, William Blake and William Wordsworth
- Identify the prominent works of Robert Browning, Thomas Hardy and W. H. Auden
- Explain the prominent themes and issues discussed in the poems, *The Nightingale*, *The Pulley*, *The Unknown Citizen* and *Porphyria's Lover*

## 2.2 PHILIP SIDNEY: AN INTRODUCTION

Philip Sidney was born at Penshurst (Kent) on 30 November 1554. He was the eldest son of Sir Henry Sidney and Lady Mary Dudley. His mother was the eldest daughter of John Dudley, Duke of Northumberland and sister of Robert, Earl of Leicester and Ambrose, Earl of Warwick. Thus, we can say that Sidney belonged to the aristocratic class. This had direct implications on his hopes for the future and his reactions when it did not unfold as he had anticipated.



**Fig. 2.1** Sir Philip Sidney

He attended the Shrewsbury school (from 1564 to 1568) which was run under the tutelage of Thomas Ashton, a noted educator of his time. Here he met his lifelong friend, Fulke Greville. His father had been a close companion of the young King Edward VI. This proximity continued during the reigns of Queen Mary and Queen Elizabeth. This is borne out by the fact that while the son attended Shrewsbury the father served the crown as Lord Deputy of Ireland.

Philip was thirteen when he entered Christ Church, Oxford in 1568. During his three years here he acquainted and befriended the likes of Richard Hakluyt the geographer and William Camden the historian. When he turned seventeen, his uncle, the Earl of Leicester, sponsored his Grand Tour of Europe. The aim was to familiarize him with foreign languages and international relations so that when he returned home he would have first-hand knowledge of events and people in the Continent and could use this familiarity to build a future for himself at home. Leicester was sufficiently impressed by his nephew's knowledge and recommended him to Sir Francis Walsingham, then resident ambassador in Paris. As a result, Sidney went to France in May 1572 in a special

embassy to Charles IX. While in France, he met Hubert Languet (1518–1581) a Huguenot humanist and political observer for the Elector of Saxony. They became friends and corresponded for nearly nine years.

His tour of the Continent for the next two-and-a-half years was mostly under the aegis of Languet. During this time he attended the University of Padua (in Venetian territory and thus safe for Protestants) for a year, and also spent time in Vienna, Frankfurt and Prague. He travelled to Poland in the East and Florence in the South, and freely interacted with the correspondents and friends of Languet. This exposure made him the Queen's best-informed courtier about international relations. Languet's friendship proved useful in other fields as well. As a result of his interactions and discussions with Languet and his friends, Sidney was introduced to the politico-religious philosophy of Philipp Melancthon. Melancthon was Luther's friend and was instrumental in converting many humanists to the cause of the Reformation. It was his belief that if the politico-religious fight against the Pope and the King of Spain was to be won, it was imperative that the Reformed churches unite under the leadership of a Protestant prince. This does not mean that Melancthon considered theological issues to be more important than political ones. He held that a stable, prosperous state was possible only under the aegis of a wise and godly political government.

If we were to follow the trajectory of Sidney's career, it would not be wrong to say that it was governed by this belief. He was recalled by the Queen in May 1575 and became a courtier under the sponsorship of Leicester. In the next few years Philip acted as his father's representative. Even though his father was criticized Philip was immensely respected. In 1577, he headed a special embassy to the new Emperor, Rudolph II. During this trip, he was tasked to explore the probability of forging a feasible Protestant alliance to counter the Pope's Holy League. He was successful in performing both these tasks brilliantly. Sidney returned with a detailed account on the Emperor and his entourage and also a draft for 'Heads of a treaty' between Elizabeth and the Protestant German princes. Though this treaty never materialized, its brilliant, cogent and insightful observations and arguments greatly enhanced his reputation. On his return from this trip Sidney reverted to his role of protecting his father's interests in court, while the former was still in Ireland. In one instance, where his father and Ormond were opposed to each other, he wrote a memorandum addressed to the Queen. Though it was well received, it did not change her mind because she was parsimonious and favoured Ormond (his father's rival and an ally of another enemy, the Earl of Sussex). This memorandum, though incomplete, is the first remaining piece of his writing (apart from letters). Sidney's ability to look at the larger picture was borne out by the interest he took in the exploration of the New World. He invested in Frobisher's expedition to Newfoundland in search of a Northwest passage to Asia and also wrote to Languet about it.

While, Sidney was first and foremost a courtier wanting to be a statesman, he was also a talented poet and a writer not only of verse, but of fiction also. We get a glimpse of this in *The Lady of May* which is his first known literary work. It is a masque composed in 1578 to commemorate the Royal visit to Leicester's house at Wanstead.

By the end of the 16th century, a series of Spanish successes saw a change in British foreign policy to the extent that French concerns and claims were seen to be legitimate. This conflict is best illustrated in the revived project to marry Elizabeth. King Henri III's younger brother was the new candidate. This match had the support of a section of the Court and the Government. The Protestant faction, including Leicester and Walsingham, opposed the same. To convince the Queen and to bring her around to

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their way of thinking, the Protestant faction persuaded Sidney to write a Letter to the Queen. The Letter is a highly intelligent and heartfelt document. It clearly sets out the arguments against such a union by reminding Her Majesty of the involvement of her suitor in the worst persecutions of the Huguenots. The letter was taken seriously and the marriage was shelved.

In 1580, Sidney left the Court temporarily to stay at his sister Mary's (wife of Earl of Pembroke) country house for a year. Here he began to write his three greatest works—*Arcadia*, a prose romance, the treatise *A Defence of Poesy* (also known as *The Apology for Poetry*), and the sonnet-sequence *Astrophil and Stella*.

Sidney was knighted in the early 1580s. Along with his uncle, the Earl of Warwick, he became the Master of the Ordinance and oversaw the country's material preparedness for an increasingly inevitable war with Spain. He married Frances, Walsingham's daughter, in 1583. One can discern a change in his literary creations of this period. It seems his conception of 'poesy' in the sense of fiction was transforming into a view of literature in line with the Huguenot ideals of Walsingham and his Continental friends. Under this influence, he wrote an English versification of the *Psalms*. He died before he could complete it, but was later completed by his sister Mary. He also translated the Huguenot poet Du Bartas' *Semaine*, or Week of Creation. He began the translation of his friend Duplessis-Mornay's defence of Christianity against atheists, but died before he could complete it. This was later completed by Arthur Golding.

1584 saw political turmoil in Europe—William of Orange was assassinated, and Spain recaptured large parts of Netherlands. When Elizabeth was apprised of the situation, she agreed to intervene and negotiated three cautionary towns as guarantee for her financial and military backing. Leicester was charged with designing the form this intervention would take. In these conditions, Sidney became governor of Flushing (Vlissingen). From this moment, he became obsessed with two things—arranging payment for his soldiers, and trying to salvage what he could from a town ravaged by war. He also saw action during this conflict. He along with Maurice of Nassau, the young Dutch prince, led the storming of Axel, a town near Antwerp.

Zutphen was strategically important for the Spanish. The British lay siege of this town. In one of their charges Sidney was shot in the thigh. He was evacuated to Arnhem where his wound developed gangrene. He died on 17 October 1586. It was a slow death and he faced it stoically. Thus, formed a legend called Sidney, who was a brave soldier, an accomplished statesman, a great writer and as the Queen called him 'the most accomplished gentleman in Europe'.

### Sonnet

'Sonnet' is an abbreviation of the Italian sonetto (little song) recited to the sound of a musical instrument. It is a fourteen-line poem written in iambic pentameter. Its origins are unclear. For some, it originated in Provence and for others it is a development of the Greek epigram. It is a dialectical construct where two contrasting ideas, emotions, states of mind, beliefs, actions, events and images are juxtaposed.

The major types of sonnets are as follows:

- Italian (or Petrarchan) sonnet
- English (or Shakespearian) sonnet
- Spenserian sonnet



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1. **Petrarchan sonnet:** The Petrarchan sonnet is divided into two sections. The first eight lines are the octave (consisting of two quatrains). The octave presents a problem or question, or situation and rhymes abba abba. The final six lines are the sestet (consisting of two tercets). The sestet presents the resolution to the octave. It has a looser rhyme scheme and can rhyme as: cdc dcd; cdd cdc; cde cde; cde ced; or cdc edc.  
Typically, the ninth line of the sonnet marks the movement from the problem to the resolution. Since this marks a change in tone of the poem this line is called the 'turn' or volta.
2. **English or Shakespearian sonnet:** The Shakespearian sonnet is so called since he was the most famous practitioner of this form. The theme, generally, is the poet's love of a woman. This sonnet comprises of three quatrains of alternating rhyme and a couplet: abab; cdcd; efef; gg. Here, the sestet is divided into a four-line stanza and a couplet which sums up the poet's conclusion.
3. **Spenserian sonnet:** The Spenserian sonnet, invented by Edmund Spenser can be seen as a variation of the Shakespearean sonnet. It too has a three quatrain and a couplet structure; but with an interwoven rhyme scheme: abab; bcbc; cdcd; ee.

### Major Works of Sidney

*The Defence of Poesy* is his treatise wherein he asserts that 'poesy' (imaginative writing) is crucial for any moral education. The text also marks the poet's creative ability as special. Sidney claims that of all the human arts and sciences it is only the poet's faculty of 'invention', that equals God's creative ability as reflected in the abundance of nature.

*Astrophil and Stella* is a seminal work by Sidney. Its success sparked a renewal of the Petrarchan sonnet-sequence. The creative impulse was his love for Penelope Devereux, Lady Rich. Using the principle of *energia*, the sonnet sequence explores the way esteem becomes love, love into desire, and how desire finally destroys true love. It circulated in manuscript form and was published five years after the poet's death.

*The Arcadia*, details the combative and romantic adventures of two princes Musidorus and Pyrocles; they are in love with princesses Pamela and Philoclea respectively. It is an adaptation of Sannazaro's *Arcadia* and Montemayor's *Diana*. The first version, now referred to as the *Old Arcadia*, was never published. Sidney's revision of this text is the *New Arcadia*. The poet died before he could complete it. Therefore, the 1593 edition used the ending of the *Old Arcadia*. Sidney tried many poetic innovations in this version: he tried to substitute classical meters for traditional English rhyme. The poem deals with issues of literary composition and theory. The *New Arcadia* is a complex, variegated work and addresses issues of public and private (self-) government.

### Characteristics of Sidney's Work

Sidney's fame as a poet rests on the work he produced over a span of merely eight years, from about 1577 to his death in 1586. If we consider his poetic work we find that the themes of his writings were not based on him or his experiences. He never wrote about the military campaigns in Netherland in which he participated. Despite being a courtier, except for some passages in *The Lady of May*, he never wrote in praise of the Queen, being religious he never wrote a poem of personal devotion, he valued friendship, yet other than his 'Two Pastorals' and a single mention of Languet he never wrote a

commendatory or memorial poem for a real person; despite being interested in politics, he never wrote of issues connected to it. In fact, with the exception of *Astrophil and Stella*, his verse is neither official nor personal and deals entirely with imagined situations.

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Sidney's focus in his poetry is love. Even here the poet's personal voice is filtered through a created character—either Philisides or Astrophil. This aloofness allows Sidney to look at and assess his work with a detached eye. As a result, the poetic forms and plot structures of his works reveal a level of intricacy and polish not seen in English before.

In his eclogues, Sidney imitated Petrarch and Sannazaro. In his later poetry, he abandoned this close stylistic imitation and developed his own style. It embraces tradition even as it modifies it and is more critical and revisionist. Sidney was a humanist and his work reveals this bent of mind. He saw options and alternatives for every issue and a discussion of these, in the form of dialogue, populates his work. Further, the presence of these options and alternatives imply that for him the world existed in binaries. This in turn explains the presence of pairings and oppositions with respect to plot, character, and language in his work.

### 2.2.1 *The Nightingale*: Text and Explanation

#### Text

*The nightingale, as soon as April bringeth  
Unto her rested sense a perfect waking,  
While late bare earth, proud of new clothing, springeth,  
Sings out her woes, a thorn her song-book making,  
And mournfully bewailing,  
Her throat in tunes expresseth  
What grief her breast oppresseseth  
For Tereus' force on her chaste will prevailing.  
O Philomela fair, O take some gladness,  
That here is juster cause of plaintful sadness:  
Thine earth now springs, mine fadeth;  
Thy thorn without, my thorn my heart invadeth.*

*Alas, she hath no other cause of anguish  
But Tereus' love, on her by strong hand wroken,  
Wherein she suffering, all her spirits languish;  
Full womanlike complains her will was broken.  
But I, who daily craving,  
Cannot have to content me,  
Have more cause to lament me,  
Since wanting is more woe than too much having.  
O Philomela fair, O take some gladness,  
That here is juster cause of plaintful sadness:*

Sir Philip Sidney (1595) *The Nightingale*, extensively taken into consideration as one of the excellent of Sir Philip Sidney's quick poems, seems within the second part of his *defense of Poesy*. It's by far based on a popular tune of the time, 'Non Credo Gia Che Piu Infelice Amante', also regarded by means of the identify 'Philomela', the poem is based totally at the tale of Philomela in book 6 of Ovid's *Metamorphoses*. Philomela and Procne were the daughters of King Pandion of Attica. Procne married Tereus of Thrace, even though he lusted after Philomela. Sooner or later, Tereus raped Philomela and reduce out her tongue to silence her. She, but, wove the tale into a tapestry that she despatched to her sister. Procne then killed her son and served him for dinner to Tereus. The girls fled, pursued through Tereus, but the gods turned them all into birds: Procne have become a nightingale, Philomela a swallow, and Tereus a hoopoe.

The richness of the rhyme in this poem is indicative of its basis on an Italian piece, as are the musicality and continuity of the terms. The innovation on this piece lies in Sidney's comparison of himself to Philomela as he explores sexual dynamics, voice, self-expression, and the English way of life of male stoicism. This is carried out through both phrases and rhythm.

Sidney establishes the temper right away: 'The nightingale, as soon as April bringeth/Unto her rested sense an ideal waking.../Sings out her woes' (ll. 1-4). April is a month of juxtapositions: winter has ended and summer time is drawing close; negative rain falls alongside generative sunshine; lifestyle is beginning while a few ends. Further, Philomela's rape functions juxtapositions, too—demise of the woman and delivery of the girl; give up of innocence and beginning of experience—as proven: 'Her throat in tunes expresseth/What grief her breast oppresseth' (ll. 6-7). Acknowledging the horrible act that has led to this moment—'For Tereus' force on her chaste will winning' (l. 8)—Sidney then directly inverts the tale. The audience must now not experience pity for Philomela; rather, they must sense sorry for Sidney: 'o Philomela truthful, o take some gladness,/That right here is juster motive of plaintful unhappiness' (ll. 9-10).

To start with commiserating with Philomela, Sidney then berates her for vocalizing her pain, while he himself cannot. Philomela, Sidney claims, at the least can explicit her unhappiness via track and accordingly purge herself of it, but he, as a person, should suffer in silence. Along with her song, he claims, 'Thine earth now springs', however as he can say not anything in his state of affairs, 'mine fadeth' (l. 11). He ends the first stanza via underscoring her emotional launch thru tune and his own emotional stress in silence: 'Thy thorn without, my thorn my heart invadeth' (l. 12). At this point, it will become clear that this poem isn't only a retelling of the Philomela fantasy and a clever parody of a famous tune, but is also in element a grievance of the social mores dictating that a lady may express her emotions overtly even as a man may not. It also refers to the popular notion that positive songbirds sang their most stunning music at once before their demise, resulting from plunging their breast onto a thorn.

In the second stanza, Sidney maintains his diatribe in opposition to Philomela's vocalization of her enjoy, lightly looking at that 'unluckily, she has no other cause of discomfort/but Tereus' love, on her with the aid of robust hand wroken,/in which she suffering, all her spirits languish;/full womanlike complains her will was damaged' (ll. thirteen-sixteen). Indeed, Sidney nearly seems to be implying here that Philomela did not thoughts things as a whole lot as she claims, but as a substitute is utilizing her role as a woman to claim she has been wronged, consequently keeping her own innocence and

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chastity within the face of the act committed. In other phrases, she should revel in bodily love without social effects, something authorized to no man in polite society.

Sidney then continues on with his very own aspect of factors, claiming, 'I, who daily yearning,/can't should content me,/Have extra reason to lament me,/due to the fact that trying is extra woe than too much having' (ll. 1720). These strains clearly monitor the difference among the sexes: ladies see sexuality as an exhausting duty pressured upon them, while guys see it as something desired, however rarely finished.

Sidney embraces the male angle: women are merciless torturers who tease guys with their appeal, but then protest whilst guys pursue them, unfairly exploiting the girl's normally mentioned right to voice her feelings and causing men to go through in agonized silence at their cruel behavior. with the aid of utilizing the classic Philomela myth, he shows that this type of conduct and those tensions between the sexes have been going on for the reason that beginnings of civilization, and the tongue-in-cheek parody of a modern Italian love music allows him to explicit this fantastically vitriolic factor of view in a stylish and nonthreatening manner via a recognizable, exciting shape that lets in everything to seem harmless. He's able to air his views thoroughly within the guise of a poetry-writing exercise. Sidney might also declare once more in the second stanza that Philomela has a voice and he has none, that 'Thine earth now springs, mine fadeth;/Thy thorn without, my thorn my coronary heart invadeth' (ll. 23-24), however the poem itself is his tune, and Philomela, an insignificant myth now dead and long past, has not anything more to mention on the problem. Sidney has consequently cleverly received his argument and had the final phrase.

In this poem, the speaker is using the artwork of rhetoric. This is an example of a courtly-love poem, in which the speaker (Sidney) is in love with a lady, whom he can never have. In this poem, Sidney evaluates himself by using alluding to classical delusion (Philomela). In doing so, he's able to evaluate his state of affairs to that of hers. Despite the fact that she become raped and had her tongue cut out, the speaker says, 'That here is juster cause of plaintful unhappiness', which means that he has a better purpose to be sad than she does: 'due to the fact that trying is more woe than too much having'. He is largely saying that it's far worse to need someone and not get them, than to have an excessive amount of somebody that you did not need. In short, he is trying to convince the reader that his scenario is worse than that of someone who has been raped and sick-fated to everlasting silence.

In 'Philomela', Sidney alludes to Philomela's violent remedy by Tereus, however that isn't the primary subject matter of this paintings. In this poem, the focus is on the narrator being resentful of Philomela. This jealousy toward any such wretched mythological parent shows the intense loneliness experienced by using the narrator and the following sexist undertones.

In the first few traces of the poem, Philomela is known as a 'nightingale' and the narrator further attributes her more bird-like features, alluding to her escape from Tereus as an actual nightingale, showing a prior know-how of the parable. An informed target audience might commonly see Philomela as a pitiful sufferer guarded over via a vicious Tereus. This isn't always how the narrator sees the state of affairs in any respect. She or he does now not even deal with the horrors committed in opposition to Philomela. The manner the poem is offered it does no longer even provide the slightest indication of the abuses suffered with the aid of Philomela on the arms of Tereus. The narrator sees Philomela's sole source of ache to be Tereus' over-ample love, of which the speaker is glaringly green with envy. The narrator makes this jealousy clean because they say that

## Check Your Progress

1. What kind of family background did Philip Sidney come from?
2. What was Sidney's profession?
3. How did Sidney die?
4. Name the major types of sonnets.
5. What are some of the major works of Sidney?

they're 'each day craving' such attentions and that 'looking is more woe than an excessive amount of having' (17, 20). So, on this individual's opinion, wanting love is greater painful than having too much, because the case seems to be with Philomela and Tereus. Thus, it seems that the narrator is jealous of the lust, or love, that Philomela evokes in others. And this envy, in conjunction with the lack of affection, is inflicting the narrator excellent misery.

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### 2.3 METAPHYSICAL POETRY AND GEORGE HERBERT

John Donne, George Herbert, Andrew Marvell, Henry Vaughan, Richard Crashaw, and Katherine Philips are some of the most famous metaphysical poets in the history of English literature.

#### Metaphysical Poetry

Metaphysical poetry is a kind of poetry that lays stress on the belief that the logical aspect rules the emotional; signified by sarcasm, absurdity and extraordinary comparisons of unlike features; the latter often being fanciful, to the limit of peculiarity. In his seminal work, *Discourse on Satire* (1693), John Dryden said that Donne's work 'affects the metaphysics'. Later, Dr. Johnson labeled the various seventeenth century poets, whose poems irrespective of their subject matter possessed certain characteristics, as 'Metaphysical Poets'. It is to Johnson that we owe the term 'Metaphysical Poets'.

Eighteenth century poet and critic Dr. Samuel Johnson is considered a certain group of poets, metaphysical, because he wanted to portray a loose group of British lyric poets who belonged to the seventeenth century. These poets were generally interested in metaphysical issues and had a common method of examining them. Their writings were marked by the innovativeness of metaphor (these included comparisons known as metaphysical conceits). The changing times had a significant influence on their poetry.

Discovery of the new sciences and the immoral scenario of the seventeenth century England were also other factors influencing their poetry. Metaphysical poets dealt with topics like God, creation and afterlife. The most popular metaphysical poets are John Donne, Andrew Marvell and Henry Vaughan among others. Donne incorporates the Renaissance conception of the human body as a microcosm into his love poetry. The Renaissance saw several people thinking that the macrocosmic physical world was reflected in the microcosmic human body. They believed that the body is ruled by the intellect just like a land is ruled by a king or queen.

Most of Donne's poems, such as *The Sun Rising*, *The Good-Morrow* and *A Valediction: Of Weeping* are based on the theme of love and involve a pair of lovers. They are represented as complete worlds unto themselves. The lovers are deeply in love with each other and oblivious to the world around them. Donne uses the analogy to express the extent to which the lovers are involved with each other. They are so engrossed that they forget their surroundings and behave as if they are the only people in existence. Nothing else matters to them except they themselves.

#### 2.3.1 Characteristics

Poets from John Donne to Ted Hughes show a few characteristics of metaphysical poetry.

Each poet categorised under this school of poetry reflected the following characteristics in his writings:

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1. **Ratiocination:** It is reasoning based on logic i.e. this kind of poetry used both reason and logic as a vehicle to put forward an idea. Good ratiocination is invariably supported by argument, proof, examples, etc. In Donne's *Death Be Not Proud* ratiocination takes place as the poet explains coherently why death should not be proud.
2. **Emotional appeal:** The use of reason does not mean an absence of emotional appeal. Metaphysical poetry displays a fine interspersing of emotions, sensibilities, memories and reasons.
3. **Use of conceits:** The metaphysical poets introduced the concept of conceits. In simple terms, a conceit is the bringing together of very unlikely ideas to produce a new idea. Helen Gardner explains, 'a comparison becomes a conceit when we are made to concede likeness while being strongly conscious of unlikeness'. Conceits can be either short or extended. References from medicine, commerce, warfare etc. are drawn to provide novelty to the conceits.
4. **Wit:** In the context of Metaphysical Poetry, the excessive use of intellectual ideas is referred to as wit.
5. **Paradox:** On the surface, a paradox appears to be a self-contradictory statement, but delving deeper we see the meaning lying underneath.
6. **Dramatic Opening:** These poems usually start off from certain events or actions, for e.g. consider the line 'For God's sake hold your tongue, and let me love' (*The Canonization* by John Donne)
7. **Simple Language:** The language used in metaphysical poetry is simple and easy to understand, devoid of elevated and ornate speech, which is found in classical writings.
8. **Humour:** Another prominent aspect of metaphysical poetry is humour. If the humor is subtle and polished, it helps in controlling the tone and mood of the poem.

## Definition

To decide on a standard definition of Metaphysical poetry is slightly difficult. Frank J. Warnke provides an elaborate description of metaphysical poetry:

... A kind of poetry created in England during the first two thirds of the seventeenth century, distinguished by a radical use of conceited imagery, rational or argumentative structure, specifically intellectual emphasis manifesting itself usually in language from which all traces of special poetic diction have been purged a markedly dramatic tone, a pre-occupation in both amorous and devotional poetry with themes of transcendence and aspiration.

## Metaphysical Poetry and Religion

Since two of the four metaphysical poems deal with religious themes, it will be appropriate to highlight a point or two about this relation. During the seventeenth century, the orthodox Protestant Church of England believed in Calvinist theology. According to Calvinism,

God is the supreme being with ultimate authority and power and is the final authority in deciding whether a soul should be damned or salvaged. It emphasises on the original sin and does not believe in the need of priests between God and Individual.

In Metaphysical poetry, emotions are shaped and expressed by logical reasoning and both sound and picture are subordinate to this end. Words consecrated to poetry are avoided because such words have accumulated emotion. The very reasons that prompt other poets to use these words persuade Donne and his disciples to neglect them. The Metaphysical poets like Wordsworth preferred words in everyday use. But their practice goes even further beyond.

The Metaphysical poets used the natural language of man when they are engaged in commerce or in scientific speculation, so that the words themselves, apart from the meaning in the context, have no repercussions. They cut themselves off from one of the common means of poetry and thus become entirely dependent on a successful fusion between thought and feeling; they seldom employ easy or emotionally exciting rhythms.

Often the rhythm is as intricate as thought and only reveals itself when the emphasis has been carefully distributed accordingly to the sense; its function is that of a stimulant, not a narcotic, to the intellect. Elizabethan rhythms were usually suggested by a classical heritage, or by the requirements of music. The rhythms of Donne and his followers are dictated by the meaning.

Dr. Jonson rightly said, 'to write on their plan it was at least necessary to read and think'. Successful reading of Metaphysical poets necessitates at least a temporary conquest of the tendency to divorce feeling from intelligence, to be moved only at the cost of being unable to judge, and to judge well only when the sympathies are not engaged. The incompatibility of detachment and participation, or amusement and pity is constantly impoverishing our experiences.

Any poet must separate himself from his experience if his poem is to be more than a personal outcry. The Metaphysical poets call upon the powers of connecting in a peculiar degree. The search for the intellectual equivalent of emotion enforces connection and it also ensures detachment must be held at an arm's length. In most of the poems, Donne transmutes the personal experience of a lover into an affirmation about the nature of man. Without forfeiting the power to express emotion, the Metaphysical poetry style distances the persona; it is not true of the protagonist alone but of all mankind that body and spirit are interdependent.

Those who did not like the Metaphysical poetry attacked it for two reasons. Firstly, it is objected that such a style soon degenerates into the pursuit of logical incongruity and ingenuity for its own sake. This is certainly the fate that overtakes it when the poet has very little to say. The second objection is that the Metaphysical poetry style is needlessly obscure. There may actually be a cleavage between the poet's image and his original impulse. The Metaphysical poet is the man with a continual breakdown of mental habits—experiences which have been kept apart in the mind are suddenly yoked together.

This occasion questions the obscurity in poetry. Recondite imagery is a common cause of difficulty or obscurity in poetry. But difference should be made between the almost implausible obstacles of private symbolism such as William Blake used or even

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imagery derived from individual literary pursuits such as T. S. Eliot used in *The Waste Land*; and the imagery of a poet like Donne demands only an acquaintance with widespread contemporary ideas. The other difficulty which arises and complicates Metaphysical poetry is its 'compression'. But this element of compression in the Metaphysical poetry could overcome through a very careful punctuation.

### 2.3.2 Conceit and Metaphysical Conceit

The word 'conceit' means 'a concept or an image'. In simpler terms, it is a figure of speech that brings out interesting or striking comparison between two different things, or situations or ideas to create a new concept. The course of development that one comes across in English poetry, suggests that there are two kinds of conceit: (a) the Petrarchan conceit and (b) the metaphysical conceit. We will more or less focus on metaphysical conceit that was mainly employed by the metaphysical poets of the seventeenth century like John Donne, Andrew Marvell and George Herbert.

Metaphysical poetry was in vogue during the seventeenth century. It was popularized by John Donne. Later on, many of his literary successors like Henry Vaughan, Andrew Marvell, George Herbert, and Richard Crashaw carried on the tradition.

The metaphysical poets 'shared a philosophical point of view and strongly opposed the mode of the idealized human nature and of physical love which was a tradition in Elizabethan poetry'. Initially, the 'metaphysical' school of poetry was looked down upon by the earlier writers. For instance, Ben Jonson had remarked, 'Donne deserved hanging because he had run roughshod over the conventional rhythm and imagery and smoothness of the Elizabethan poetry.'

Distinct characteristics of metaphysical poetry include extreme use of puns, allegories and conceits which are incorporated into the ordinary speech. Metaphysical poetry is marked by 'its exaltation of wit' that indicated 'nimbleness of thought' during the seventeenth century. The phrases and terms incorporated by these poets in their writing were inspired from various fields of knowledge. The metaphysical poets were extremely well read. Their writing reflected their high education as well as the vastness of the knowledge. Their poems exposed their deep faith in matters of life and religion. Whereas, if we consider the love poems, then we see that the neo-platonic concept of ideal love is glorified and sensuousness, along with physical beauty, receives a backseat. They highlighted the tension arousing in matters of love by incorporating realism in their poetry.

Speaking about the metaphysical writers in his essay, T. S. Eliot opines that the metaphysical poets used the conceit as a prominent tool to challenge the existing imagery used in the contemporary writings 'in order to stimulate both emotions and intellects'. It is also believed that they tried to express their highly sensitive mind and thought process through their poems. They invariably tried to bring together the human body to understand the notion of completion in their poetry.

Scholars suggest that the metaphysical conceit is a process by which a logical argument is presented in a poetic manner. Critic Baldick suggests that metaphysical poetry '... is an unusual or elaborate metaphor or simile presenting a surprisingly apt parallel between two apparently dissimilar things or feelings'.



Metaphysical poetry flourished at an age that coincided with the development of age of reason. It is argued by many that metaphysical poetry was the end product of the various movements that were taking place as a consequence of social, political, economic, and religious conditions that were prevalent in that age.

### 2.3.3 George Herbert

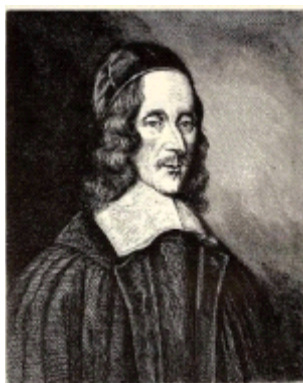
George Herbert was born on 3 April 1593. He was the fifth son in a famous Welsh family. Herbert's mother, Magdalen Newport, is known to be a patron of the eminent literary writer John Donne. It is believed that Donne dedicated his Holy Sonnets to her.

George Herbert could not enjoy his father's company for long. His father died when George was only three-years old. As a result, Magdalen was entrusted with the responsibility to raise ten children, all on her own. She was confident that she will be able to educate and provide a healthy upbringing to her children. At the age of ten, Herbert went to study at Westminster School. Later on, he won scholarships at Trinity College, Cambridge.

Herbert received his graduation degree in 1613 and completed his post-graduation in 1616. Later on, he was elected as a major fellow of Trinity. Almost immediately after graduating from college, Herbert was appointed as reader in Rhetoric at Cambridge. By 1620, he was elected a public orator. This was a post which gave Herbert the chance to represent Cambridge at public gatherings and platforms. For two successive years, 1624 and 1625, Herbert was elected as representative to the Parliament. In 1627, Herbert resigned from his role as an orator. In 1629, he tied the knot with Jane Danvers. By 1630, Herbert 'took holy orders in the Church of England'. Henceforth, until his death, Herbert spent his life discharging the role of rector in Bemerton near Salisbury. In Bemerton, apart from preaching, he spent a considerable time writing poetry and helping the community by rebuilding the church from his own funds. Herbert had composed a practical manual during his stay in Bemerton, known as *A Priest to the Temple*.

In 1633, Herbert died of consumption. He was only forty. *A Priest to the Temple* came out in print in 1633. Scholars have highlighted the popularity of book by pointing out that the book had been reprinted as many as twenty times since the year 1680.

George Herbert's poems will always be remembered for the deep religious devotion they reflect, for their linguistic accuracy and fluidity in rhyme. The great Romantic poet, Samuel Taylor Coleridge had written: 'Nothing can be more pure, manly, or unaffected,' in the context of Herbert's use of language in his poetry.



**Fig 2.2** George Herbert

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## Major literary works

The well-known literary works of George Herbert are the following:

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<i>A Dialogue-Anthem</i>	<i>Heaven</i>	<i>The British Church</i>
<i>A True Hymn</i>	<i>Jordan (I)</i>	<i>The Call</i>
<i>A Wreath</i>	<i>Jordan (II)</i>	<i>The Church-floor</i>
<i>Aaron</i>	<i>Joseph's Coat</i>	<i>The Collar</i>
<i>Affliction (I)</i>	<i>Life</i>	<i>The Dawning</i>
<i>Affliction (II)</i>	<i>Love (I)</i>	<i>The Elixir</i>
<i>Affliction (III)</i>	<i>Love (II)</i>	<i>The Foil</i>
<i>Affliction (IV)</i>	<i>Love (III)</i>	<i>The Glance</i>
<i>Antiphon (I)</i>	<i>Love-Joy</i>	<i>The Holdfast</i>
<i>Christmas</i>	<i>Man</i>	<i>The Holy Scriptures I</i>
<i>Church-music</i>	<i>Mary Magdalen</i>	<i>The Holy Scriptures II</i>
<i>Colossians 3.3</i>	<i>Mortification</i>	<i>The Pearl</i>
<i>Death</i>	<i>Peace</i>	<i>The Pilgrimage</i>
<i>Dialogue</i>	<i>Prayer (I)</i>	<i>The Pulley</i>
<i>Discipline</i>	<i>Prayer (II)</i>	<i>The Quiddity</i>
<i>Dullness</i>	<i>Redemption</i>	<i>The Quip</i>
<i>Easter</i>	<i>Sepulchre</i>	<i>The Search</i>
<i>Easter Wings</i>	<i>Sinne (I)</i>	<i>The Sinner</i>
<i>Even-song</i>	<i>Sinne (II)</i>	<i>The Son</i>
<i>Faith</i>	<i>Vanity (I)</i>	<i>The Storm</i>
<i>Grief</i>	<i>Virtue</i>	<i>The Temper (I)</i>
<i>H. Baptisme (I)</i>	<i>The Agony</i>	<i>The Temper (II)</i>
<i>H. Baptisme (II)</i>	<i>The Answer</i>	<i>The Windows</i>

### 2.3.4 *The Pulley*: Text and Explanation

The poem, *The Pulley*, centers on the theme of relationship between God and his best creation, that is, man. God, the ultimate father-figure to mankind, uses his special pulley to draw man back to him, once man's scheduled quota is over on this planet earth. He (God) does it for the good of mankind. *The Pulley* portrays the life of a man as he grows up experiencing certain aspects of life and in the process developing a relationship with God through this pulley.

*When God at first made man,  
Having a glass of blessings standing by,  
'Let us,' said he, 'pour on him all we can.  
Let the world's riches, which dispersèd lie,  
Contract into a span.'*

*So strength first made a way;  
Then beauty flowed, then wisdom, honour, pleasure.  
When almost all was out, God made a stay,  
Perceiving that, alone of all his treasure,  
Rest in the bottom lay.  
'For if I should,' said he,  
'Bestow this jewel also on my creature,  
He would adore my gifts instead of me,  
And rest in Nature, not the God of Nature;  
So both should losers be.*

*Yet let him keep the rest,  
But keep them with repining restlessness;  
Let him be rich and weary, that at least,  
If goodness lead him not, yet weariness  
May toss him to my breast. '*

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In this famous poem by George Herbert, an analogy is drawn between a pulley and Pandora's Box. As the Pandora's Box keeps all the evils of the world, anyone who opens it only takes the risk of spreading all the evil contained in the box and this process cannot be undone. Whereas, in the poem *The Pulley*, Herbert suggests that God controls everyone through a metaphorical pulley so that God can keep man under control and pull on a man to come to his salvation; hence, denying him the temptation not to undo the Pandora's Box. The very initial lines of the poem, state that:

*When God at first made man,  
Having a glass of blessing standing by,  
Let us (he said) pour all on him we can.*

These lines points to the reader that when God created man, he gave the best of everything he had in his possession to him. God almost poured his own image in man. He has blessed man with prosperity and has endowed him with all the riches because God realizes that man deserve these privileges. God has done this out of the goodness he stores in his heart for the mankind.

The reader must understand that after God blessed man by creating him, next he filled man with gifts such as, wisdom, honour and pleasure; rare yet incomprehensibly precious. After this, God gave man everything he could give to make man different of all the species:

*When almost all was out, God made a stay,  
Perceiving that, alone of all His treasure,  
Rest in the bottom lay.*

After blessing man with so much good, God decided to take rest. Thus, suggesting that God is beyond comparison in his ability to be so generous. He parted with whatever he had and decided not to keep anything for himself. The word 'rest' creates a pun because it means both physical rest and the notion of being left behind.

Moving on, Herbert says that God has showered all his gifts on man, but man is foolish to worship the gifts while ignoring God. And since this happens, Herbert suggest, 'And rest in Nature, not the God of Nature: / So both should be losers.'

To elaborate further, if the man worships the gifts and not God, then both man and God are unsuccessful in their intentions. Man did not realize that God is the ultimate being and creator and he should not forget God, while lingering after the gifts that God has given him. Moreover, God too failed because he did not give that wisdom to man to understand as to what he should worship. Thus, man choses a different path and moves further away from God. Each of them are definitely unsuccessful because the man chooses to go after something not pious and not precious as God had originally intended. However, this is the choice which each and every human must decide upon, because, needless to say, Pandora's Box is extremely tempting, but it is up to man to realize that God is doing everything that he can do out of his love for humanity.

The last segment of the poem, states, 'Yet let him keep the rest, / But keep them with repining restlessness.' Here, Herbert insists that both God and man are failures.

God insists that the man must keep the gifts, but this leads to him being discontent in every aspect of his life due to the transitory choices he makes. Herbert goes on to suggest:

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*Let him be rich and weary, that at least,  
If goodness lead him not, yet weariness  
May toss him to My breast.*

Thus, God finally decided that the man may remain rich, but weary. Since God's goodness could not make man to worship him, then let these troubles and worries make people return to God. In this manner, we are back to discussing the pulley which was talked about in the early part of the poem. Human beings, in general, have a choice. The individual can either chose to remain weary and lead a miserable life. Nevertheless, he can also take recourse to good that God has made for him; thus, continuing to remain under his protection forever. God specifically wants the best for his prized creation. God desires that man will worship him of his own will. Yet, if this does not happen then let through despair, he will be drawn back to God and in the process have the good life that he possess.

To no one's surprise, God has intentionally withheld the gift of rest from man. As God is fully aware that his other treasures would finally result in bringing upon a spiritual restlessness and fatigue in man. Man will after all grow tired with his material gifts that he has provided. Soon humans will turn to God in exhaustion and desperation. Certainly, God is omniscient and prophetic. He is fully aware that the wicked might not come back to him, yet at the same time, he knows that his mortal creation will linger in lethargy. At this point of time, 'his lassitude, then, would be the leverage.'

Once the reader goes through this poem, he will realize that God is only seeking to make the best possible life for all humans. Herbert prays that people might get the right powers to choose the correct path and follow God because the latter has created them. For some reason, if man decided not to choose the right path, then he will be surrounded by the Pandora's Box. This will continue as long as he does not decide to change his course of action and worship the almighty. Through this poem, Herbert is trying to make a very strong point. According to the poet, God has created man, but human beings are prone to mistakes. Thus, God has made a metaphorical pulley which will constantly remind human beings that they are still connected, yet they need that extra pull at times to remind them of the God's existence.

### Myth and Conceit in *The Pulley*

Many critics consider the poem, *The Pulley*, containing a myth of origins. Yet, many others suggest that it is a moral and spiritual fable. However, both these genres overlap because of the way the poem is presented. According to Herbert, someone's devotional responsibility is perfectly consistent with the flow that decides his personality. The poem is short and yet simple, but Herbert manages to reaffirm several key facts. The approach to creation myth emphasizes the dignity of humankind. This dignity is bestowed by God, who is always considered to be thoughtful, generous apart from being kind. In the *Book of Genesis*, the story of creation that we come across says that a spiritual breath raised dusty clay to life and this living being was Adam. Nevertheless, in Herbert's poem, the creation appears to be even more wonderful because humanity as well as humankind is projected as the summation of all the riches that the world possesses. Moreover, God is a being that can easily and cordially communicates with all his creations—living and non-living.

Along with this emphasis on the dignity of humankind, there is, however, a carefully drawn difference; beauty, strength, wisdom, honour along with pleasure are all integral and vital aspects of humankind. Yet, these are not sufficient to guarantee the spiritual health of the people. Only for this purpose, human beings need rest and this is one quality that God has held back. Thus, the independence of human beings is definitely curtailed. *The Pulley* never ever suggests that humankind is miserably flawed or impotent, or life that we come across in the world of nature is insignificant or useless. Herbert opines that life can, definitely, be 'rich'. Nevertheless, the poem highlights the limitations of human beings and the liabilities that one comes across while undergoing this earthly existence.

*The Pulley* is one of those rare poems which are replete with meaning. God is presented as a being who knows everything and has clear knowledge about how eventually life will turn out to be.

This poem begins with the story of God creating man and goes on to say:

*'For if I should' said he,  
'Bestow this jewel also on my creature,  
He would adore my gifts instead of me,  
and rest in Nature, not the God of Nature;  
So both should losers be.*

Here, we see that God is tense that man might prefer to rest in nature, while ignoring him completely. God was definitely aware that his treasures would eventually tire man and exhaust him. He desired that man should find true rest only in him. God wanted all of us to rest in him, for he is the only one who is able to give the best while the rest appear desperately seeking comfort.

### **George Herbert and Metaphysical Conceit**

George Herbert employs a single conceit throughout his compositions. In the poem, *Easter Wings*, the conceit that keeps recurring throughout the work is depicted through the print shape that is spread upon the page. While in *The Pulley*, the conceit is visible through the content that the poem presents. Herbert takes on an argumentative tone while trying to express the relationship that God has with his creation that of 'the whimsical man and the logical power'. The conceit that we come across here appears in the image of the pulley that continuously moves in a pleasing manner, trying to carry heavy loads that will signify the tensed and restless condition of man during his life:

*When God at first made man,  
Having a glass of blessings standing by,  
'Let us,' said he, 'pour on him all we can:  
Let the world's riches, which dispersed lie,  
Contract into a span.'*

This specific poem, just like his other poetic output, underline that Herbert was a devotional preacher. He was definitely burdened by an inner conflict that was spiritual in nature, especially between his worldly desires and the commitment that he owed towards his religious duties that he graced in the capacity of a priest. His poems, in general, speak about the fact that he considered life as something 'worthless' and 'unprofitable'.

## **NOTES**

## Notion of Sleep and *The Pulley*

### NOTES

In the context of the mechanical operation that we come across in the poem through the imagery of a pulley, the same kind of leverage and force when ‘applied makes the difference for the weight being lifted’. The same idea is applied to man in this composition by Herbert. One can definitely suggest that the denial of rest by God is actually the leverage that will make it possible to hoist or draw mankind towards the almighty. However, if we look at the first line of the last stanza, we realize that Herbert puns with the word ‘rest’, implying that it may be God’s will, after all, allow man to ‘keep the rest’. Yet, such a reading will appear to lessen the intensity behind the poem’s conceit. Rest, which also implies sleep, is an idea that was definitely plaguing the minds of the Renaissance writers.

One can come across numerous Shakespearian plays which speak about sleep or denial of it as a result of some punishment or due to some heinous sins committed. For example, in *Macbeth*, King Macbeth is said to ‘lack the season of all natures, sleep’ while both he and Lady Macbeth are tortured due to lack of sleep. If we consider the case of Othello, we realize that even he is disconcerted by the fact that he is not being able to sleep peacefully. Especially, once Iago tries to poison him with a remote possibility that his wife might be infidel to him and preferring Cassio over him. Hence, considering the poem in this context, we realize Herbert’s *The Pulley* does not provide us with any new concept. Rather, the ideas presented in the poem are extremely commonplace, especially, if we consider for seventeenth century religious poems that were composed by Herbert and his contemporaries. Though the most distinctive feature of this metaphysical poem is the religious tone, it conveys through a secular as well scientific image that not just requires the reader’s friendliness with the subject matter, but also expects certain knowledge of some basic laws of physical sciences.

## 2.4 JOHN MILTON: AN INTRODUCTION

John Milton was born on Gregorian calendar month 9, 1608, in London, England. Around 1600 he married Sara Jeffery, the rich female offspring of a merchant-tailor.



**Fig. 2.3** John Milton

### Check Your Progress

6. What are the salient features of George Herbert’s poetry?
7. Name the major poems written by George Herbert.
8. What is the theme of the poem, *The Pulley*?
9. What are the gifts bestowed by God on man in *The Pulley*?

The young Milton was regarded for his love to his study and his ardour in poetry. From his father, UN agency become Associate in Nursing amateur musician, younger John advanced the love of track, that later unfold through his poetry. When personal tutoring, he entered St. Paul's faculty in around 1620. Admitted to Christ's faculty on the age of fifteen, he meant to become a reverend within the Church of European country. Thanks to a confrontation together with his teach, he become rusticated (briefly expelled) in 1626. Once more at Cambridge around April 1626, Milton was allotted a one-of-a-kind coach and resumed the study of sense, ethics, Greek, Latin, and Hebrew. He composed Latin poems and epigrams.

## NOTES

### Political and Social Background

James I (1603-1625). When the Tudor dynasty was brought to a close by the death of Elizabeth in 1603, James VI of Scotland, the son of Mary Stuart, Protestant, and descendant of Henry VII of England, ascended the throne as James I. With the declining years of the Renaissance Queen had waned the patriotic unity of the country, and the wisdom necessary to cement the factions and to revive patriotic fervor was not possessed by the new King. The people resented the new taxes made necessary by the Monarch's lavish expenditures and resented the attempted at an alliance with Spain through the betrothal of the King's son Charles. Persecutions of the Catholics by Parliament and of the Puritans by James I led to the establishment at Plymouth (1620) of the first permanent English Settlement in New England, and to the 'Great Emigration' (1630) to Massachusetts. As the middle-class rose to power, it clashed with the Crown, who in turn dissolved three Parliaments (1604, 1614, 1621) over imposition of customs, money grants, and right of free speech. Continuously the defenders of popular privileges endeavored to check the King's prerogative, assigned to himself by his Theory of Divine Right.

Charles I (1625-1649). At his accession Charles I was popular, but his deliberate deceitfulness and wrongheaded impulsiveness soon turned the people against him. Difficulties with Parliament were increased by his marriage with Princess Henrietta Maria of France, a Roman Catholic, and by his appointment of James's hated favorite Buckingham as Lord Chancellor. Public feeling became further embittered by the King's dissolution of three Parliaments convoked in four years. Finally Charles I was forced to concede the Petition of Right (1628), designed to prevent the abuse of royal prerogative by providing for no taxation without the consent of Parliament no arbitrary billeting of soldiers on the citizenry, and no arbitrary imprisonment without trial.

Then Charles I dissolved Parliament and had some of the leading members imprisoned. For eleven years he governed without the Parliament, substituting in its place the Star Chamber and Court of High Commission. During these years Archbishop Laud's policy of punishing Puritans caused large emigrations to America, and his attempt to impose episcopacy upon Scotland provoked riots. Refused his demands for money, and urged to conclude a peace with Scotland, Charles I dissolved the 'Short Parliament' (1640). The 'Long Parliament,' Summoned by Charles I after his defeat at the hands of the Scots, impeached both Strafford and Laud, imprisoning the latter and executing the former. By compelling Charles I to confirm a bill by which Parliament was not to be dissolved without its own consent, the actual control of the kingdom was no longer in the hands of the king.

Civil War (1642-1648). At first the Royalists (or Cavaliers, represented by the Court, the Church, the Catholics, and the northern gentry) were the victors; but the

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Parliamentary forces (Puritans or Roundheads, represented by the bulk of the middle classes, the merchants, artisans, London, and the southeast, who in contrast to the flowing locks of the Cavaliers cut short their hair), soon acquiring experience, defeated Prince Rupert (1644) and annihilated the royal army (1645). The King, surrendering to the Scottish army, was delivered to the English Parliament. Finally, after his escape from the residence assigned him, he was recaptured, tried, and sentenced to death for murder and treason (1649). Thus at last ended the struggle between Parliament and James I and his son Charles I.

The Commonwealth (1644-1653). The country was declared a commonwealth, nominally a republic. When Scotland proclaimed Charles II the King of Ireland, Scotland, and England, Cromwell immediately took steps to break Scotland's resistance, succeeding in his purpose by 1651. The place of the provisional Rump, expelled in 1653, was taken by the Nominated or 'Barebone's' Parliament.

The Protectorate (1653-1658). When the 'Barebone's' Parliament was voted into dissolution, Cromwell, under an adopted written constitution, called the Instrument of Government, assumed the title of Lord Protector of England, Scotland, and Ireland. He became recognized for his strong foreign policy, which brought the Dutch War to a successful conclusion, and for a dictatorial home policy, which tolerated many sects including the re-admission of the Jews, expelled since 1290. By 1658 the Protectorate had become virtually a monarchy. Upon Cromwell's death (1658) there succeeded a period of strife, under his son Richard. Finally the Parliament voted (1660) to restore the monarchy with Charles II as King.

Social: Life and Temper of the Times. Horse-racing, bear-baiting, the sport of the cock-pit, and the theatrical performance were all condemned by the puritans, who looked upon the Cavaliers as given to profane swearing and sensual excesses. To the King and his courtiers, on the other hand, the Puritan was a symbol of spiritual pride, hypocrisy, rebellion, and tyranny. However, the typical Puritan was a person of high ideals, tolerant of differences of opinion; the spirit of the Puritan was a noble force: it inspired the Commonwealth to safeguard England's national ideals, it gave to the Pilgrim Fathers the courage to search for a land where they could worship in their own manner, it had as its spokesmen, two of the greatest English writers—Milton and Bunyan. Progress should also be noted in several fields—in philosophy by Bacon, in medical science by William Harvey, in mathematics by John Napier. While advances were made in the field of architecture by Inigo Jones, yet in general the fine arts obtained but small patronage. On the whole the nation was prosperous.

**General View of Literature**

Relaxing in vigor, this period is one of gradual transition from the exuberant gaiety and imaginative freedom of the Renaissance to that of artificial cheer, philosophic melancholy, and puritan sobriety. Often political or religious, the prose is in general either simple or disputatious of florid and oratorical; despite its quaint affected mannerism, the prose displays a new freedom, copiousness, and power. The poetry is marked much less by its originality of thought and impetuosity of emotion than by a correctness of form and an intellectual play of fancy; while fashionably short, its greatest weaknesses are possibly an affected adulatory language for the charms of women and a triviality of subject matter. While the Civil Wars contributed to bringing about the collapse of the drama, now frequently marked by a studied indecency, it was the Puritan opposition that affected



the closure of all theatres (1642). Not until eighteen years later were the dramatic performances legally permitted. Meanwhile the neo-classicism, fostered by Jonson, was making progress. In conclusion, although Milton is the only great representative in the field of blank verse, and the only writer of great versatility, he is not altogether representative of his age rather it should be called the Age of the Cavalier and the Puritan.

## NOTES

### 2.4.1 Milton and the Puritan Age

The English Renaissance was largely literary and achieved its finest expression in the so called Elizabethan drama, which began to excel only in the last decade of the 16th century and reached its height in the first fifteen years of the 17th; its finest exponents were Christopher Marlowe, Ben Jonson and William Shakespeare. Non dramatic poetry was also extremely rich, and reached its peak in the same period in the work of Edmund Spenser, Philip Sidney, Shakespeare and John Donne, but it is typical of the lateness of the Renaissance in England that its most ambitious product, John Milton's *Paradise Lost* was published as late as 1667. Native English prose shaped itself more slowly than poetry, More wrote his *utopia* in Latin, which was the vehicle of some other writers, including Francis Bacon owing to its advantages (for international circulation) over English at a time when the latter was little learned in other countries. Nonetheless English prose developed with vigor in native English writers such as in Roger Ascham, Thomas North, Richard Hooker, in the English works of Francis Bacon, and in the translators of the Bible.

### Historical, Literary and Social Background

**Religious conditions:** Religious intolerance was acute, but Queen Elizabeth so steered her course that her administration left the English Church upon a firm foundation. During her reign she became the champion of European Protestantism.

**Economic conditions:** Critical was the problem of extensive unemployment and increased pauperism. By a proclamation of 1560 the stabilization of coinage and thereby of prices was achieved; by the statute of Apprentices in 1563 which aimed to conserve man-power and by the passing in 1601 of the first of a series of regular Poor Laws, labour condition for six score year after wards were affected. With piracy and war come prosperity. General standards of housing condition were raised. All these changes created a wider public for the literature of the period.

**Domestic and Foreign policy:** the maintenance of England's security and the prevention of foreign interferences was the queen's foreign policy, and with aid of Cecil and Walsingham, peace was maintained for twenty five years. Despite its assistance to the protestants in Scotland, France, and the low countries, England avoided open war . Under Martin Frobisher, John Davis, William Baffin, John Hawkins, Francis Drake, and Sir Water Raleigh, the foundation of the British navy were laid and Britain's colonial enterprises were furthered. While the national life was to be vitiated by the deterioration in tone of the court of both James I and Charles I , during whose reigns there was no unity but division , yet by the time Elizabeth's reign had ended by her policy of keeping France and Spain in check for thirty years , England had become independent of all European powers.

**Ideal of Gloriana:** The court and the courtier were the centers of national life; display and adulation the ideals of personal and public life. Despite the queen's almost insatiable desire of fulsome praise of her person and her sovereignty, a desire to which the writer

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s of the age catered - the period of her reign produced many of the permanent contributions to English letters. An integral part of the golden age in English literature, as well as in English politics, is this hero-worship of Elizabeth.

**Poetry, Prose and Drama:** Prose while showing the extravagant love of decoration was rapidly developing into the flexibility it shows today; the poetry only less important than the drama, frequently achieved original beauty and exuberance. Before the close of the period, the essential fecundity and seriousness of the drama had declined into melodramatic plot and gross indecency; but above all is the reign of Elizabeth to be identified with the consummate age of the English drama.

**Charles I (1625-1649):** At his accession Charles I was popular, but his deliberate deceitfulness and wrongheaded impulsiveness soon turned the people against him. Difficulties with Parliament were increased by his marriage with Princess Henrietta Maria of France, a Roman Catholic, and by his appointment of James's hated favorite Buckingham as Lord Chancellor. Public feeling became further embittered by the King's dissolution of three Parliaments convoked in four years. Finally Charles I was forced to concede the Petition of Right (1628), designed to prevent the abuse of royal prerogative by providing for no taxation without the consent of Parliament no arbitrary billeting of soldiers on the citizenry, and no arbitrary imprisonment without trial.

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**Social Life and Temper of the Times:** Horse-racing, bear-baiting, the sport of the cock-pit, and the theatrical performance were all condemned by the puritans, who looked upon the Cavaliers as given to profane swearing and sensual excesses. To the King and his courtiers, on the other hand, the Puritan was a symbol of spiritual pride, hypocrisy, rebellion, and tyranny. But the typical Puritan was a person of high ideals, tolerant of differences of opinion; the spirit of the Puritan was a noble force: it inspired the Commonwealth to safeguard England's national ideals, it gave to the Pilgrim Fathers the courage to search for a land where they could worship in their own manner, it had as its spokesmen, two of the greatest English writers-Milton and Bunyan.

Progress should also be noted in several fields—in philosophy by Bacon, in medical science by William Harvey, in mathematics by John Napier. While advances were made in the field of architecture by Inigo Jones, yet in general the fine arts obtained but small patronage. On the whole the nation was prosperous.

## 2.4.2 Literature in the Early Seventeenth Century

The prose of the first half of the seventeenth century was poetic. The writers were highly conscious of the sound of their prose; they wrote to stir the imagination, to arouse

feelings or to satisfy their own desire for self-expression. Each writer created his own personal style coloured by his reading of the Bible, the classics, foreign vernacular languages and colloquial English.

Just as there was metaphysical poetry, full of intellectual teasing and verbal conceits, so there was metaphysical prose appealing to both intellect and imagination, at once learned and colloquial, allusive and racy, the style of John Donne and Sir Thomas Browne. The religious controversies of the seventeenth century and the rise of a new pragmatic philosophy (Bacon and Descartes), stimulated prose-writing.

It extended its range to theology, philosophy, propaganda, literary criticism and narrative fiction. John Milton the famous poet of these times gave up years of his career as a poet and damaged his eyesight while writing prose propaganda for commoners.

At the same time, the puritans helped to spread, even more widely, the influence of the authorized version of the Bible. It may be said about the prose of this period that it was 'associated' in feeling and thought.

### 2.4.3 *On His Blindness*: Text and Explanation

*When I consider how my light is spent,  
Ere half my days, in this dark world and wide,  
And that one Talent which is death to hide  
Lodged with me useless, though my Soul more bent  
To serve therewith my Maker, and present  
My true account, lest he returning chide;  
'Doth God exact day-labour; light denied?'  
I fondly ask. But patience, to prevent  
That murmur, soon replies, 'God doth not need  
Either man's work or his own gifts; who best  
Bear his mild yoke, they serve him best. His state  
Is Kingly. Thousands at his bidding speed  
And post o'er Land and Ocean without rest:  
They also serve who only stand and wait.'*

This is one of the finest Sonnets of John Milton. It indicates the personal sorrow and faith of the poet. In 1652, when the blindness overtook him, he felt wonderful ache dew to it. For that reason it's miles a moving and heart-rending personal sonnet. It offers his struggling at the early blindness, his experience of task in lifestyles and his unshakable religion with God and faith. This sonnet is written as a result of Milton's grief, as he misplaced his eye sight at his middle age. Milton's eyesight became weak from his early teens. In a prose pamphlet, he describes, 'I by no means extinguished my lamp earlier than middle of the night' and factors his closing blindness to the stress placed upon his eyes. Inside the verses of wood who knew Milton thoroughly: 'It became uncommon with him to sit up straight until middle of the night at his books, which was the first factor that brought his eyes into the chance of blindness.'

The exact date of composition of the sonnet isn't known. Milton has become absolutely blind in 1652.

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This sonnet—written within the ‘Petrarchan’ rhyme theme relating to the fourteenth-century Italian writer Francesco Petrarca—is split into eight line ‘octave’ and a six-line ‘sestet’. The octave rhymes a/b/b/a/a/b/b/a. The sestet rhymes c/d/e/c/d/e. Thus, the sonnet is a typical Petrarchan sonnet in form. Petrarch, the English version of Petrarca’s name was famous for writing about love. Milton proceeds from that conventional topic to deal with a very practical problem with many broader spiritual implications.

The idea of losing one’s sight is clearly a deeply troubling one. Suddenly, the blind person is at risk in all kinds of ways. The speaker in the poem feels vulnerable; he can no longer see his own way. The tragedy with the speaker in this poem is that he has lost his sight at an early stage of life. He now inhabits a world that seems ‘dark’ (2) in at least two senses: it is no longer physically visible, and it is a world full of sin and spiritual darkness. The world, moreover, is not only dark but also ‘wide’: the speaker will somehow have to navigate, both literally and figuratively, in a world which, because of its width or breadth, will pose many dangers.

Milton becomes rather impatient on the thought of his blindness. He is blind within the middle age. Blindness prevents him from the usage of his poetic expertise by means of writing something high-quality to glorify God. He has a keen choice to serve God with the aid of the use of his poetic skills. Milton fears that his blindness will prevent him from doing God’s work.

Milton’s mindset of doubt passes off in a moment. His inner judgment of right and wrong rises up with his faith in God’s justice. He realizes that God does no longer need man’s work by using way of service to him; nor does he care whether or not guy uses His presents.

## 2.5 WILLIAM BLAKE: AN INTRODUCTION

William Blake’s major writings happened before 1798, which is the year considered by literary scholars and the critics to be the year which marked the beginning of the Romantic Era British Literature with the publication of *Lyrical Ballads*, a compilation of poems by William Wordsworth and Samuel Taylor Coleridge. The Romantics brought forth a revolution not only in reacting against the classical dogmas of the eighteenth-century writing; but provided a fresh outlook by emphasizing on the role of imagination and individualism. Every age is either a reaction to the immediate age gone by or is a continuation with subtle changes. In the case of the Romantic era, it established itself as a reversal of the eighteenth-century Age of Reason. The term ‘romantic’ signifies a poetic creed in English literature and it connects a highly complicated set of attitudes and beliefs. Romanticism was largely a reaction against the prevailing Neo-Classical school of writing which laid great stress on form, structure and conventions of poetic diction. In a sense, reacting against a kind of sophisticated culture, the Romantics brought with them the ‘Renaissance of wonder’ where the natural world is revealed and vividly portrayed for the first time. This led to the idea of nature as an inspiring force, as felt by William Wordsworth and Percy B. Shelley. However, it is not that this change that we perceive happened suddenly. This change of outlook about writing poetry was a gradual one. The Pre-Romantics (Thomson, Gray and others) had their contribution in achieving this change in the history of the English literature. Some literary scholars even include William Blake in the list of the Pre-Romantics, as William Blake was writing much before the Romantic poets had started writing. Whether, we consider William Blake as

### Check Your Progress

10. What is the general view of literature during the age of Milton?
11. When was John Milton born?

a romantic or a pre-romantic poet does not matter as the philosophical, metaphysical, political ideas that are manifest in his writings remains intact. Moreover, if one looks at his poetry and tries to look at the major themes and ideas dealt in them, then one is bound to classify him as a Romantic Poet.



**Fig. 2.4** William Blake

William Blake was born in London in 1757. From his childhood, he had the power of extraordinary imagination. When he was four, he spoke to his parents about the visions that he had. William Blake spent his childhood and youth at a time of revolutions which shook the world—American Revolution in 1775 and the French Revolution in 1789. These revolutions and ideas and his reading of different writers especially Scandinavian poet Swedenborg, created in him the persona of a rebel. In 1789, Blake published *Songs of Innocence* and *The Book of Thel* which established him as a poet of extraordinary caliber. Between 1790-1800, Blake created iconic works such as *Songs of Experience*, *The Marriage of Heaven and Hell*, *America: A Prophecy*, *Europe: A Prophecy*, *Visions of the Daughters of Albion*, *The Song of Los*, and *The Book of Urizen*, all of which discernibly demonstrated Blake's ideas on the Revolution. As the ideals of the French Revolution disintegrated during the Reign of Terror and into a war for national power, and lost sight of its original mission of liberating idealism; Blake began to lose his faith in humanity and in the revolutionary spirit. In Blake's final years of poverty and despair, he completed two of his most famous and respected religious works, *Jerusalem* and *Milton*.

### Blake's Revolutionary Views

William Blake was a revolutionary in every sense. His views on politics, religion, literature, science, etc., were all revolutionary as he could not accept the prevailing ideas and culture of the eighteenth-century. He was opposed to the eighteenth-century mechanistic view of the universe. Therefore, he despised the tendency to analyse rather than synthesize which made him critical of philosophers such as Voltaire and Rousseau:

*Mock on, Mock on, Voltaire, Rousseau:*

*Mock on, Mock on, 'tis all in vain!*

*You throw the sand against the wind,*

*And the wind blows it back again.*

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Again, in *Reason and Imagination*, Blake says:

*I come in self-annihilation and the grandeur of Inspiration*

*To cast off Rational Demonstration by Faith in the Saviour,*

*To cast off the rotten rags of Memory by Inspiration*

*To cast off Bacon, Locke and Newton from Albion's covering,*

*To take off his filthy garments and clothe him with Imagination.*

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He held reason in contempt because he thought it imprisons the mind. For him, imagination (like other Romantic poets) plays an important role not only in poetic creation, but also in the development of human mind. Being a person born during the age of Revolution, he was attracted to the ideas of 'liberty, equality and fraternity' of the French Revolution.

Blake was eighteen when the Declaration of Independence by the American Colonies inspired idealists all over Europe. Blake in his lifetime was witness to the burning of Newgate Prison (1780) which was a violent expression of the hatred of authority. Like many others of his generation, Blake was sympathetic to the causes of the French Revolution. He was incensed when Tom Paine was attacked in 1798. With such a political background, Blake became an anarchist of sorts as he hated all political systems (as he thought them to be oppressive) and favoured complete personal freedom. He admired radicals such as William Godwin and Mary Wollstonecraft. Several other radicals were his friends such as, Dr Price (who was the first Englishman to support the French Revolution) and Thomas Paine. Blake was against any kind of tyranny and despised it to the heart's core. Although, he did not develop (in the sense of writing) a coherent political theory, but he wanted freedom and love for all. Blake was opposed to private property, any established church, formal government, the prevailing laws, and machinery.

William Blake also hated traditional Christianity which he thought cramped the soul rather than setting it free. Like all the Romantics who attempted a re-evaluation of Christian values after the French Revolution, William Blake also had his own interpretation of Christian religion and its use for the benefit of mankind. He was against the authoritarian God who is revengeful. Therefore, he thought of churches as a kind of prison as there is no individual freedom under the purview of the church. Therefore, in *The Garden of Love*, Blake writes:

*I went to the Garden of Love,*

*And saw what I have never seen;*

*A Chapel was built in the midst,*

*Where I used to play on the green.*

*And priests in black gowns were walking their rounds,*

*And binding with briars my joys & desires.*

For Blake, love is the supreme religion and it cannot be found in the bricks and mortar of churches, but in love for humanity. It is not that he did not have faith in the merciful and benevolent Christ, but he is against God the Father who, according to him, is authoritative and tyrannical. If we look at the poems *The Lamb* and *The Tyger* from *Songs of Innocence* and *Songs of Experience* respectively then we will figure out that Jesus is the lamb, merciful, innocent and tender, whereas God, the Father, as represented in *The Tyger* has a 'fearful symmetry'.

William Blake's hostile attitude towards traditional Christianity also influenced his interpretation of history. He identified three stages in history which corresponded to three stages in the life of an individual. The first stage corresponds to that of the Garden of Eden, or of primal innocence. The second stage was the eating of the forbidden tree or the fall (that is, the phase of experience). The third stage was that of achieving a higher state of innocence or redemption (when one is as clever as a serpent and as innocent as a dove). In the third stage, innocence cannot be corrupted anymore as one has the necessary cleverness of the serpent will not allow the corruptions to affect innocence. So from that point of view, the two contrary states—innocence and experience are absolutely essential as 'without contraries, there is no progression.' One can never be in the first stage of innocence forever; one will get into the phase of experience with aging and with the pressures of culture; but when one surpasses that to achieve supreme innocence, one is in an ideal. Blake through his two series of poems— *Songs of Innocence* and *Songs of Experience* is trying to concretize the notion of supreme innocence for the readers.

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### French Revolution

The French Revolution (1789–1799), was a period of radical social and political upheaval in France which laid the foundation of modern democracy as the ideas germinated by the scholars found a place in the hearts of the people of France and they revolted against the oppressive monarchy and religious system. The absolute monarchy of France collapsed within three years and feudal, aristocratic and religious privileges evaporated under the pressure of Enlightenment principles of equality, citizenship and inalienable rights. The people of France got increasingly agitated against the incompetence of King Louis XVI and the decadence of the aristocracy; leading to a Revolution in 1789 with the convocation of the Estates-General in May. In the first year of the Revolution, members of the Third Estate proclaimed the Tennis Court Oath in June, the assault on the Bastille in July, the passage of the Declaration of the Rights of Man and of the Citizen in August, and an epic march on Versailles that forced the royal court back to Paris in October. The next few years were dominated by struggles between various liberal assemblies. A republic was proclaimed in September 1792 and King Louis XVI was executed the next year. External threats shaped the course of the Revolution. Internally, popular sentiments radicalized the Revolution significantly, culminating in the rise of Maximilien Robespierre and the Jacobins and virtual dictatorship by the Committee of Public Safety during the Reign of Terror from 1793 until 1794 during which between 16,000 and 40,000 people were killed. After the fall of the Jacobins and the execution of Robespierre, the Directory assumed control of the French state in 1795 and held power until 1799, when it was replaced by the Consulate under Napoleon Bonaparte. The growth of republics and liberal democracies, the spread of secularism, the development of modern ideologies, and the invention of total war all mark their birth during the Revolution. Subsequent events that can be traced to the Revolution include the Napoleonic Wars, two separate restorations of monarchy (Bourbon Restoration and July Monarchy), and two additional revolutions (1830 and 1848) as modern France took shape. The revolution was not only significant for France as the ideas germinated before and during the revolution led to its spread across other countries of Europe, also in England, and then to the rest of the world, leading to modernization.

## 2.5.1 *And Did Those Feet in Ancient Time: Text and Explanation*

### NOTES

*And did those feet in ancient time  
Walk upon Englands mountains green:  
And was the holy Lamb of God,  
On Englands pleasant pastures seen!*

*And did the Countenance Divine,  
Shine forth upon our clouded hills?  
And was Jerusalem builded here,  
Among these dark Satanic Mills?*

*Bring me my Bow of burning gold:  
Bring me my arrows of desire:  
Bring me my Spear: O clouds unfold!  
Bring me my Chariot of fire!*

*I will not cease from Mental Fight,  
Nor shall my sword sleep in my hand:  
Till we have built Jerusalem,  
In Englands green & pleasant Land.*

It opens with an epic invocation to the muses; however, Blake describes the proposal in physical phrases, vitalizing the nerves of his arm. A mythological person, creates a complex universe from within which other Blakean characters debate the actions of devil. Devil is usually an ambivalent discern for Blake: he is the pressure of liberation, and in Milton, reversing Calvinist doctrine, he listen that the 'reprobate' are the real believers, even as the 'opt for' are locked in narcissistic moralism. Milton, listening to this, appears and is of the same opinion to go back to earth to purge the errors of his personal Puritan imposture. He travels to Lambeth, taking in the shape of a falling comet, and enters Blake's foot. Blake ties hos sandal and, guided by means of Los, walks with it into the metropolis of art. ....Ololon, a woman discern connected to Milton, descends to Blake's garden to meet him. Blake sees a skylark, which mutates right into a twelve months-antique female, who he thinks is certainly one of his own muses. He invites her into his cottage to meet his spouse. The woman states that she is simply searching out Milton. Milton then descends to fulfill along with her, and in an apocalyptic scene he is in the end unified with the female, who's identified as Ololon and becomes his personal feminine thing. The poem concludes with a vision of a very last union of living and lifeless, inner and external reality, and male and female, and a transformation of all of human notion. Milton (for reasons you will bet) isn't lots study. However, a brief lyric in its preface, 'And did those feet in ancient time' have become popular when it regarded in a patriotic anthology in the course of the primary world war, and turned into set to music by using Sir Hubert Parry. This anthem, *Jerusalem*, has come to be a sort of second national anthem, and is performed with almost camp fervour at royal weddings and famous live shows. That could be a sudden fate for a poem which plays with



through the apocryphal story that as a younger man Jesus, observed by using His uncle Joseph of Arimathea, a tin merchant, travelled to what is now England and visited Glastonbury at some point of his unknown years. This legend is related to an idea inside the book of Revelation of a Second Coming, wherein Jesus establishes a New Jerusalem, an area of conventional love and peace.

*And did those feet in ancient time  
Walk upon Englands mountains green:  
And was the holy Lamb of God,  
On Englands pleasant pastures seen!*

In the first stanza of the poem, the poet asks an age-old query if the divine feet ever walked on English shores. The Lamb of God is an allusion to Jesus Christ here. The verse is open-ended, but given William Blake's affinity with Christianity, the answer is definitely, Jesus. As along with his poem, *The Tyger*, the readers ultimately feel the poem's important theme is god rather than jungle's tiger, the Lamb of God allusion is gift. The poet is in interrogation mood while he contemplates if the divine entity ever walked on English lands as soon as. The Lamb of God additionally seems in Gospel of John. It's far cited close to sacrificial lamb as Jesus died for our sins, atoning mankind at the entire, as Christianity hypothesizes. To fill the gaps right here for the readers, 'the misplaced years' refers back to the years (12-30), while Jesus is said to have been disappeared from writings. As consistent with legend, he might also have arrived on British shorelines with Joseph of Arimathea. Blake desires to explore all terrains as is the case right here, even interesting this wishful legend.

*And did the Countenance Divine,  
Shine forth upon our clouded hills?  
And was Jerusalem builded here,  
Among these dark Satanic Mills?*

In the second stanza, the poet keeps stoically in his interrogative mode, contemplating if his divine presence ever landed mistakenly upon English beaches. Did he walk on our clouded hills and taught disciples about peace and forgiveness? The terrain of questioning is equal as first stanza, wondering if Jesus Christ can also have lived in these lands earlier than preaching in his place of birth. His face is alluding to light as in bringing a change in terms of reforms. As a count number of reality, Jesus of Nazareth for all intents and functions may additionally had been black complexioned. In those passages, he notes the want of light to cleanse the darkness, indicating presence of Jesus. Then coming to the 1/3 verse, he wonders if Jesus shaped a brand new Jerusalem in those very lands, amongst those inhuman generators. The term builded simply method built. He's definitely gambling with phrases here. Satanic turbines and Jerusalem are popular terms performing in William Blake's poetry continuously. The poet refers back to the promised biblical Jerusalem alluded in Bible, book of Revelation. As the Christian theology hypothesizes, after the earth is destroyed, a brand new haven will emerge within the shape of New Jerusalem. The true believers of Christ will live in it for eternity. As for William Blake, Jerusalem represents the correct metropolis with no discord, equality and in essence, a utopia. As for the satanic mills, the poet has mammoth sympathy for commonplace hard work oldsters operating tirelessly in an industrial age beneath the monarchy. The generators are referred to as hackers of peace and serenity. For him, the commercial revolution has handiest mechanized the lives of humans. He fears and loathes

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this age with complete fervor. Commercial revolution was simply starting off in his time-duration and he for one, feeling nauseous about it. For William Blake, the generators surely have satanic origins, since it has expanded toddler exertions, bad paintings conditions, coal-burning, pollution and mechanized lives. In conclusion, Blake wonders whether or not he walked on those lands, a time lengthy beyond.

*Bring me my Bow of burning gold:*

*Bring me my arrows of desire:*

*Bring me my Spear: O clouds unfold!*

*Bring me my Chariot of fire!*

After mentioning the satanic turbines, the poet is psyched up to the most in the third stanza. He embarks on portray a mythical story with chariots of fireplace, the clouds to spread for him. The poet seems to be alluding to historic Greek Gods or angels which as the popular subculture move, are hypothesized to be wandering the skies in superb forms and stylistic traits. As clear from the verses, it's some other allusion to the biblical verses from Kings. It's the tale of Elijah, one in all the most important prophets of vintage testimony. In this tale, the prophet Elijah is taken on a heavenly journey on chariot of hearth. He ascends to heaven on this godly car created at some stage in the normative imagination of the time to justify god's divine message. He wants to reincarnate the similitude of this fable tale written in Bible. The occasions get doubly thrilling on the grounds that Elijah brings divine wrath upon folks who deserved it. As the fictitious legend goes, Elijah orders divine fire from the skies in an effort to neutralize a group of humans. In essence, he intends to smash these drawing close heresies known as generators destroying the very essence of herbal existence bringing mechanization into its fold. William Blake is linked to Bible and its fictional legends, bringing them into play as his poems progress to render a dramatic sound and grandness.

*I will not cease from Mental Fight,*

*Nor shall my sword sleep in my hand:*

*Till we have built Jerusalem,*

*In Englands green & pleasant Land.*

William Blake is not a great deal for violence, and so are the grandiose characters in his poems. Weapons are on the whole used to indicate motion metaphorically, even though with energy. William Blake is averse to burnings, deaths and all things Kafkaesque. As a result, the term, 'mental flight' is an allusion to a non-violent battle to emerge from the ashes a cleansed nation. The French Revolution was still fresh in Blake's mind. As in step with Martin Luther King, human beings ought to choose people as consistent with their individual, now not by way of their pores and skin's colour. He inserts the concept of a societal revolution very cleverly, with ease obvious to the ones capable of studying between the strains. The sword suggests the energy and could to combat continuously because the night time is darkest before dawn. The war between yin and yang will maintain as continually. He is not declaring to create a brand new Jerusalem via main war towards the monarchy. It's definitely a metaphor to recreate modified world altogether in a reformed way. Ordinary and simplistic living is the perfect existence for Blake, doing away with the short industrialization for proper.

**Check Your Progress**

12. Explain the term, 'romanticism'.
13. Comment on Blake's revolutionary views.
14. Outline Blake's own interpretation of history.

## 2.6 WILLIAM WORDSWORTH: AN INTRODUCTION

William Wordsworth brought a new approach to the writing of English poetry. The well-known characteristics of his revolutionary artistic achievements are his objections to an over-stylized poetic diction, his attitude to nature, his choice of simple incidents and humble people as subjects of his poetry. Poetry for him was primarily the record of a certain kind of state of mind, and the value of poetry for him lay in the value of the state of mind which the poem recorded.

*Lyrical Ballads* was planned with Coleridge in 1797, when Wordsworth was living at Racedown with his sister. The volume appeared the following year, with four poems by Samuel Taylor Coleridge (including *The Ancient Mariner*) and nineteen by William Wordsworth. The materials of poetry can be found ‘in every subject which can interest the human mind’ and explained that these poems were experiments written chiefly ‘to ascertain how far the language of conversation in the middle and lower classes of society is adapted to the purposes of poetic pleasure.’ Thus, Wordsworth, instead of following the tradition of the conventional poetic style of using diction, thought of creating poetry out of his personal experiences and emotions. It is not that *Lyrical Ballads* was Wordsworth’s first publication; he had started publishing poetry from 1793 onwards.

In the year 1793, Wordsworth’s first published poetry with the collections *An Evening Walk* and *Descriptive Sketches*. Wordsworth’s *The Prelude* is usually thought to be his magnum opus which is a semiautobiographical poem of his early years. He revised and expanded *The Prelude* a number of times. Wordsworth was Britain’s Poet Laureate from 1843 until his death in 1850.

### 2.6.1 Literary Background

Between 1770 and 1850, roughly the time of Wordsworth’s career as a poet, the intellectual life of Europe was dominated by the romantic mood, though the Romantic Age supposedly begins in 1798 with the publication of *Lyrical Ballads* (a compilation of poems by Wordsworth and Samuel Taylor Coleridge) and continues till about 1832. It is not that the romantic strain of poetry was suddenly visible in the poems of *Lyrical Ballads* in the poems of the Pre-Romantics (such as Thomas Gray and others) we see a romantic involvement with nature and a celebration of the imagination and individuality. Moreover an age does not and cannot come to an abrupt end, therefore post 1832, when the Victorian Era supposedly begins as pointed out by literary historians, we perceive the influence of Romantic poetry, especially in the early poems of Lord Alfred Tennyson.

Basically, Romanticism is a reaction to the Neo-classical ‘Age of Reason’—the age of Newton and Locke in England, Leibniz and the Encyclopaedists, the age which was governed by rationality and reason. The writers of the Enlightenment had preached human perfectibility; they described man as flourishing in a world which was completely rational and utterly predictable. Romanticism came to be a new way of viewing man and his relationship with his environment. Jean-Jacques Rousseau (1712-78) is usually considered to be the father of Romanticism, as he was one of the first to point out the stultification of the Age of Reason. Rousseau saw a neo-primitive return to more natural ways for restoring the soul to humanity. He stressed naturalness in education and religion and simplicity in government, and thus attacked the very ramparts of the entrenched institutions which fostered traditionalism—the literati, the Church, and absolutism. Though

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Rousseau was only the first to express what many were beginning to feel, his legacy was indeed a rich one: the leaders of the French Revolution were his acknowledged disciples, and his non-political ideas flourished in the Romantic Movement.

The great guiding principle of the romantic revolt was a reinvigorated Humanism, which was greater than any since the Renaissance. It taught individualism and freedom of action; in the political sphere, it brought the end of privilege and substituted constitutionalism and extension of the franchise; in the religious realm, it was earmarked with pietism and renewed Fundamentalism (manifested by such phenomena as Methodism). In the world of the arts, it brought freedom from the restraint of long-established rules and the unabashed expression of temperament. As an aesthetic, it spread to all the arts and ultimately to the whole Western world. Since the beginning of early modern times, the fine arts had sought their inspiration in Greek and Roman models. At the height of the Enlightenment, classical rules, forms, and themes necessarily excluded much that was immediate and vital in human experience from creative expression. The romantic reform threw open the floodgates. Its greatest effect was perhaps felt in literature. Indeed, the revolt ushered in an age rich in both poetry and prose. The intellectuals were young, and enthusiasm was boundless. Everyone felt the change—the great minds and the lesser.

Wordsworth's was one of the great minds, and one that led where others followed. The most important event of the latter part of the eighteenth-century was the French Revolution. It affected the lives of almost everyone, whether in France or elsewhere. Before it had run its course, it had effected changes throughout Europe and even in America. Because Wordsworth had a youthful enthusiasm for democratic movements and because he had an opportunity to witness some of the revolutionary activities in person, the Revolution had a great effect on his philosophy and on his works.

As Wordsworth was just beginning his literary career, prospects for a popularly desired outcome to the conflict were still promising, but the somewhat poorly formulated aims of the revolutionists were far from realized. The Jacobins had not yet come to power, and the more mature and moderate disciples of Montesquieu still directed the course of revolutionary activities. Their goal was limited, or constitutional, monarchy, much like the English, with guarantees of all personal freedom. The vociferous egalitarians, following Rousseau, sought to bring about a quick and painless transition—something that the British had taken hundreds of years to create. The patriots sparked the Assembly in such a way as to generate admiration at home and among the liberals abroad.

The Assembly had done away with or curbed many of the royal and feudal abuses that had set off the revolt, reorganized the political and representative structure of the state, and, by erasing older restrictions, created an equality of opportunity for those who had never known it before. Importantly, it stabilized national finances and created a uniform and integral judicial system (where formerly there had been a multiplicity of unique local systems), and it curbed the irresponsible Catholic hierarchy in France.

The magic word was *liberté*. It excused everything. The legislature unfortunately was susceptible to any whim of the sanguine Paris mobs which pressured it. Violence loomed always as a real possibility. A fanatical element was beginning to gain control. The Congressional Assembly deliberately voted itself out of existence as part of the deadwood of the old regime, and many of the wisest legislators retired. Control then passed to the radical Legislative Assembly. As Wordsworth arrived in Paris, the Assembly was busy sentencing *émigré* royalists and recalcitrant priests with the death penalty; intrigue and suspicion gripped the capital. To compound the difficulties, the great powers

of Europe were menacing the borders of France with their armies in an undisguised effort to keep King Louis XVI the instrument of government. To safeguard the gains already won, Robespierre instituted the celebrated Reign of Terror.

The young Wordsworth continued to condone the acts of the radicals. On 10 August 1792, Louis XVI was dethroned amid bloodshed; the first step toward securing the new republic had been established. From then on, the Jacobin Club devoted itself to the extermination of all Bourbon supporters. Upon report of actual invasion, 900 royalist men, women, and children were wiped out in the September Massacres. Finally, the king was beheaded early in 1793. The excesses of the Revolution, its inevitable miscarriages of justice, continued to be excused because of the fanatical dedication of its leaders to exalting humanity.

Not until the coming of the Directory (1795) and Bonaparte's drawing attention from the national to the international hostilities did control pass to the moderate middle class and the revolutionary activities abate somewhat. At the time, there was a revolution going on in England, though it was one fought without arms. Its origin was two-pronged: the emphatic rise of the merchant class, with its demands for less personal restraint from government, and the penetration of the romantic attitude into the mores of the nation.

The political situation in 1793-94 was the result of two credos which grew out of two basic and conflicting aspects of human nature itself—tendencies toward conservatism and toward liberalism, both intricately commingled in the human breast, but one managing to predominate over the other from time to time. The Revolution in France whipped to non-violent frenzy the sympathies of liberals and the reaction of conservatives. The resulting crisis was the most serious in England since the Puritan Revolution (1649). There was a curtailment of rights and liberties by the Tory government, which feared an actual armed uprising. The social injustices resulting from the Industrial Revolution were manifesting themselves at a time when reform was blocked by the conservative social philosophy, while liberal sentiment outspokenly supported the French insurgents.

Finally, the press smoldered with much pamphleteering for and against the Revolution, innate rights, and the theory of equality. There were strident pleas for the immediate reform of the British constitution, and several societies were founded for the propagation of radical views. In the midst of this turmoil, Wordsworth composed his early poetry. The romantic revolt had gotten well underway by 1800; it reached its climax in the first half of the nineteenth-century. Revolutionary ideals from France created an intense political response in Britain. Moreover, the Napoleonic Wars (1796-1815) and war with the United States (1812) strained the economy and burdened the poor.

In English statecraft, a pattern had been slowly emerging in which evolutionary progress and reform were obtained by solving political and social conflicts through compromise; after the Whig Party came to power (1830), this way of proceeding became predominant. Thereafter, the suffering which had been the direct result of the Industrial Revolution and *laissez faire* was ameliorated through a series of legislative acts curbing the abuse of labor and through revisions of the poor and criminal laws. The stage was set for a new leisure, prosperity, and enjoyment of more of the arts and material refinements of life. And a great technological and literary effort responded to the challenge.

### 2.6.2 Life and Works of Wordsworth

William Wordsworth, son of John Wordsworth, was born in the Lake District, United Kingdom on 7 April 1770, which is famous for being the most picturesque part of England.

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William obtained his formal education at home and at a nearby grammar school. However, his real teacher was ‘nature’ and the simple peasants who populated the region. Though, he grew up as an ordinary boy, yet his acute sensitivity towards nature set him apart from the rest.

He became an orphan early in life and he was brought up by his uncle. Later on, he went to attend Cambridge University. After university, being aware of his disinterest in the normal course of professional life he spent some time wandering around the city, observing the city and its life as a mere spectator.

During his tenure at Cambridge, he went to visit France and Switzerland with his friend Robert John. Wordsworth visited France for the second time during the Revolution. There, he met Annette Vallon with whom he established a relationship which resulted in her bearing him a child.



**Fig. 2.5** William Wordsworth

Wordsworth had immense faith in the war just like his other young English compatriots. In his poem, *The Prelude*, he anticipates the arrival of a new world which will bring in Liberty, Equality, Fraternity—the three principles on which the French Revolution was based. However, the bloodshed and devastation that the Revolution caused left him completely disillusioned and shattered all his hopes of seeing a better world. The corruption, anarchy, tyranny and chaos surrounding his country left him in a state of psychological upheaval. He became stable only after he renewed his communication with nature, which was possible with the support of his sister Dorothy, a sensitive and strong lady, resulting in Wordsworth resuming his writing.

In 1795, the Wordsworths moved to Dorsetshire. Their association with Samuel Taylor Coleridge developed in 1797 around which time they again shifted to Alfoxden. With Coleridge, he undertook a literary collaboration that resulted in the publication of *Lyrical Ballads*, which contained nineteen poems by Wordsworth. In the later edition, Wordsworth added a preface to the Ballads, which became a theoretical treatise on his kind of poetry. It was during this period that he composed his popular lyrics like *The Daffodils*, *The Rainbow*, *To a Butterfly*, *To the Cuckoo*, etc.

After coming back from Germany, a visit that he had undertaken with Coleridge, he started working on *The Prelude*, his autobiographical poem with philosophical musings. Wordsworth was one of the forerunners of the Romantic Movement. He is the esoteric mouthpiece of nature. He perceived and appreciated nature in both its physical and spiritual aspects. He could feel the divine in nature. His poem *Tintern Abbey* is an expression of his pantheistic approach.

In 1802, he married Mary Hutchinson. His poetry was gradually turning more meditative and spiritual. His love for the innocence of nature took the shape of extreme dislike for materialistic development like the industrialist and the capitalist world, reforms related to the educational, political and social scenario. In 1807, Wordsworth brought out his *Poems in Two Volumes*, which was both critically and commercially unsuccessful.

In 1810, he parted ways with Coleridge, bringing an end to a great productive association.

In 1814, his nine-volume, 9000-line poem, *The Excursion* was published. In quick succession came *The White Doe of Rylstone* (1815), *Peter Bell* (1819) and *Benjamin the Waggoner* (1819). However, none of these was well-received because the content was related to rural folk and simple language.

At long last, in 1843 he was made Poet Laureate. In 1850, he passed away and was buried in Grasmere churchyard.

It is important to throw light on the diversity found in Wordsworth's poetry. Apart from the short lyric and long narrative poems that deal with nature and his spiritual musings, he has dealt with other forms and subjects as well. Some of the prominent ones would be his sonnet group, *Ecclesiastical Sonnets* (1822), which were composed after his disillusionment with the French Revolution and which chronicles his perceptions on the interrelation of freedom, power, repression and nature. Some poems, like *Ode to Duty*, *Laodamia*, and *Dion* owe their existence to classical inspiration. They also showcase the use of the classic style. Wordsworth's Romantic epic *The Prelude*, like Milton's grand epic *Paradise Lost*, is in blank verse and traces the poet's spiritual journey.

### 2.6.3 London, 1802: Text and Explanation

Milton! thou shouldst be living at this hour:  
 England hath need of thee: she is a fen  
 Of stagnant waters: altar, sword, and pen,  
 Fireside, the heroic wealth of hall and bower,  
 Have forfeited their ancient English dower  
 Of inward happiness. We are selfish men;  
 Oh! raise us up, return to us again;  
 And give us manners, virtue, freedom, power.  
 Thy soul was like a Star, and dwelt apart:  
 Thou hadst a voice whose sound was like the sea:  
 Pure as the naked heavens, majestic, free,  
 So didst thou travel on life's common way,

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*In cheerful godliness; and yet thy heart  
The lowliest duties on herself did lay.*

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In the beginning of *London, 1802*, William Wordsworth cries out to the poet, John Milton, telling him that he have to be alive, because England desires him now. He goes on to describe England as a swampy marshland of ‘stagnant waters’ in which the whole lot that was as soon as a natural present (which includes faith, chivalry, and art, symbolized respectively through the altar, the sword, and the pen) has been lost to the curse of modernity.

The speaker continues by means of telling Milton that the English are egocentric and asking him to elevate them up. He asks Milton to bring the English (‘us’) ‘manners, virtue, freedom, energy’. The speaker then tells Milton that his ‘soul was like a celebrity’, due to the fact he became unique even from his contemporaries in terms of the virtues listed above. The speaker tells Milton that his voice become like the sea and the sky, a part of nature and therefore natural: ‘majestic, unfastened’. The speaker additionally compliments Milton’s capability to encompass ‘joyful godliness’ even at the same time as doing the ‘lowliest obligations’.

*London, 1802* is a sonnet with a rhyme scheme of abbaabbacddece. The poem is written in the second individual and addresses the late poet John Milton, who lived from 1608-1674 and is famous for having written *Paradise lost*. The poem has two major purposes, one among that’s to pay homage to Milton with the aid of announcing that he can store the entirety of England together with his nobility and virtue. The other motive of the poem is to attract interest to what Wordsworth feels are the troubles with English society. In keeping with Wordsworth, England was once an extraordinary region of happiness, faith, chivalry, artwork, and literature, but at the prevailing moment those virtues had been lost. Wordsworth can most effective describe present day England as a swampland, in which people are selfish and have to study approximately such things as ‘manners, distinctive feature, freedom, power’. Be aware that Wordsworth compliments Milton through evaluating him to things found in nature, consisting of the celebs, the ocean, and ‘the heavens’. For Wordsworth, being likened to nature is the highest praise viable.

*London, 1802* works on such a lot of degrees. To start with, it’s an obvious name for help; the poet, William Wordsworth, laments the kingdom of Britain, and expresses his fears approximately the health of the country wide character. Also, it is an elegy for John Milton, a superb English poet of the seventeenth century (famous for the terrific - long and awesome epic, *Paradise lost*). Eventually, it’s accurate old-fashioned sonnet. In just fourteen lines, Wordsworth manages to invoke his poetic forefather, caricature out his view of Britain’s individual and population, and exhibit to us just how professional he is with rhyme and meter by way of crafting a fantastic Petrarchan sonnet. No longer only is the sonnet achieved and polished example of its form, it is also a formidable condemnation of the poet’s state and fellow countrymen.

*London, 1802* is a sonnet stimulated by, and in praise of, John Milton, one of the best poets of the English language and one in every of its most done writers of sonnets. The shape of the poem is for that reason mainly appropriate to its difficulty. The work opens with exclaiming Milton’s call, which is metrically emphasized through the accented first syllable (a contravention of strict iambic meter). Milton is treated as a form of muse, capable of inspiring each the poet Wordsworth and the English country by means of expressing his wish that Milton need to ‘be living at this hour’, Wordsworth enables



convey that want that pass: he uses this very poem to assist revive Milton's reminiscence and have an impact on. The verb 'residing' is particularly apt, for the reason that poem is significantly concerned with restoring life to a number of England's maximum essential traditions and values, while the phrase 'at this hour' stresses Wordsworth's sense of urgency.

He believed that England in 1802 turned into at a moment of disaster, each regionally and because of its ultra-modern conflicts with France. Although he knew, of route, that Milton couldn't actually be revived, in this sonnet he seeks not only to reawaken and renew hobby in his first-rate predecessor, but also to adopt Milton's role as a public poet addressing the nation on problems of pressing ethical situation. Simply as Milton's name became metrically emphasized in line 1, so 'England' is emphasized inside the same manner (and within the equal preliminary, first-phrase position) in line 2. The first-rate poet and his kingdom are already being linked in subtle ways as Wordsworth attempts to underscore their critical connection. England is defined metaphorically in line 2 as a lady in want of a male rescuer, but within the subsequent breath she is likewise known as 'a fen [swamp]/Of stagnant waters' (2-3).

Each new noun adds effect, like a spreading stain, to the catalogue of deterioration; rarely unmarried thing of Britain seems left untouched by way of the atrophy Wordsworth indicts. All these segments of English society have 'forfeited heir historical English dower/Of inward happiness' (lines five-6), that is, they have got now not merely lost something, however, have actively given it up thru mistakes, offense, or crime, with the verb 'forfeited' additionally wearing a secondary notion of lack of wealth. The word 'dower' is specially widespread, in view that it can refer now not simplest to a widow's inheritance from her husband, but also to the cash a brand new wife brings (from her own family) into a wedding. The first that means reinforces the existence/demise assessment already implied by using the primary line. It also implies gift-day England's irresponsibility, its self-indulgence, its lack of admire for its personal past. Metaphorically, England has betrayed her lifeless partner; her noble traditions. The word 'dower' also, because of its economic connotations, appears lower back to the preceding connection with 'heroic wealth'. Satirically, despite the fact that Wordsworth believed that rampant materialism become partially to blame for England's decline, he goes out of his way on this sonnet to give superb connotations to phrases related to money. However, the 'wealth' and 'dower' he has in mind are associated with heroism and communal traditions, no longer with mere economic self-hobby.

Wordsworth transvalues the regular meanings of those nouns, associating them no longer with outward financial success, but with 'inward happiness'. England's decline has now not been fabric (a long way from it: Britain changed into fast turning into the wealthiest kingdom in the world); rather, its decline (in Wordsworth's view) became religious. Its afflictions were first and main afflictions of the soul, and that is why both Milton and his successor Wordsworth are possible assets of help. However, while the poem seems maximum accusatory, and while Wordsworth appears to sit down most glaringly in extremely advanced judgment of his countrymen, he all of sudden consists of himself in the indictment. In a brief, matter-of-reality word that invitations no objections or qualifications, he makes easy, all-inclusive declare: 'we're selfish guys'. Mockingly, by using implicitly faulting himself in addition to his fellows, he makes his charges extra rhetorically persuasive. He indicates the very humility he later praises in Milton (and, by doing so, he of route partially exempts himself from the fee of selfishness).

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In line 7, Milton is addressed most absolutely as a form of muse or divine being—perhaps whilst a kind of Christ discern whose second coming is devoutly desired via continually the use of such phrases as ‘we’ and ‘us’, Wordsworth continues to become aware of himself with the human beings he had just been criticizing; he implicitly turns into what he implies Milton become additionally: the spokesman for, and the sense of right and wrong of, the English nation. Milton himself is actually incapable of ‘return[ing]’ to life, but can be (and is being, thru this poem) reincarnated in the prophetic character Wordsworth is right here fashioning for himself. While, the first list had emphasized all of the aspects of English society presently in decline, the second listing info some of the needed characteristics that Milton can provide to help restore or opposite that slide. Those encompass ‘manners, virtue, freedom, [and] strength (8).

Honestly, Wordsworth seeks not simply political trade, however, a wholesale moral revolution. In other phrases, he wishes not a lot to regulate external kinds of government as to transform, at a few pretty essential degree, the ways people think, feel, and behave. The word ‘manners’ shows the methods human beings deal with each other; the word ‘virtue’ indicates their deepest ethical instincts. In the meantime, the phrase ‘freedom’ may imply political liberty, but it likely additionally shows freedom of soul or spirit (as in freedom from obsessive materialism). Sooner or later, ‘power’ almost clearly does no longer discuss with political or military may however, over again, to religious and ethical energy. The sonnet’s 8th line is essential not because it lists solutions to the troubles already listed in strains 3 and 4, but additionally due to the fact, in a traditional Petrarchan sonnet, the 8th line is the end of the octave (the first essential division of the poem). So far, Wordsworth has observed Petrarchan structure precisely rather than adopting the looser and easier bureaucracy desired via other English sonneteers: mainly, he has given us, inside the first-eight lines, the same old Petrarchan rhyme scheme of abba abba. We ought to expect, then, that in line 9, Wordsworth will not best start a brand new pattern of rhyme, but may even offer a giant shift of cognizance. In the Petrarchan sestet, or last 6 lines of the poem, Wordsworth’s attention—which had heretofore been targeted on England now shifts to Milton himself. The poem’s earlier implied emphasis on spirituality right here turns into express with the connection with Milton’s ‘soul’, that is compared to a ‘superstar’ (i.e., a small speck of mild inside the midst of surrounding darkness; a capability supply of steerage; a lofty object of wondrous attention). Milton’s soul ‘dwelt apart’ (9) within the feel that Milton changed into centered on better goals and aspirations than maximum of his own contemporaries, but it became exactly his religious distance from them that made him a treasured trainer.

Effectively using alliteration to emphasize liquid ‘s’ sounds, Wordsworth now pronounces that Milton possessed ‘a voice whose sound changed into like the ocean’. The final noun now not only contrasts powerfully with the earlier description of England as a ‘fen /Of stagnant waters’ (2- 3), however also incorporates its other relevant connotations, associating Milton with a large, deep, inexhaustible and effective force of nature. The expanse of the sea is then linked, inside the subsequent line, to the expanse of the sky: ‘the naked heavens’. Milton is ironically called both ‘majestic’ (a word related to royalty) and ‘loose’ (a word related to democracy), and the line in which these kinds of descriptions occur makes use of, over again, the method of list that Wordsworth has hired so effectively some other place on this poem.

**Check Your Progress**

15. List the major poems of William Wordsworth.
16. When was *The Excursion* published?

## 2.7 ROBERT BROWNING: AN INTRODUCTION

Born in Camberwell, South London, Robert Browning (7 May 1812 – 12 December 1889) was raised in a household of significant literary resources. In March 1833, *Pauline, a fragment of a confession* was published anonymously by Saunders and Otley at the expense of the author. In 1838 he visited Italy, looking for background for *Sordello*, a long poem in heroic couplets, presented as the imaginary biography of the Mantuan bard spoken of by Dante in the *Divine Comedy*, canto 6 of *Purgatory*. Next was *Bells and Pomegranates* (1841-1846), a series of eight pamphlets. In 1845, Browning met the poet Elizabeth Barrett, six years his elder, who lived as a semi-invalid in her father's house in Wimpole Street, London and got married to her on 12 September 1846. In Florence, probably from early in 1853, Browning worked on the poems that eventually comprised his two-volume *Men and Women*, (1855) for which he is now well known. In 1868, after five years work, he completed and published the long blank-verse poem *The Ring and the Book*. Browning is often known by some of his short poems, such as *Porphyria's Lover*, *My Last Duchess*, *Rabbi Ben Ezra*, *How they brought the good News From Ghent to Aix*, *Evelyn Hope*, *The Pied Piper of Hamelin*, *A Grammarian's Funeral*, *A Death in the Desert*. Browning's fame rests mainly on his dramatic monologues, in which the words not only convey the backdrop and action but also reveal the speaker's character.

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#### Dramatic Monologue

From *M. H. Abrams, Glossary of Literary Terms, Ninth Edition, Wadsworth Cengage Learning, Boston, 2009*

A monologue is a lengthy speech by a single person. In a play, when a character utters a monologue that expresses his or her private thoughts, it is called a soliloquy. Dramatic monologue, however, does not designate a component in a play, but a type of lyric poem that was perfected by Robert Browning. In its fullest form, as represented in Browning's *My Last Duchess*, *The Bishop Orders His Tomb*, *Andrea del Sarto*, and many other poems, the dramatic monologue has the following features:

1. A single person, who is patently *not* the poet, utters the speech that makes up the whole of the poem, in a specific situation at a critical moment: the Duke is negotiating with an emissary for a second wife; the Bishop lies dying; Andrea once more attempts wistfully to believe his wife's lies.
2. This person addresses and interacts with one or more other people; but we know of the auditors' presence, and what they say and do, only from clues in the discourse of the single speaker.
3. The main principle controlling the poet's choice and formulation of what the lyric speaker says is to reveal to the reader, in a way that enhances its interest, the speaker's temperament and character.

In monologues such as *Soliloquy of the Spanish Cloister* and *Caliban upon Setebos*, Browning omits the second feature, the presence of a silent auditor; but features 1 and 3 are the necessary conditions of a dramatic monologue. The third feature—the focus on self-revelation—serves to distinguish a dramatic monologue from its near relation, the dramatic lyric, which is also a monologue uttered in an identifiable situation at a dramatic moment. John Donne's *The Canonization* and *The Flea* (1613), for example, are dramatic lyrics that lack only one feature of the dramatic monologue: the focus of

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interest is primarily on the speaker's elaborately ingenious argument, rather than on the character he inadvertently reveals in the course of arguing. And although Wordsworth's *Tintern Abbey* (1798) is spoken by one person to a silent auditor (his sister) in a specific situation at a significant moment in his life, it is not a dramatic monologue proper, both because we are invited to identify the speaker with the poet himself, and because the organizing principle and focus of interest is not the revelation of the speaker's distinctive temperament, but the evolution of his observations, memories, and thoughts toward the resolution of an emotional problem. Tennyson wrote *Ulysses* (1842) and other dramatic monologues, and the form has been used by H. D. (Hilda Doolittle), Amy Lowell, Robert Frost, E. A. Robinson, Ezra Pound, Robert Lowell, and other poets of the twentieth century. The best-known modern instance is T. S. Eliot's 'The Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock' (1915). See Robert Langbaum, *The Poetry of Experience: The Dramatic Monologue in Modern Literary Tradition* (1957); Ralph W. Rader, *The Dramatic Monologue and Related Lyric Forms, Critical Inquiry* 3 (1976); and Adena Rosmarin, *The Power of Genre* (1985), chapter 2, *The Dramatic Monologue*.

### Robert Browning as a Dramatic Monologist

In a dramatic monologue, even though there is only one speaker speaking (therefore, monologue), it is still dramatic as there is an actual or implied listener whose questions and queries are anticipated by the speaker and answered making the monologue dramatic. It is an unusual form of poetry in the sense that it is dramatic and yet there is only one speaker. The silence of the listener is not a problem for the readers as the listener's presence is manifest in the poem through the speech of the speaker

It is similar to soliloquy in some sense, but in a soliloquy there is no implied or actual listener in front of the speaker. In a soliloquy the speaker talks to himself at a critical juncture of his life when he is undecided about what action he or she should follow thereafter; whereas in a dramatic monologue, the speaker not only talks to himself, but also to the speaker at the same time. Thus, this form of poetry is interesting at it allows readers to find out what the speaker is telling himself and what he intends the listener to understand.

For example, in *Porphyria's Lover*, Browning's dramatic monologist, the lover is speaking to the readers explaining why he has murdered his beloved and at the same time making himself understand that he is justified in his actions. As mentioned before, the monologist enters the scene at a critical juncture of his life to justify some act that he has committed. The action of the monologist is mental, psychological and verbal, that is, the speech includes pleading, informing, reminiscing, meditating and justifying oneself. The monologist asks the readers to suspend his or her sense of judgment as it thrives on reader's sympathy. In most cases, we see that the Browning's dramatic monologist is an obsessive and neurotic character suffering from 'I' syndrome and has great rhetorical capability. The dramatic monologue form is 'a fusion of two kinds of poetry into one—the lyric and the dramatic, subjective and pictorial.'

Browning's dramatic monologues are not just concerned with passions, but with the 'psychology of passions' of unstable characters who at some critical point of their life sets into a rhetorical mode to justify his action through a dramatic monologue. Browning's monologues grow out of some critical situation in the life of the principal figure and embody the reactions of that figure to that particular situation. Placed in such a situation, the speaker indulges in self-analysis and self-introspection and in this way his soul is laid bare in the poem.

Let us take two examples: *Porphyria's Lover* and *My Last Duchess*. Both the dramatic monologues deal with man-woman relationships, both the speakers are male and murderers. *Porphyria's Lover* is a soliloquy in isolation as there is no listener though the lover speaks dramatically. The lover of Porphyria lives in a world of obsession and nightmare. He kills his beloved for he suspects her fidelity. To him, she is a 'bee' and the moment this 'bee' surrenders and begins to worship him (the bud)—her deity—he shuts her forever. She is strangled to death. He justifies his crime by saying that he strangled his beloved, while she did not feel any pain and her smiling head was glad to rest itself on his shoulders. He fondly believes that god by remaining silent has accepted his superiority and condoned this sinister act. However, the readers are able to discern that in his attempt to reassure himself the mad lover has betrayed his anxiety, his sullenness and his vexation. We get to know that he has not only a great rhetorical competence, but also suffers from the 'I' Syndrome.

In *My Last Duchess*, the Duke, the dramatic monologist, is a polished, sophisticated Italian aristocrat, an autocrat, a product of renaissance, arrogant, avaricious, status-conscious, and connoisseur of art. Like all the other speakers of dramatic monologue, the Duke is aggressive, socially and intellectually superior to his listener. From the very beginning he asserts his superiority over the listener by forcing him to observe the last duchess' portrait, to hear what he has to say and not to read the meaning of her life, like painted countenance with passionate glance and cheerful blush and half flush. The Duke in his own typically narcissistic self-delineation puts himself in the spot light and turns the listener into a shadow. The envoy is compelled to listen to his story suspending all his power of judgment. The dramatic monologues are basically concerned with human psychology. George Santayana thought that Browning's personae always displayed 'traits of character and never attains character at all.'

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### 2.7.1 *Porphyria's Lover*: Text and Explanation

*THE rain set early in to-night,  
The sullen wind was soon awake,  
It tore the elm-tops down for spite,  
And did its worst to vex the lake:  
I listen'd with heart fit to break.  
When glided in Porphyria; straight  
She shut the cold out and the storm,  
And kneel'd and made the cheerless grate  
Blaze up, and all the cottage warm;  
Which done, she rose, and from her form  
Withdrew the dripping cloak and shawl,  
And laid her soil'd gloves by, untied  
Her hat and let the damp hair fall,  
And, last, she sat down by my side  
And call'd me. When no voice replied,  
She put my arm about her waist,  
And made her smooth white shoulder bare,*

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*And all her yellow hair displaced,  
 And, stooping, made my cheek lie there,  
 And spread, o'er all, her yellow hair;  
 Murmuring how she loved me—she  
 Too weak, for all her heart's endeavour,  
 To set its struggling passion free  
 From pride, and vainer ties dissever,  
 And give herself to me for ever.  
 But passion sometimes would prevail,  
 Nor could to-night's gay feast restrain  
 A sudden thought of one so pale  
 For love of her, and all in vain:  
 So, she was come through wind and rain.  
 Be sure I look'd up at her eyes  
 Happy and proud; at last I knew  
 Porphyria worshipp'd me; surprise  
 Made my heart swell, and still it grew  
 While I debated what to do.  
 That moment she was mine, mine, fair,  
 Perfectly pure and good: I found  
 A thing to do, and all her hair  
 In one long yellow string I wound  
 Three times her little throat around,  
 And strangled her. No pain felt she;  
 I am quite sure she felt no pain.  
 As a shut bud that holds a bee,  
 I warily oped her lids: again  
 Laugh'd the blue eyes without a stain.  
 And I untighten'd next the tress  
 About her neck; her cheek once more  
 Blush'd bright beneath my burning kiss:  
 I propp'd her head up as before,  
 Only, this time my shoulder bore  
 Her head, which droops upon it still:  
 The smiling rosy little head,  
 So glad it has its utmost will,  
 That all it scorn'd at once is fled,  
 And I, its love, am gain'd instead!*

*Porphyria's love: she guess'd not how  
Her darling one wish would be heard.  
And thus we sit together now,  
And all night long we have not stirr'd,  
And yet God has not said a word!*

### *Critical Appreciation*

The poem *Porphyria's Lover* begins with a description of the tumultuous weather of the night when it was raining and windy, and the lover was waiting for Porphyria in a cabin in an unnamed place. She finally arrives and we come to know that she has transcended her class expectations to visit him. She is wet and cold, so she comes near the fire to dry herself. She leans against the narrator and professes her love. The lover looks into her face and realizes that she 'worshipp'd' him in this moment. Taken by the purity of the moment, he decides to take her hair and strangle her to death with it. He then assures that she died painlessly. After she dies, he unwinds her hair and lays her corpse out in a graceful pose with her eyes opened and her lifeless head on his shoulder. He justifies his action by saying that he has done the right thing by murdering her and ends by remarking that God 'has not yet said a word' against him.

In *Porphyria's Lover*, Robert Browning is dealing with an unstable lover's passion who is mentally not stable and finally kills his beloved to make her to be his own forever. Like almost all the dramatic monologist of Browning, Porphyria's lover too is an obsessive neurotic character who is self-obsessed and thinks that his way of thought and action are justified in every sense. Therefore, we find no sense of remorse in the lover even after he kills his lovely beloved. Moreover, he proudly pronounces that he is quite justified in what he has done. The monologue is occasioned by the fact that he has committed the murder and therefore is at a critical juncture of his life when he needs to get into a dramatic monologue. He needs to reassure himself, while reassuring the readers that what he has done is no crime. Like the Duke of *My Last Duchess*, the lover here claims his superiority and in that tone claims his innocence.

The interesting fact is that the logic that he provides for his act of murder is that women are transgressive in nature. This idea is nothing new. Patriarchy has always believed that women have always tried to break free of the clutches of males to discover themselves. Furthermore, patriarchy believes that women, as they are of inferior intellect than men, should be under the guidance of men. Many a times during the history of mankind we have seen that women are treated as inferior citizens only because of their gender. The view that women have the propensity to become infidels, if not checked by males, is taken a step further by the neurotic lover of Porphyria as he decides to end her life at a moment when the beloved is showing her fidelity, so that the moment of fidelity gets fixed forever and she does not get a chance to show her infidelity.

The logic of the lover is absurd—but all Browning's dramatic monologists use this kind of absurd logic as Browning's monologues deal with the absurdity of the passions of abnormal characters. It is this absurdity that makes Browning's dramatic monologues so interesting and intriguing. One needs to keep in mind here that no matter how absurd the lover might sound in his logic; it is based on the patriarchal construction which allows the women to be seen as secondary. Therefore, the absurdity does not only lie in the lover's part, but in the whole of patriarchy and its ways of gender stereotyping. There is nothing in women which makes them born infidel; there is nothing in them which makes them

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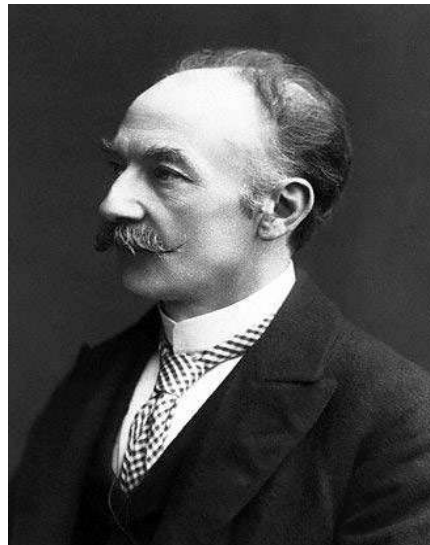
secondary and second grade. However, patriarchy prefers to think so as that is the way males can rule over females. In the larger context of world politics, this is what is happening when feminist movements across the world are questioning males for their limited mindset.

From this point of view, it would be unfair to call Browning a patriarchal male-chauvinist writer as he is deliberately portraying these kinds of characters in his monologues to make readers aware of how with dubious constructions about gender they are living their life without insight and reflection. From that point of view, Browning's dramatic monologues are not merely beautiful pieces of poetry, but at the same time upholds a social message—to question the patriarchal constructions.

## 2.8 THOMAS HARDY: AN INTRODUCTION

Thomas Hardy (1840–1928) was a prominent writer of the Victorian era. His life can be easily compartmentalized into three phases. The first phase (1840–1870) was marked by his early life, including first marriage, early compositions and a first unpublished novel. The second phase (1871–1897) was marked by his establishment as a writer, along with a prosperous writing career in the form of fourteen published novels and numerous short stories. The third phase (1898–1928) was marked by his attainment of a celebrity stature, moving away from composing novels and returning to poetry.

Except for the period in London during young manhood, Thomas Hardy passed his life near Dorchester, close to the place where he was born in 1840 and died in 1928. He was surrounded by people and customs, the monuments and the institutions of Dorset and contiguous counties of south-western England, which he placed permanently on the literary map by the ancient name Wessex. As a writer, Hardy was a living paradox. A natural poet, much of his poetry is nevertheless in prose. He had the poet's largeness, minuteness and intensity of vision—a threefold faculty displayed throughout his novel. The irony in Thomas Hardy's novels is not directed at human egotism, but at the very conditions of human existence. He saw his characters as elemental figures whose passions were doomed to run the cause that human conditions had set for them.



*Fig 2.7 Thomas Hardy*

### Check Your Progress

17. Explain dramatic monologue.
18. What are the features of a dramatic monologue?



Hardy was neither a philosophical novelist nor a subtle psychologist. His view of man is neither holy consistent nor any degree profound. His prose has air of being self-taught; it is often clumsy, sometimes pretentious generally rough-hewn and unequal. Hardy's vision of life was genuine and he wrestled it alone. The underlying rhythm of his novel is sound and what Henry James called the 'sense of felt life' is movingly present.

'Critics can never be made to understand that the failure may be greater than the success... To have the strength to roll a stone weighing a hundredweight to the top of a mountain is a success, and to have the strength to roll a stone of then hundredweight only halfway up that mount is a failure. However, the latter is two or three times as strong a deed' (Hardy in his diary, 1907).

Hardy was born to a master mason and building contractor in the village of Higher Bockhampton, on the edge of Puddletown Heath. His mother, who had literary tastes and read Latin poets and French romances, had a huge impact on him. Early training as an architect gave him intimate knowledge of local churches utilized to advantage in his writings. He married Emma Lavinia Gifford in 1874. At the age of 22, Hardy moved to London and started to write poems which idealized the rural life. Emma Lavinia Gifford encouraged him and he started to consider literature as his 'true vocation.'

Hardy's first novel *The Poor Man and the Lady* was rejected and he was advised by Alexander Macmillan to improve his work. *Under the Green Wood Tree* (1872) is an idyllic tale of rustic life. *Far From the Madding Crowd*, (1874) use a wider canvas and take a closer look at the nature and consequences of human emotions. Misfortune, coincidences and the intrusion into the pastoral life makes this love story tangled and violent. *The Return of the Native*, (1878) is a more ambitious work.

In the novel, *The Mayor of Casterbridge* (1886), nature, civilization and human character work on each other continually. The novel *Tess of the d'Urbervilles* outraged the religious conscience of 1891 and his novel *Jude the Obscure* is fatally injured by his ruthlessness.

In 1896, disturbed by the public uproar over the unconventional subjects of two of his greatest novels, *Tess of the d'Urbervilles* and *Jude the Obscure*, Hardy announced that he would never write fiction again. In April, 1912, Hardy wrote:

'Then somebody discovered that Jude was a moral work—austere in its treatment of a difficult subject—as if the writer had not all the time said in the preface that it was meant to be so. Thereupon many uncursed me, and the matter ended, the only effect of it on human conduct that I could discover being its effect on myself—the experience completely curing me of the further interest in novel-writing.'

He continued writing poems the rest of his life.

As for his marriage to Emma, it was an unhappy one, but they continued to stay with each other. They did not have any offspring. Hardy, however, had many affairs.

Emma died in 1912 and a couple of years later he married Florence Emily Dugdale, his secretary, who was a woman in her 30s and approximately thirty years younger to him.

Hardy breathed his last on 11 January 1928 in Dorchester, Dorset. Hardy was popular as a lyrical pastoralist. He was also a modern, even revolutionary writer. It may be a sign of the times that some of us take his books to bed, as if even his pessimistic vision was one that enabled us to sleep soundly.

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## Works of Thomas Hardy

Thomas Hardy tries to create impressions by the skilful use of similes, metaphors, allusions and images. He invests in his characters, objects and elements an extraordinary power which is not inherently their own.

The popular works of Thomas Hardy include the following:

### Novels and Short Stories

- *The Mayor of Casterbridge*
- *Jude the Obscure*
- *Under the Greenwood Tree*
- *Far from the Madding Crowd*
- *Tess of the d'Urbervilles*
- *The Fiddler of the Reels and Other Stories (1888-1900)*
- *The Hand of Ethelberta*
- *A Changed Man and Other Tales*
- *Desperate Remedies*
- *The Distracted Preacher*
- *A Laodicean*
- *Life's Little Ironies*
- *A Mere Interlude*
- *A Pair of Blue Eyes*
- *The Return of the Native*
- *The Romantic Adventures of a Milkmaid*
- *Selected Stories of Thomas Hardy*
- *Stories of Wessex*
- *The Trumpet-Major*
- *Two on a Tower*
- *The Well-Beloved*
- *Wessex Tales*
- *The Withered Arm and Other Stories*
- *The Woodlanders*

### Poems

Hardy wrote poems during the second Boer War of 1899–1902 and the Great War of 1914–1918. Naturally, his verses reflected the conflicts related to war. His war poems reflect a wide diversity in attitude. While *Channel Firing* has a deeply pessimistic tone, *The Breaking of Nations* is rather optimistic and focuses on the good things of daily life that are sure to survive even when wars are long forgotten. His popular poems include the following:

- *At an Inn*
- *Beeny Cliff*

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- *The Darkling Thrush*
- *The Dead Man Walking*
- *Heiress and Architect*
- *Her Dilemma*
- *Her Immortality*
- *I Look into my Glass*
- *The Ivy-Wife*
- *The Man He Killed*
- *Neutral Tones*
- *The Ruined Maid*
- *She, At his Funeral*

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### 2.8.1 *The Darkling Thrush*: Text and Explanation

*I leant upon a coppice gate  
 When Frost was spectre-grey,  
 And Winter's dregs made desolate  
 The weakening eye of day.  
 The tangled bine-stems scored the sky  
 Like strings of broken lyres,  
 And all mankind that haunted night  
 Had sought their household fires.*

*The land's sharp features seemed to be  
 The Century's corpse outleant,  
 His crypt the cloudy canopy,  
 The wind his death-lament.  
 The ancient pulse of germ and birth  
 Was shrunk hard and dry,  
 And every spirit upon earth  
 Seemed fervourless as I.*

*At once a voice arose among  
 The bleak twigs overhead  
 In a full-hearted evensong  
 Of joy illimited;  
 An aged thrush, frail, gaunt, and small,  
 In blast-beruffled plume,  
 Had chosen thus to fling his soul  
 Upon the growing gloom.*

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*So little cause for carolings  
 Of such ecstatic sound  
 Was written on terrestrial things  
 Afar or nigh around,  
 That I could think there trembled through  
 His happy good-night air  
 Some blessed Hope, whereof he knew  
 And I was unaware.*

Thomas Hardy invariably wrote about gloomy and fatalistic perspective of life. Hence, when he uses a bleak winter landscape, in his poem, to symbolize the transitory nineteenth century, it does not surprise anyone. In the poem, *The Darkling Thrush*, he calls nineteenth century a 'corpse' which is lying in a 'crypt'.

When Hardy composed *The Darkling Thrush* he was living on the threshold of the twentieth century. In addition, it was not just the age, but he himself was also making a transition in his creative approach, from writing novels he was focusing on writing poems. The desire for this transition was the negative public reception of his two novels, *Tess of the d'Urbervilles* (1891) and *Jude the Obscure* (1895). Hardy had been too frank in his depiction of morally disagreeable subject matter. This had outraged the readers of his time. Hardy's contemporary novelist, George Gissing (1857–1903), had famously called the novel *Jude the Obscene*. This was of course, one personal reason for which Hardy was gloomy in temperament.

Ironically, both *Tess* and *Jude the Obscure* are widely read and appreciated today along with his poetry which is considered to be of high quality.

*The Darkling Thrush* was composed at the far end of the nineteenth century. The poem was first printed as *By the Century's Deathbed* sometime during December 1900.

The poem appears in the form of an ode. It is a conventional lyric poem. It appears in the form of an address identifying a particular subject. It is written in a lofty and elevated fashion. The poem has a formal tone although we also know that odes can be written in the form of a personal note as well. On the very special occasion of the adieu hours of the old century, the poet puts down his reflections in the first person, 'I'. It appears as if he is leaning on a gate by the little wood. Such a pose is traditionally considered to be a 'thinking pose'.

Apart from the thinking pose, the gate symbolizes the arrival of the New Year as well as the century.

Hardy portrays a frosty evening landscape in the poem. It is that time when everyone else has gone indoors. He has depicted realistic pictures of the winter landscape. It appears to him as if the season is a corpse, that resembles, the corpse of the almost dead nineteenth century. Along with the natural surroundings, the cloudy sky is considered as the crypt (burial place) for the corpse. Adding to it is the sound of the winter wind; for the poet it is a lament that is usually associated with a dead person (the nineteenth century). Each and every living organism appears to be as devoid of passion as Hardy. Both of them appear to be almost as dead as the century. At this moment of absolute despair a thrush's beautiful song suddenly is heard somewhere nearby. It breaks upon the grim cold scene or as the poet prefers to call, the 'growing gloom'. This makes

Hardy wonder whether the bird is aware of any such cause/subject which might indicate hope. Perhaps Hardy is ignorant of such subject. The title of the poem, *The Darkling Thrush* is indicative that Hardy was intentionally incorporating words that have a long poetic history. 'Darkling' implies darkness, or emergence of darkness. Emergence because Hardy can still view the landscape, as well as figure out that the sun is 'weakening' but it is not completely set. It is believed that the title probably is a shorthand for 'the thrush that sang as night was approaching.'

*I leant upon a coppice gate  
When Frost was spectre-grey,  
And Winter's dregs made desolate  
The weakening eye of day.  
The tangled bine-stems scored the sky  
Like strings of broken lyres,  
And all mankind that haunted night  
Had sought their household fires.*

### Explanation

The poem begins with the speaker stating that finally it is the middle of winter. One can also call it a very cold and dreary autumn. There is no fun of springtime here. Everywhere, it is cold and ice, darkness and grey. The speaker is leaning against a gate. Even the exact identity of 'I,' is vague. However, 'I' could refer to a depressed soul.

What is important to mention here is that the word frost is mentioned in capital 'F'. It is almost as if frost has attained human-like characteristics. This is very typical to human beings whose names are capitalized while writing them. Certain elements of nature, like snow, ice and frost are definitely not proper names but the capitals suggest their human-like attributes.

As we move on, we come across further human-like qualities, the 'almost human' part of the description. The speaker probably thinks that frost is 'spectre-grey.' Here, the word 'spectre' means 'ghost'. That is why if frost is human-like then it is also ghost-like, thus, being human and non-human.

The speaker continues to suggest that this winter day is dreary. The word 'dregs' is related to coffee. It refers to those grainy, bitter things that cling to the bottom of the coffee cup. Dregs invariably imply anything which is not good to taste. Hence, when the speaker of the poem suggests that we are in the dregs of winter, he wishes to convey that this is not the beautiful snowfall that one comes across during Christmas time. In fact, it refers to those grey and gloomy elements which make the reader depressed.

The speaker goes on to mention that the day has got an eye. This seems to imply that 'Winter' is a person. In continuation with the dreary image, the whole world appears to be mostly dead. In fact, as our speaker observes, the day already appeared inferior and in a weak state long before winter's dregs made things all the more worse.

Despite the fact that Hardy is writing this poem at the end of the nineteenth century, it is surprising to note that he is not celebrating the arrival of the new century. Also, he is not looking ahead to see good times. He is rather carrying forward the gloom and despair of the previous century with him.

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Further, the speaker is describing things which he sees while gazing the patch of tangled brushes. However, amidst those bushes all he can see is death and destruction. The vines in front of the speaker appear to resemble the broken bits of a lyre. Lyre is a harp-like instrument used in the classical times.

Hardy has incorporated classical allusions which makes the poem all the more beautiful. The lyre also appears in infinite poems of the antiquity. Hardy probably intends to suggest that with the new era setting in; the stock and trade of traditional poetry are also moving out of their way.

The first stanza reconfirms that the speaker is a loner. The speaker is outside observing the surroundings when other people are not out and around. It is definitely some late hour. Even the speaker mentions that everyone else he is acquainted with is curled up by the fire or may be enjoying dinner or probably relaxing over a nice cup of tea. The speaker is sure there is life out there somewhere but just that it does not happen to be anywhere in his proximity.

However, then the question arises: Is there really life out there somewhere. After all, as the speaker makes it clear that the people who we assume are enjoying life were earlier 'haunting' the landscape. So are these people human at all?

It is believed that the writing of *The Darkling Thrush* by Hardy is a prequel to *Night of the Living Dead*. Some reasons for such thought could be that Hardy is writing this poem towards the end of the Industrial Revolution. With the arrival of the Industrial Revolution, Britain, an agrarian nation, became an industrial one. People migrated to cities in search of better livelihood. Nevertheless, the industries turned cities into centres of smog and dust which in turn brought in many deadly diseases.

Hardy is trying to point out that the Industrial Revolution changed the way work was perceived and executed. Prior to the arrival of the Industrial Revolution, both men and women worked as peasants for rich landowners yet they were in touch with nature. However, as soon as people started working in factories, everything changed suddenly. The workers had to work for 12 or 14-hours a day. It was all about getting a job and working arduously. No worker got to see the sun due to long working hours. Most of them turned pale as a ghost. Several English novels like *Mary Barton* by Elizabeth Gaskell highlight this plight of workers during the Industrial Revolution.

We can assume that the folks, who are walking around like ghosts as the speaker perceives them, could be the industry workers and they have been turned into automations by the life being led by them. It is a scary and dreary scenario.

Hardy is probably drawing a parallel between the end of the century and Doomsday because some almost dead exist here. Nevertheless, it is more than evident that the speaker, just like Hardy himself, is not very appreciative of the modern age.

*The land's sharp features seemed to be  
The Century's corpse outleant,  
His crypt the cloudy canopy,  
The wind his death-lament.  
The ancient pulse of germ and birth  
Was shrunk hard and dry,  
And every spirit upon earth  
Seemed fervourless as I.*

## Explanation

In the second stanza, the speaker uses metaphor to describe the desolate landscape as the carcass of the nineteenth century.

The speaker wonders why is the century ‘outleant’? Though technically, outleant is not a word per se, but Hardy’s speaker probably considers himself out of this world and hence, has chosen to use the word. The word is so special that even the entire vocabulary of the English language could not match up to find one word to describe the speaker’s experience. This is precisely where the word has been incorporated for literary effect. Till now, we realize Hardy has been discussing inanimate concepts like ‘Winter’ or ‘the century’. Yet, he has hardly made any reference to living beings. Hardy’s speaker insists on focusing on the death of inanimate (or at times abstract) things, so much so that at times, we wonder if we are still alive or are we heading towards our grave.

Nature appears to conspire to lament over the transition of the century. In a way, the whole idea is very romantic (like Wordsworth or Coleridge would have expressed it). A Romantic poet might have understood something similar.

It is interesting to note here that even the speaker moves on with the idea of ending all things; the rhythm of the poem remains absolutely constant and conventional. One can definitely see an uncanny relationship being built between the rhyme scheme and the huge void that the speaker experiences around himself.

‘The ancient pulse of germ and birth/Was shrunken hard and dry’ is filled with symbolism. Hardy incorporates metaphors of germination. Here in the poem, he refers to the unsuccessful and futile germination.

In the last two lines of this stanza, the speaker says that there is some kind of spirit that is present at the moment. It could also imply a lack of reason or perhaps the speaker is too engrossed in the gloom and sorrow around that he happens to see a spirit. It appears as if Hardy is trying to prove that there is no real living being in this poem.

Hardy insists on calling people as spirits only to highlight the physical rejection of any real living being. He insists on calling humans-as-ghosts or even at times, ghosts-as-humans making it difficult for us to discern the differences.

*At once a voice arose among  
The bleak twigs overhead  
In a full-hearted evensong  
Of joy illimited;  
An aged thrush, frail, gaunt, and small,  
In blast-beruffled plume,  
Had chosen thus to fling his soul  
Upon the growing gloom.*

## Explanation

You must have noticed by now that these lines indicate a significant shift in the poem. It seems that in the midst of the silence and death, the speaker suddenly hears something. This time what he hears is something beautiful. It is a love song. It is embalmed with happiness.

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Finally, as the title suggests, the thrush makes an appearance. However, if one hears more closely, one realizes that this sound resembles the gloominess which permeated the initial parts of the poem.

One might compare Keats *Ode to a Nightingale* with this poem. Keats nightingale was more happy and melodious than the one suggested by Hardy in this poem. Keats nightingale was immortal while Hardy's thrush is combating a nasty storm in the middle of nowhere land. Nonetheless, the only positive thing about this bird is that it manages to survive despite the rough weather.

The tiny and adversity ridden bird has successfully managed to survive the despair and dejected atmosphere which even the speaker is unable to do. The bird has forgotten about the adversities and is simply singing merrily. The song does not make the 'growing gloom' disappear but at least it lessens the impact of the gloomy atmosphere. The song alone drew the attention of the speaker towards the bird as a welcomed distraction.

*So little cause for carolings  
Of such ecstatic sound  
Was written on terrestrial things  
Afair or nigh around,  
That I could think there trembled through  
His happy good-night air  
Some blessed Hope, whereof he knew  
And I was unaware.*

## Explanation

Once again the first four lines of the stanza get merged into each other. This also builds up the momentum as the speaker continues to give special attention to the song of the thrush. The bird is singing a happy song whereas the speaker is discussing that the world is full of lifeless people. Perhaps the bird is happy from within. Hence, nature with elements of art (the bird song) becomes the epitome of real art for the poet.

It is wonderful to figure out that the bird is happy. It seems that the speaker is also comforted by the ideas which make the bird happy and cheerful.

Yet, the speaker insists that he is not happy. He now insists that he is not sure whether the bird is singing a song of ecstasy. The speaker just imagines that the bird is probably singing for a cause and the speaker might in time just get to know about the cause.

Finally, the arrival of the twentieth century becomes apparent in this stanza. In the final couplet, he manages to capture the perspective of the major writers of the successive decades. Hardy brings in a sense of negotiation by bringing in hope (through the speaker) though in a subtle manner.

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## 2.9 W. H. AUDEN AND THE MODERN AGE

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Before discussing the life and works of Wystan Hugh Auden, let us first discuss about the age in which W. H. Auden wrote, i.e., the Modern Age.

**Check Your Progress**

19. Mention the three phases of Thomas Hardy's life.
20. Name Hardy's first novel.
21. List the major poems written by Thomas Hardy.
22. What kind of transition does the poem *The Darkling Thrush* indicate?
23. How has landscape been portrayed by the speaker in the poem *The Darkling Thrush*?



As the name suggests, modern literature was very different from traditional and classical literatures. Modernist literature started dominating the literary scene during the interim period between the two world wars. Modernist poetry too was very different from the poetry of any other period. It was a revolt against all the classical and traditional characteristics of poetry. This unit deals with the growth of the modern era of literature, as well as the chief characteristics of Modernism. An overview of Modernist literature is also provided in this unit.

The long reign of Queen Victoria came to a climax in the Diamond Jubilee Year (1897), a time of peace and plenty when the British Empire seemed to be at the summit of its power and security. Of the discord that soon followed, we shall here note only two factors which had large influence on contemporary English literature.

The first disturbing factor was imperialism and reawakening of a dominating spirit which had seemingly been put to sleep by the proclamation of an Imperial Federation, coming of which was heralded by the Boer War in South Africa, through which Britain blundered to what was hoped to be an era of peace and good will. Imperialistic nations were all alike, blind. An inevitable result was the First World War and the great horror of the Second World War; the two, calamities being different acts of the same tragedy of imperialism. Another factor that influenced literature for the worse was a widespread demand for social reform of every kind not slow social and orderly reform, which is progress, but immediate and intemperate reform, which breeds a spirit of rebellion and despair. Imperialism had its outstanding advocate in the English poet Rudyard Kipling, who with drum and trumpet called upon England to 'take up the White Man's burden' by dominating 'all lesser breeds without the law.'

The Victorian era continued into the early years of the 20th century and two figures emerged as the leading representatives of the poetry of the old era acting as a bridge to the new. These two were W B Yeats and Thomas Hardy. Yeats, although not a modernist, was to learn a lot from the new poetic movements that sprang up around him and adapted his writing to the new circumstances. Hardy was, in terms of technique at least, a more traditional figure and was to be a reference point for various anti-modernist reactions, especially from the 1950s onwards.

Modernist poetry was the culmination of the different trends of the first quarter of the century. Among the foremost of these poets were Gertrude Stein, T S Eliot, Hilda Doolittle and Ezra Pound, each of whom spent an important part of their writing lives in England, France and Italy. Modernism is the movement in visual arts, music, literature, and drama which rejected the old Victorian standards of how art should be made, consumed, and what it should mean. In the period of 'high modernism', from around 1910 to 1930, the major figures of Modernist literature helped radically to redefine what poetry and fiction could be and do: figures like Virginia Woolf, James Joyce, T.S. Eliot, Ezra Pound, Wallace Stevens, Marcel Proust, Stephane Mallarme, Frank Kafka, and Rainer Maria Rilke are considered the founders of Modernism.

Modernism in poetry is distinguished by its pluralistic complexity. It is a synthesis of diverse kinds of poetry including the polished formalism of the 1890's, the symbolism of Yeats and Arthur Symons. Pound's involvement with the Imagists marked the beginning of a revolution in the way poetry was written. English poets involved with this group included D.H. Lawrence, Richard Aldington, T.E. Hulme, F.S. Flint, E.E. Cummings,

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Ford Madox Ford, Allen Upward and John Cournos. Eliot, particularly after the publication of *The Waste Land*, became a major figure and influence on other English poets.

Modern poets leave us with an impact that all order has gone; they might seem to be writing in a language without grammar or syntax, a language without rhyme or rhythm. It is not simply that the poetry seems to be in revolt against traditional forms of verse but, rather, it seems to register the extent to which language itself is in crisis as it confronts a world in decay which no longer has any role for poetry.

This does not mean that ideas in modern poetry are necessarily difficult; the difficulty resides in the technique. Around 1914, Ezra Pound and others produced economical poems mainly characterized by their use of a few, hard, clear images. Pound's two-line poem *In a Station of the Metro*, is one of the finest, for instance:

*'The apparition of these faces in the crowd;*

*Petals on a wet, black bough.'*

The poets who began to emerge in the 1930s had two things in common; they had all been born too late to have any real experience of the world before the commencement of the First World War, and, they grew up in a period of social, economic and political turmoil. Perhaps as a consequence of these facts, themes of community, social injustice and war seem to dominate the poetry of the decade. With the poetry of the 1930s there is a shift to the political poetry of W H Auden, Stephen Spender and C Day Lewis.

As we move towards the twentieth century, we find an increasing sense that life is overwhelmingly confusing and complicated. In late nineteenth and early twentieth century literature, for example, in the novels of Hardy, Joseph Conrad, Joyce, Woolf and D.H. Lawrence and in the poetry of Eliot and Yeats, there is a feeling that the world has in this era, the world has become so baffling that it is impossible to make sense of it.

### Thematic and Technical Features of Modernist Literature

From a literary and stylistic perspective, the main characteristics of Modernism include:

- An emphasis on impressionism and subjectivity in writing (and in visual arts as well); an emphasis on HOW seeing (or reading or perception itself) takes place, rather than on WHAT is perceived. An example of this would be writing in the stream-of-consciousness.
- A movement away from the apparent objectivity provided by omniscient third-person narrators, fixed narrative points of view, and clear-cut moral positions. William Faulkner's multiply-narrated stories are an example of this aspect of Modernism.
- A blurring of distinctions between genres, so that poetry seems more documentary (as in T.S. Eliot) and prose seems more poetic (as in Woolf or Joyce).
- An emphasis on fragmented forms, discontinuous narratives, and random-seeming collages of different materials.
- A tendency towards reflexivity, or self-consciousness, about the production of the work of art, so that each piece calls attention to its own status as a production, as something constructed and consumed in particular ways.
- A rejection of elaborate formal aesthetics in favour of minimalist designs (as in the poetry of William Carlos Williams) and a rejection, in large part, of formal aesthetic theories, in favour of spontaneity and discovery in creation.

- A rejection of the distinction between 'high' and 'low' or popular culture, both in choice of materials used to produce art and in methods of displaying, distributing, and consuming art.

The modern age depicts the disillusionment of a generation, that is, of the post-war generation. So, the literature of this age deals with the universal dilemma of fragmentation and disintegration. It makes us aware of the nervous exhaustion, the mental disintegration, the exaggerated self-consciousness, the boredom and the pathetic groupings after fragments of a shattered faith—all those symptoms of the psychic disease which ravaged Europe mercilessly like an epidemic.

Modernism tends to present a fragmented view of human subjectivity and history but presents that fragmentation as something tragic, something to be lamented and mourned as a loss. Many modernist works try to uphold the idea that works of art can provide the unity, coherence, and meaning which has been lost in most of modern life; art will do what other human institutions fail to do. Postmodernism, in contrast, does not lament the idea of fragmentation, or incoherence, but rather celebrates that. The world is meaningless. Let's not pretend that art can make meaning then, let's just play with nonsense.

Modern literature explores fragmentariness in narrative and character-construction. *The Waste Land* is often cited as a means of distinguishing modern and postmodern literature. The poem is fragmentary and employs pastiche like much postmodern literature, but the speaker in *The Waste Land* says, 'these fragments I have shored against my ruins'. Modernist literature sees fragmentation and extreme subjectivity as an existential crisis, or Freudian internal conflict, a problem that must be solved, and the artist is often cited as the one to solve it.

Mythical method, symbolist techniques, juxtapositions, imagery, expressionistic techniques and surrealism are the hallmarks of modern age applied by Eliot, Yeats, Pound, Auden and other modern poets, dramatists and novelists.

Twentieth century poets tend to lean in one of two directions, either towards writing in a traditional form, or towards writing dense and often disjointed verse. Of course, there are plenty of poets who call upon both these ways of writing as W B Yeats who began his career by writing traditional, romantic, nature poetry and then move onto a more complex style, using symbolism and new stanza forms.

### Literature in the Modern Age: An Overview

Modernism is a comprehensive but somewhat vague term for a movement which owes its genesis to the closing years of the 19th century. The term is not restricted to literature alone but pertains to other creative arts like painting, music, architecture as well. There was much emphasis on language and its use. Thinkers like Nietzsche, Karl Marx, Sigmund Freud and Frazer were the intellectual precursors of Modernism as they had raised queries regarding the traditional modes of social organization, religion and morality, and also the traditional ways of conceiving the human self.

A prominent feature of Modernism was the phenomenon called 'avant-garde' that denotes exploration, path-finding innovation and invention – something new, revolutionary or 'ahead of its time'. The avant-garde artists are frequently alienated from the established order, against which they assert their own autonomy.

Eliot experimented with new forms and developed a new style in *The Waste Land*. He replaced the standard flow of poetic language by fragmented utterances.

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Ezra Pound, the first leader of Imagism, also made his contribution to Modernism. The Imagist proposals supported the abandoning of conventional materials, freedom to choose any subject, using common speech. James Joyce, in his epic novel, *Ulysses*, recorded the happenings of a single day by the use of stream-of-consciousness technique.

The modern period was also a notable era of symbolism in literature which came from a group of French writers beginning with Charles Baudelaire. Many of the major writers of modern era created symbolist settings, agents and actions in their works. A few examples are Yeats' *Byzantium* poems, William Faulkner's *The Sound and the Fury*, etc.

Another 'ism' that appeared during the modern era was surrealism. The surrealists attempted to express, in art and literature, the working of the unconscious mind and to synthesise these workings with the conscious mind.

Thus, breaking away from the shackles of the stifling Victorian conventions, the authors and poets of this period went their own ways, experimenting in different arenas, launching a host of new styles as well as genres.

### 2.9.1 W. H. Auden Life and Works

Wystan Hugh Auden is an Anglo-American poet. He is regarded by many critics as one of the greatest writers of the 20th century. Besides writing poetry he has also written prose essays and reviews. His first book, *Poems*, was published in 1930 with the help of T.S. Eliot. Most of his poetry is concerned with moral issues and highlights a strong political, social, and psychological context. Auden's poetry is reckoned to be versatile and inventive, ranging from the tersely epigrammatic to book-length verse, and includes a vast range of scientific knowledge.

Auden was born on 21 February 1907, in York, England. His father George Augustus Auden was a psychologist and his mother Constance Rosalie Bicknell Auden was a devoted Anglican. Auden started his education at St. Edmunds Preparatory School. At age thirteen, Auden continued on to Gresham's School, and later attended Oxford University. It was here, where Auden and a few of his fellow undergraduates formed a group called the 'Auden Generation'. The members of the group were influenced by Modernism and rejected traditional poetic forms. After his first publication, Auden was well-known for his different styles of verse form and the excellent leftist voice of his young generation. Time and again, his poetry imitated the writing styles of other well-known writers including W.B. Yeats, Dickinson, Henry James and T.S. Eliot.

#### Poetry

- *Collected Poems*
- *Thank You, Fog: Last Poems*
- *Epistle to a Godson*
- *Academic Graffiti*
- *City Without Walls and Other Poems*
- *Collected Longer Poems*
- *Collected Shorter Poems 1927-1957*
- *About the House*
- *Homage to Clio*

- *Selected Poetry*
- *The Old Man's Road*
- *The Shield of Achilles*
- *The Age of Anxiety: A Baroque Eclogue*
- *The Collected Poetry of W. H. Auden*
- *For the Time Being*
- *The Sea and the Mirror*
- *The Double Man*
- *The Quest*
- *Another Time*
- *Selected Poems*
- *Spain*
- *Look, Stranger!*
- *The Orators*

## Prose

- *Forewords and Afterwords*
- *Selected Essays*
- *The Dyer's Hand and Other Essays*
- *The Enchaféd Flood*
- *Journey to a War*
- *Letters from Iceland*
- *Drama*
- *On the Frontier*
- *The Ascent of F.6*
- *The Dog Beneath the Skin: or, Where is Francis?*
- *The Dance of Death*
- *Paid On Both Sides*

## 2.9.2 The Unknown Citizen: Text and Explanation

*He was found by the Bureau of Statistics to be  
 One against whom there was no official complaint,  
 And all the reports of his conduct agree  
 That, in the modern sense of the old-fashioned word, he was a saint,  
 For in everything he did he served the Greater Community.  
 Except for the war till the day he retired  
 He worked in a factory and never got fired,  
 But satisfied his employers, Fudge Motors Inc.  
 Yet he wasn't a scab or odd in his views,*

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*For his union reports that he paid his dues,  
 (Our report of his union shows it was sound)  
 And our Social Psychology workers found  
 That he was popular with his mates and liked a drink.  
 The Press are convinced that he bought a paper every day,  
 And that his reactions to advertisements were normal in every way.  
 Policies taken out in his name prove that he was fully insured,  
 And his Health-card shows that he was once in hospital but left it cured.  
 Both Producers Research and High—Grade Living declare  
 He was fully sensible to the advantages of the Installment Plan  
 And had everything necessary to the Modern Man,  
 A gramophone, a radio, a car and a frigidaire.  
 Our researchers into Public Opinion are content  
 That he held the proper opinions for the time of the year;  
 When there was peace he was for peace; when there was war he went.  
 He was married and added five children to the population,  
 which our Eugenist says was the right number for a parent of his generation,  
 And our teachers report he never interfered with their education.  
 Was he free? Was he happy? The question is absurd:  
 Had anything been wrong, we should certainly have heard.*

*The Unknown Citizen* is a poem composed by W. H. Auden. Auden wrote it in 1939, quickly after transferring from England to the United States, and the poem offers proof of his lifestyle surprise, while all of sudden confronted with American-fashion chaos and consumerism. The poet intends his satire against a society which kills a person's individuality. The epigraph of the poem *The Unknown Citizen* 'To JS/07/M/378/'. This marble monument is erected by the state' alludes to the idea enforced via the government that every individual need to be labeled by using an alpha-numeric tag to differentiate who they may be, in preference to being capable of having their own personal identification.

*The Unknown Citizen* is a classic Auden's poem. It shows the poet's concern for the modern world and its problems. Auden, as a keen observer of the contemporary world, was the first one to realize that the totalitarian society would not be a utopia. In this society, the citizen will have no scope to develop his talents or to assert his individuality. He will be made to be liable to the state in all things. It is the picture of such a citizen, in a way similar to Eliot's *Hollow Man*, which is ironically presented in the poem. Auden showcases his theme by showing the glaring disparity between the complete statistical information about the citizen compiled by the state and the sad inadequacy of the judgments made about him. The poet seems to say, statistics cannot sum up an individual and physical facts are inadequate to evaluate human happiness—for man does not live by bread alone.

In the phrase 'The Unknown' the word 'unknown' means ordinary and obscure. Therefore, the whole phrase means 'those ordinary, obscure soldiers as citizens of the state who laid down their lives for defending their motherland wanted name and fame,

but remained unknown. The title of Auden's poem imitates this. Thus, *The Unknown Citizen* means the ordinary average citizen in the modern industrialized urban society. He has no individuality and identity. He has no desire for self-assertion. He likes to remain unknown.

The poet asks two questions at the end of the poem; Was he free? Was he happy? No government statistics can ever answer these kinds of questions. By asking these questions, the speaker draws our attention to the question of freedom and happiness. And ironically, the speaker states that the modern man is a slave to the routine and he is incapable of understanding such concepts like happiness and freedom. Therefore, such a question in this context would be 'absurd'. Thus, this poem *The Unknown Citizen* is a harsh attack on modern society—its indifference towards individuality and identity. The only way for an individual to survive in a disciplined society is to conform, obey and live in perpetual mental slavery. Such a creative is this 'unknown citizen' who is utterly devoid of any urge for self-assertion. Such a modern man is a slave to the routine, is incapable of understanding such concepts as happiness and freedom.

## NOTES

### 2.10 SUMMARY

- Philip Sidney was born at Penshurst (Kent) on 30 November 1554. He was the eldest son of Sir Henry Sidney and Lady Mary Dudley.
- 'Sonnet' is an abbreviation of the Italian sonetto (little song) recited to the sound of a musical instrument. It is a fourteen-line poem written in iambic pentameter.
- Sidney's fame as a poet rests on the work he produced over a span of merely eight years, from about 1577 to his death in 1586.
- Sir Philip Sidney (1595) *The Nightingale*, extensively taken into consideration as one of the excellent of Sir Philip Sidney's quick poems, seems within the second part of his *defense of Poesy*.
- The richness of the rhyme in this poem is indicative of its basis on an Italian piece, as are the musicality and continuity of the terms.
- George Herbert was born on 3 April 1593. He was the fifth son in a famous Welsh family.
- The poem, *The Pulley*, centers on the theme of relationship between God and his best creation, that is, man. God, the ultimate father-figure to mankind, uses his special pulley to draw man back to him, once man's scheduled quota is over on this planet earth.
- John Milton was born on Gregorian calendar month 9, 1608, in London, England.
- William Blake's major writings happened before 1798, which is the year considered by literary scholars and the critics to be the year which marked the beginning of the Romantic Era in British Literature with the publication of *Lyrical Ballads*, a compilation of poems by William Wordsworth and Samuel Taylor Coleridge.
- William Blake was born in London in 1757. From his childhood, he had the power of extraordinary imagination. When he was four, he spoke to his parents about the visions that he had.

#### Check Your Progress

24. When was W.H. Auden's first book published?
25. When was W.H. Auden born?

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- William Wordsworth, son of John Wordsworth, was born in the Lake District, United Kingdom on 7 April 1770, which is famous for being the most picturesque part of England.
- In the beginning of *London, 1802*, William Wordsworth cries out to the poet, John Milton, telling him that he has to be alive because England desires him now.
- Wordsworth goes on to describe England as a swampy marshland of ‘stagnant waters’ in which the whole lot that was as soon as a natural present (which includes faith, chivalry, and art, symbolized respectively through the altar, the sword, and the pen) has been lost to the curse of modernity.
- *London, 1802* is a sonnet with a rhyme scheme of abbaabbacddece. The poem is written in the second individual and addresses the late poet John Milton, who lived from 1608-1674 and is famous for having written *Paradise Lost*.
- Born in Camberwell, South London, Robert Browning (7 May 1812 – 12 December 1889) was raised in a household of significant literary resources.
- In a dramatic monologue, even though there is only one speaker speaking (therefore, monologue), it is still dramatic as there is an actual or implied listener whose questions and queries are anticipated by the speaker and answered making the monologue dramatic.
- The poem *Porphyria’s Lover* begins with a description of the tumultuous weather of the night when it was raining and windy, and the lover was waiting for Porphyria in a cabin in an unnamed place.
- In *Porphyria’s Lover*, Robert Browning is dealing with an unstable lover’s passion who is mentally not stable and finally kills his beloved to make her to be his own forever.
- Thomas Hardy (1840–1928) was a prominent writer of the Victorian era.
- Thomas Hardy tries to create impressions by the skilful use of similes, metaphors, allusions and images.
- Hardy wrote poems during the Second Boer War of 1899–1902 and the Great War of 1914–1918.
- In the poem, *The Darkling Thrush*, he calls nineteenth century a ‘corpse’ which is lying in a ‘crypt’.
- When Hardy composed *The Darkling Thrush* he was living on the threshold of the twentieth century. In addition, it was not just the age, but he himself was also making a transition in his creative approach, from writing novels he was focusing on writing poems.
- W.H. Auden is an Anglo-American poet. He is regarded by many critics as one of the greatest writers of the 20th century. He was born on 21 February 1907, in York, England.
- *The Unknown Citizen* is a poem composed by W. H. Auden. Auden wrote it in 1939, quickly after transferring from England to the United States, and the poem offers proof of his lifestyle surprise, while all of sudden confronted with American-fashion chaos and consumerism.



## 2.11 KEY TERMS

- **Conceit:** The word ‘conceit’ means ‘a concept or an image’. In simpler terms, it is a figure of speech that brings out interesting or striking comparison between two different things, or situations or ideas to create a new concept.
- **Metaphysical conceit:** The metaphysical conceit, associated with the Metaphysical poets of the 17th century, is a more intricate and intellectual device. It usually sets up an analogy between one entity’s spiritual qualities and an object in the physical world and sometimes controls the whole structure of the poem.
- **Poet laureate:** A poet laureate is a poet officially appointed by a government or conferring institution, who is often expected to compose poems for special events and occasions.
- **Monologue:** A monologue is a lengthy speech by a single person.
- **Dramatic monologue:** It is a technique devised by Robert Browning in which there is only one speaker speaking, but there is a silent listener.

## NOTES

## 2.12 ANSWERS TO ‘CHECK YOUR PROGRESS’

1. Philip Sidney was the eldest son of Sir Henry Sidney and Lady Mary Dudley. His mother was the eldest daughter of John Dudley, Duke of Northumberland and sister of Robert, Earl of Leicester and Ambrose, Earl of Warwick. Thus, we can say that Sidney belonged to an aristocratic family of England.
2. Sidney was a brave soldier, an accomplished statesman and a great writer.
3. Sidney died of gangrene which he developed after he got wounded in a war against Spain.
4. The major types of sonnets are as follows:
  - (i) The Italian (or Petrarchan) sonnet
  - (ii) The English (or Shakespearian) sonnet
  - (iii) The Spenserian sonnet
5. Some of the major works of Sidney are as follows:
  - (i) *The Defense of Poesy*
  - (ii) *Astrophil and Stella*
  - (iii) *The Arcadia*
6. The salient features of George Herbert’s poetry include its deep religious devotion, linguistic accuracy, fluidity in rhyme and most importantly, the use of metaphysical conceit.
7. The major poems written by George Herbert are as follows:
  - *Holy Sonnets*
  - *The Pulley*
  - *Affliction*
  - *The Collar*
8. The poem *The Pulley* centers on the theme of the relationship between God and his best creation, that is, man.

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9. In *The Pulley*, God bestows the gifts of wisdom, honour and pleasure on man.
10. The age of Milton is one of gradual transition from the exuberant gaiety and imaginative freedom of the Renaissance to that of artificial cheer, philosophic melancholy, and puritan sobriety. Often political or religious, the prose is in general either simple or disputatious of florid and oratorical; despite its quaint affected mannerism, the prose displays a new freedom, copiousness, and power. The poetry is marked much less by its originality of thought
11. John Milton was born on Gregorian calendar month 9, 1608, in London, England.
12. Romanticism was largely a reaction against the prevailing Neo-classical school of writing which had laid great stress on form, structure and conventions of poetic diction. The Romantics brought with them the 'Renaissance of wonder', where the natural world is revealed and vividly portrayed for the first time.
13. In many ways Blake's revolutionary views were formed as a reaction to the eighteenth-century submission to reason and law. He rebelled against this and criticized philosophers such as Voltaire and Rousseau for annihilating the liberating powers of the imagination.
14. William Blake's hostile attitude towards traditional Christianity also influenced his interpretation of history. He identified three stages in history which corresponded to three stages in the life of an individual. The first stage corresponds to that of the Garden of Eden, or of primal innocence. The second stage was the eating of the forbidden tree or the Fall (that is, the phase of Experience). The third stage was that of achieving a higher state of innocence or redemption (when one is as clever as a serpent and as innocent as a dove). In the third stage, innocence cannot be corrupted anymore as one has the necessary cleverness of the serpent will not allow the corruptions to affect innocence.
15. Some of the major poems of William Wordsworth are *The Daffodils*, *The Rainbow*, *To a Butterfly*, *To the Cuckoo*, and so forth.
16. *The Excursion* was published in 1814.
17. Browning's fame rests mainly on his dramatic monologues, in which the words not only convey the backdrop and action but also reveal the speaker's character.
18. The features of a dramatic monologue are as follows:
  - The monologist enters the scene at a critical juncture of his life to justify some act that he has committed.
  - The action of the monologist is mental, psychological and verbal, that is, the speech includes pleading, informing, reminiscing, meditating and justifying oneself.
  - The monologist asks the readers to suspend his or her sense of judgment as it thrives on reader's sympathy.
  - In most cases, we see that the Browning's dramatic monologist is an obsessive and neurotic character suffering from 'I' syndrome and has great rhetorical capability.
  - The dramatic monologue form is 'a fusion of two kinds of poetry into one—the lyric and the dramatic, subjective and pictorial.'
19. Thomas Hardy's life can easily be divided into three phases. The first phase (1840–1870) was marked by his early life, including first marriage, early

compositions and a first unpublished novel. The second phase (1871–1897) was marked by his establishment as a writer, along with a prosperous writing career in the form of fourteen published novels and numerous short stories. The third phase (1898–1928) was marked by his attainment of a celebrity stature, moving away from composing novels and returning to poetry.

20. The name of Hardy's first novel is *The Poor Man and the Lady*, which was rejected and he was advised by Alexander Macmillan to improve his work.
21. The major poems written by Thomas Hardy include *At an Inn*, *The Darkling Thrush*, *I Look into my Glass*, *The Ruined Maid* and *The Dead Man Walking*.
22. *The Darkling Thrush* written by Thomas Hardy indicates the change from the nineteenth century to the twentieth century. Also, it indicates the change in Hardy's creative approach, from writing novels he focused on writing poems.
23. The speaker portrays a bleak winter landscape in the poem *The Darkling Thrush*.
24. W.H. Auden's first book, *Poems*, was published in 1930 with the help of T.S. Eliot.
25. Wystan Hugh Auden (W.H. Auden) was one of the most important poets of the 20th century. He was born on 21 February 1907, in York, England.

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## 2.13 QUESTIONS AND EXERCISES

### Short-Answer Questions

1. Write a short note on Philip Sidney.
2. Summarize the poem *The Nightingale*.
3. Provide a short biographical sketch of George Herbert.
4. Write a short note on the political backdrop of England at the time when Blake was writing.
5. Why would Wordsworth look to a poet for reform, rather than a politician or a religious figure? Give reasons for your answer.
6. Paraphrase M.H. Abrams overview of Browning's Dramatic Monologue.
7. Give a brief overview of Browning's dramatic monologue in *Porphyria's Lover*.
8. Write a short note on the childhood and youth of Thomas Hardy.

### Long-Answer Questions

1. Critically analyse the poem *The Pulley* by George Herbert.
2. What was Milton's crisis in *On His Blindness*?
3. How does Milton meditate upon different ways to serve God in his sonnet *On His Blindness*?
4. Do you consider William Blake as a precursor of the Romantic Movement? In what ways is William Blake a Romantic poet?
5. Do you think Wordsworth sets himself up as Milton's poetic heir?
6. Discuss Robert Browning as a dramatic monologist.
7. Browning's Dramatic monologues are psychological studies of abnormal characters. Do you agree? Give examples to substantiate your view

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8. 'The Darkling Thrush reflects Hardy's pessimistic outlook of life.' Discuss.
9. 'Hardy's female protagonists are based on the author's own notion of the feminine ideal.' Explain this statement with suitable examples from his works.
10. The poem was written in 1939, and some critics have found parallels with the rise of fascist, authoritarian governments in Europe. Is the 'State' of the poem a fascist state, or is it merely a subtle parody of democratic and socialist governments?

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## 2.14 FURTHER READING

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# UNIT 3 FICTION

## Structure

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### 3.0 INTRODUCTION

Fiction as a genre includes a lot of different formats of writing including novels, short stories, poems, plays, epics. Novel is a form of long narrative which describes the characters and events in a fictional space in the form of a story. Novel due to the long narrative allows the readers to get a sense of the psyche and thinking of the characters in different social situations. Charles Dickens is one of the most recognized novelist of the English language. Many of his works like *Oliver Twist*, *Tale of Two Cities*, *David Copperfield* and *Great Expectations* have been received very well not only by the readers of his times, but the readers of today's generation too. His writing is known to be a realist portrayal of the nineteenth century England society and appeals to a wide variety of readers from different social backgrounds. His accuracy of depicting the real life circumstances and its elevation to a universalistic level is what makes readers identify with him the most.

Charles Dickens primarily deals with the class struggles, economic condition and the movement of the lower classes to a higher stratum in the society. It contains a certain nuanced sense of humour along with appropriate representation of the behaviour of the different characters. *Great Expectations* is the epitome of his style of writing. Through characters like Pip, Estella, Magwitch and Miss Havisham we go on a journey to witness how important status and money is in society and how it transforms people. In this unit, you will learn about Charles Dickens' life and works, his style of writing along

with a discussion of the plot, the characters and the important themes of his famous work *Great Expectations*.

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### 3.1 UNIT OBJECTIVES

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

- Analyse Dickens' life and works
- Describe Dickens' style of writing
- Discuss the plot of *Great Expectations*
- Assess the major characters in *Great Expectations*
- Explain the themes in *Great Expectations*

### 3.2 CHARLES DICKENS AND THE VICTORIAN AGE

In this section, we will have a look at the rise of the novel in the Victorian Age, life history of Charles Dickens, some of the major works Dickens wrote and his style of writing.

#### 3.2.1 Rise of the Novel

The novel as a genre in comparison to other literary forms such as epic, drama, poetry, prose etc is of relatively recent origin. Critics have tried to establish the century in which novel as a genre originated. However, its origin is still debated among critics. For instance, many critics believe that novel as a genre emerged with the publication of Cervantes' *Don Quixote* whereas the contemporary Russian cultural theorist, Mikhail Bakhtin asserts that novel had its origin in the form of Hellenistic romances during Hellenistic Greece. While it is difficult to establish the genesis of novel temporally, it is even more difficult to define the novel as a genre.

Literary theorists have tried to define it in multiple ways but an exhaustive definition of novel is still lacking. William Hazlitt in the eighteenth century defined the novel as, '... a close imitation of man and manners; (where) the very web and texture of society (is represented) as it really exists, and as we meet it when we come into the world. If poetry has "something more divine" in it, this savors more of humanity. We are acquainted with the motives and characters of mankind, imbibe our notions of virtue and vice from practical examples, and are taught knowledge of the world through the airy medium of romance.'

Lionel Trilling, in his celebrated critical work, *The Liberal Imagination* writes in appreciation of this genre saying that, '... its greatness and its practical usefulness lay in its unrelenting work of involving the reader himself in the moral life, inviting him to put his own motives under examination, suggesting that reality is not as his conventional education has led him to see it. It taught us, as no other genre ever did, the extent of human variety and the value of this variety. It has the literary form to which the emotions of understanding and forgiveness were indigenous, as if by the definition of the form itself.'

Interestingly, as novel emerged after epic poetry, dramatic form and prose, it had reached their pinnacle as a literary genre. It is always defined in the context of these literary forms. For instance, both Hazlitt and Trilling's definition of novel is in the context of a comparative analysis of novel with regards to other literary forms. In fact, as Terry Eagleton states, the novel comprises of different attributes of all genres. In his work, *The English Novel*, Eagleton defines the novel as 'a piece of prose fiction of a reasonable length.' Although Eagleton's definition appears to be complete, he himself goes on to denounce this very simplistic definition of novel as having too many loopholes. For instance, as he himself points out that not all novels are written in prose; rather Vikram Seth's *Golden Gate* is a novel in verse.

The question arises, how does one differentiate between a novel, a novella and a short story? If length is one criterion then Eagleton argues how we can classify Anton Chekhov's *The Duel* as a short story and Andre Gide's *The Immoralist* as a novel when both are of relatively same length. Eagleton thus argues his point only to establish that according to him novel as a literary form is a genre which defies precise or exact definition. He says that it is a form which weaves together several literary modes so as to defy being classified as a one single pure genre.

To quote Eagleton, 'You can find poetry and dramatic dialogue in the novel, along with epic, pastoral, satire, history, elegy, tragedy and any number of other literary modes ... The novel quotes, parodies and transforms other genres, converting its literary ancestors into mere components of itself. ...' Hence, one can safely conclude that the rapid growth of novel was largely possible because it merged in itself the most appealing features of almost all literary genres. Now, let us study the beginnings of novel as a genre.

## Beginnings

A study of the growth of English literature reveals that the novel as a literary form gained ascendancy around the turn of the seventeenth century. Every new genre that gained popularity, be it Elizabethan Drama or prose in the Augustan age, was a result of interplay of social, cultural, literary forces. For instance, around the years 1580-90, there was a sudden manifestation of Elizabethan drama with the flowering of Marlowe, Kyd and the greatest of all dramatists, Shakespeare. Before that, only mystery and morality plays had existed and nothing anticipated the rapid growth of drama as a literary form. With novel as well, there were no signs signaling the emergence of this genre.

Moreover, there was not even a classical model to serve as a precursor. Cervantes' *Don Quixote* is often cited as one of the most significant influences that shaped the modern novel, however, there are contrary views regarding this. Coming back to Cervantes' *Don Quixote*, even after its translation into English, another one hundred and thirty years passed before Joseph Fielding's *Joseph Andrews* was published.

The earliest works that are often cited as being close to the genre of a novel are Geoffrey Chaucer's *The Prologue to the Canterbury Tales*, *Troilus and Criseyde*, besides this Bunyan's work *The Pilgrim's Progress* published in 1678 is also regarded as a significant precursor of the modern novel.

Initially, novels were disregarded; most critics regarded it as trash to be pursued only by females and servants. It was considered as a low genre and not to be seriously attended to. It was with the publication of Richardson's *Pamela or Virtue Rewarded* that the novel started to be regarded as a serious art form. Walter Allen in his very significant critical work, *The English Novel*, says that the time period for which novel

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as an art form flourished was short lived. To quote Allen, 'The first great flowering of the English novel began in 1740, with Richardson's *Pamela, or Virtue Rewarded* and ended thirty -one years later with Smollett's *Humphrey Clinker*.'<sup>6</sup> Virginia Woolf regarded novel as the most flexible of all literary forms.

### Victorian Age

Victorian literature is a term which is used to refer to the literature written during the reign of Queen Victoria (1837-1901). It forms a transitory link between the writers of the romantic age and the modern literature of the twentieth century. In the Victorian age, novel became the predominant form of literary expression in English. The works of pre-Victorian authors such as Jane Austen and Walter Scott were primarily social satires and adventure stories which became immensely popular amongst the reading public.

The prime novelists of this time were Charles Dickens, Anthony Trollope and William Makepeace Thackeray. Of these, Dickens was extraordinarily popular and is still one of the most popular authors of Victorian era. Thackeray was Dickens' greatest rival at that time. He is best known for his novel *Vanity Fair*, subtitled *A Novel without a Hero*, which is also an example of a form popular in Victorian literature: the historical novel, in which very recent history is depicted. It was during the Victorian era that novel became a popular literary art form.

Emily Brontë's only novel *Wuthering Heights* (1847) is a masterpiece boasting of an uncompromising aesthetic sense. You will read about her work in the next unit. The novels of Mary Ann Evans who wrote under the pseudonym of George Eliot appeared during the 1860s and the 1870s. An author of great erudition and moral fervour, Eliot was concerned with ethical conflicts and social problems.

Another very prominent author was Thomas Hardy whose profoundly pessimistic novels are all set in the harsh, punishing midland county called Wessex. There were countless authors of which several deserve merit and it cannot be denied that by the end of the Victorian period, novel became not only the prime source of pleasure but also a means of analysing and offering solutions to social and political problems.

### 3.2.2 Different Ages of the Novel

The fictional novel emerged as a popular and public literary form in the eighteenth century with the coming of writers like Richardson, Fielding, Smollett, Sterne and Defoe. While this was a late development, several sub-genres or forms of the novel can be traced. Given below are some forms of the novel according to the timeline of their development.

#### The Beginning of the English Novel (1719-1770)

This period can be termed as the first flowering of the English novel. It was aimed at satisfying the taste of the readers from the middle-class. Daniel Defoe's *Robinson Crusoe* published in 1719 was based on the picaresque novel tradition that originated in the sixteenth century in Spain. Picaresque novels / prose told the stories of low and common rogues and their actions. Daniel Defoe's *Robinson Crusoe* tells the tale of a seminal castaway in this style. Samuel Richardson's (1689-1761) *Pamela or virtue Rewarded* (1740), *Clarissa: Or the History of a Young Lady* (1748), and *The History of Sir Charles Grandison* (1753) fall under the category of Epistolary novels; which are novels in the form of letters or documents. Richardson's works had profound moral and they all



displayed sentimentality. As a reaction to Richardson's sentimentality, Henry Fielding (1707-1754) took to novel writing. His subtle use of irony, satire and humour was exemplary and the plot in his novels were very well-structured. The development of plot was noteworthy in the hands of Henry Fielding and could be traced in his *Joseph Andrews* (1742), *Tom Jones* (1749), *Amelia* (1751), *Jonathan Wilde*, etc. Other important novelists of this period are Lawrence Sterne, Samuel Johnson, and Tobias Smollett. Lawrence Sterne and Tobias Smollett wrote in the picaresque tradition. Lawrence Sterne (1713-1768) wrote *Tristram Shandy* and *A Sentimental Journey through France and Italy* (1760-1767). Tobias Smollett (1721-1771) wrote *Roderick Random* (1748), *Peregrine Pickle* (1751) and *Humphrey Clinker* (1771). Oliver Goldsmith's *Vicar of Wakefield* (1766) became an inspiration to the following generation of writers.

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### Novel of Terror and Romance or Gothic Novel (1764-1818)

Among the prominent categories of novels, the Gothic novel was a popular one. The Gothic novel usually had an Italian setting and recalled the medieval period. It had elements of horror, romance, mystery, and cruelty. The Gothic novels came about as a reaction against the prosaic common sense of the eighteenth century and the strict neo-classical trend of writing. It was full of romance and an expression of liberty and rebellion. The first novel in this tradition was *The Castle of Otranto* (1764) written by Horace Walpole. He combined horror, romance, mystery and cruelty in his novel. After Walpole, Ann Radcliffe tried her hand at this kind of fiction and introduced a serious, Byronic villain as her hero. Gothic is related to a type of medieval architecture and the authors used these as a setting for their tales. The setting in most Gothic novels is a lonely, far away castle where mysterious events take place. *Mysteries of Udolpho* (1794) by Radcliffe is cited as a notable work in this genre. William Beckford's *Vathek* (1786), and *The Monk* (1796) by Matthew Lewis are a few other notable Gothic fictional novels. Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein* (1818) was a mixture of Gothic and the romantic. It was also a stimulant for the next generation of scientific fiction writers and is relevant even today because of the science fiction aspect. It has been a popular subject for cinematization. The Gothic fictional novels influenced the later generation of writers because of the use of fanciful, romantic and the mysterious.

### Romantic Novel (1790-1832)

The romantic novel flourished in the Romantic Age of English letters, during the period of the Napoleonic Wars. Jane Austen was a major exponent. Austen's works, while being confined to a certain smaller territory of England, depict the reality of human nature and relationships. Thus they have a universal appeal and are widely read all around the world. Though she was not popular in her age, she was regarded as a master craftsman in the following generations. Her chief works include — *Pride and Prejudice* (1813), *Sense and Sensibility* (1811), *Mansfield Park*, *Persuasion*, *Emma* (1815), etc. Her *Northanger Abbey* (1798) is considered a satire on the Gothic tradition. She was supremely gifted in handling harmony and irony together. Sir Walter Scott (1771-1832) is a major romantic novelist who is known as a pioneer of the historical novel in English. He combined fact and fiction finely. His novels are categorised as historical romance. He wrote a series of novels which is called "Waverley Novels" (1814-1831). It includes *The Antiquary*, *Ivanhoe*, and *The Heart of Midlothian*. He worked for the upliftment of the Scottish tradition and territory throughout his life. He was a very popular writer in his lifetime.

## Victorian Novel (1830-1900)

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In the Victorian Age, novels became a dominant form of literature and became more popular than poetry. Many writers in this form emerged during this period. It was in the 1830s that English novel saw some changes in style and form. It was the period after the Industrial Revolution. Various reforms in the society had started taking place and the focus was on the upliftment of the society. The middle class emerged during this phase and there was a rise in the poorer class as well. The novel was the literary form that was to please the taste and satisfy the newly emergent middle class. Authors like Dickens used the novel to elaborate the contemporary social themes in his works. Later on, the theme of novel changed from social to moral to psychological. As the writers explored various themes in this age, they also paid attention to develop the novel as a literary genre. Since this age saw the loss of faith in religion and rise of social reform and a questioning attitude in people — the novel tried to explore these in its themes. The Victorian age could be termed as the age of the morals.

Charles Dickens (1812-1870) is one of the best known novelists of this period. He has been regarded as a major pillar of the Victorian era of novel writing. In his journey from a journalist to a pioneer literary figure, he wrote many famous novels. His works focus on realism. Dickens, in his novels, draws the picture of London streets where he had passed many sleepless nights as a child. Along with this realism, he also has the gift of high imagination and a wide range of characterisation. He uses these as tools to make his novels colourful, full of humour, and very interesting. In his early writings his focus was more on incidents than a structured plot. This could be because the early novels were published as serial episodes in periodicals. But all the same, they are extremely interesting. He described what he saw with a wide range of fictitious characters. His major works include *Pickwick Papers*, *Oliver Twist*, *Great Expectations*, *A Tale of Two Cities*, *Little Dorrit*, *Nicholas Nickleby*, and *Hard Times*. His works mainly dealt with social problems raising sympathy and awareness in the mind of his readers for the labour class, the education system, politics, and the effects of industrialisation.

The Brontë sisters: Charlotte, Emily and Anne are known for their emotionally charged worlds in their novels where they described experiences, mostly their own. *Jane Eyre* (1847), *Villette*, *Shirley* are Charlotte Brontë's (1816-1855) famous works. The character Jane Eyre is based on her own life. *Agnes Grey* (1847) and *The Tenant of Wildfell Hall* (1849) are the only two works to Anne's (1820-1849) credit. Both of these relate to the experiences of the novelist herself. *Wuthering Heights* (1847) by Emily Brontë is an emotional drama of an orphan called Heathcliff who is a character synonymous with darkness. He is a tragic figure whose love and hatred brings disasters upon two generations of the two central families around which the whole story is woven.

William Makepeace Thackeray (1811-1863) was the second most prominent novelist after Dickens of that period. His worldview differed from that of Dickens. He focused on the society and human behaviour. His novels are called the novel of ideas. His story developed through his characters. His *Vanity Fair* (1847) is a classic novel. It is an excellent example of a novel where characters display certain nature types. It is akin to Ben Jonson's comedy of humours. His other works are *Pendennis* (1849-1850), *The Book of Snobs*, *The Newcomes* (1855), and *The Virginians* (1859). He also wrote an historical novel called *Henry Esmond* (1852).

Anthony Trollope (1815-1882) was the novelist from the upper class. His focus was on the lives of ruling and the professional class of the then society. His novels were chiefly “an entertainment of an idle hour”. His novels are called *Barsetshire* novels. He focused on the power of money in the society. *Barchester Towers* (1857), *The Warden* (1855), *The Way We Live Now* are a few of his famous novels.

There was a large group of Pre-Raphaelite poets, novelists and artists among John Ruskin's (1819-1900) associates. William Morris (1834-1896) was chief amongst them as a novelist. He was a painter, poet and a writer of fantasy fiction. The *Wood Beyond the World*, and *The Well at the World's End* are among his notable works. He revived the genre of medieval romance.

Another prominent novelist was Wilkie Collins (1824-1889) who revived the tradition of epistolary novel. *The Moonstone* (1868) is the first novel in the detective fiction sub-genre. *The Women in White* is another popular work by him.

George Eliot (1819-1880), the pen name of Mary Anne Evans, was another great novelist during this period who perfected the art of novel writing. She is known for her portrayal of village-life and the simplicity of characters. She is also known for the psychological analysis of her characters. Her novels reveal the pathos of woman. She believed deeply in the law of moral and used it to instruct readers. Her *Mill on the Floss* (1860), *Silas Marner* (1861), *Middlemarch* (1871-72), and *Daniel Deronda* (1876) are very famous novels to this day. Set in provincial England, the works are known for their realism and psychological insight. She was a pioneer novelist who established the genre of ‘literary realism’.

Thomas Hardy (1840-1928) is known for his series of *Wessex* novels and poetry. *Under the Greenwood Tree* (1872), *Far From the Madding Crowd* (1874), *The Return of the Native* (1878), *The Mayor of Casterbridge* (1886), *Tess of the d'Urbervilles* (1891), *Jude the Obscure* (1895) are a few of his best known works. As a realist, setting his works into *Wessex*, an old county, he focused on the society, human relationship, social constraints, and much more. He is an important figure to have introduced classical tragedy into the English novel. He enhanced the dignity of country-side and rural landscapes of England. Nature was an important factor in his works; almost featuring as a universal character looking over other characters as a guardian. Hardy is known for his marvellous tragedies that are gloomy and sombre. While his tragedies are unsurpassed, it is not known that Hardy has written lively, thriving romances and fantasies like *A Pair of Blue Eyes*, *Two on a Tower* and *The Well-Beloved*.

H.G. Wells (1866-1946) wrote his famous *Time Machine* (1895) and many other works during this period thus initiating the sub-form of science fiction. He has been called the father of Science Fiction in English literature. *The War of the Worlds* (1898), *The Invisible Man*, *Tono-Bungay*, *The Shape of Things to Come* (1933), *The Wheels of Chance* (1896), are his other novels from this genre. He concentrated on man and his scientific ability to progress and developed this plot with a little play of irony.

## 20th Century English Fiction (1900-2000)

The Modern Age of English literature was an age of the two great World Wars and the period after that. In this age, there were many new trends in English novel which flourished in this period. Different group of writers influenced by different thoughts or movements associated themselves with novel writing during this period and this brought about a change in the genre. Some prominent novelists of this time period are mentioned below:

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David Herbert Lawrence(1885-1930) was a popular modern novelist. He was influenced by Charles Darwin's philosophy of nature. He was a major influence on his contemporary and succeeding generation of writers. Lawrence wrote against the crippled industrialised society of the early twentieth century that made man mechanical and impotent. He set his novels in harmony with nature and natural urges of mankind. His chief works include *The Rainbow* (1915), *Women In Love* (1920), *The White Peacock* (1910), *Sons and Lovers* (1913), and *The Trespassers*. Lawrence inspired great writers such as T.S. Eliot, F.R. Leavis and E.M. Forster. His *Lady Chatterley's Lover* (1928) was banned initially after its publication initially because of obscene language and frank portrayal of sex. It was later in the twentieth century that Lawrence came to be regarded as the greatest amongst the novelists of the world by the critics.

Virginia Woolf(1882-1941) is one of the most influential feminist writers of the twentieth century. She is known for her daring experiments with the form of novel. She used the "Stream of Consciousness" technique in her novels. "Stream of Consciousness was a phrase used by William James in his *Principles of Psychology* (1890) to describe the unbroken flow of perceptions, thoughts, and feelings in the waking mind; it has since been adopted to describe a narrative method in modern fiction." (A Glossary of Literary Terms, M.H. Abram) It relates to the beginning of the psychological novel which has its example in Richardson's *Pamela* (1740). By the end of the 19th century, Dorothy Richardson applied this narrative technique into her thirteen novel sequence called "*Pilgrimage*". "*Pointed Roofs*" written in 1915 is credited to be the first stream-of-consciousness novel. Following her, Virginia Woolf adopted the same technique with more polish and sophistication in her works. The most notable of Mrs. Woolf's novels are *Mrs. Dalloway* (1925), *To the Lighthouse* (1927), *Orlando* (1928), *The Waves* (1931), *A Room of One's Own* (1929), and *Between the Acts*. Often this technique comes across as an interior monologue of one character.

E.M. Forster(1879-1970) was another famous novelist in this period. He is best known for his well-organised plot and structure. He also uses mystery, irony, and moral instruction as techniques in his novels. Human relationships, cultural invasion, class differences and hypocrisy of people form the major themes in his novels. In his own words, the one principle underlysing all his writings was "*only connect*". His characters are gathered from different societies, countries and classes, and make up a harmonious whole. His approach is humanistic and is tinged with sympathy and positivity. His chief works include *A Passage to India* (1924) which explores a colonised Indian society. In this novel, he focused on Hinduism as a very deep and mystical religion — almost a living enigma. Also, he tried to bring many cultures together with human sympathy that is remarkable for an Englishman. His other works include *Howards End*, and *A Room With A View*.

John Galsworthy (1867-1933), Nobel Laureate, was a very famous novelist and playwright in the last century. His *The Forsyte Saga* (1922) was a trilogy which deals with the theme of eponymous family and connected lives. His *Forsyte Saga* along with his other novels like *A Modern Comedy* (1924-1928) and *A Family Man* dealt with the social problems of the upper middle class. He highlighted man's self-centred, snobbish, acquisitive nature with a humane voice. He is considered one of the first authors who challenged the Victorian values and ideals of English literature. He spoke about the unhappy life of woman in marriage. Through his works he championed various social causes such as prison reform, women's rights, animal welfare, and opposition of censorship. However, he did not highlight the burdens of the lower class in the changing face of society. He was awarded the Nobel Prize for literature in 1932.

Arnold Bennett (1867-1931) was a very famous novelist of his age. His origins were humble and modest and he was kind towards others who had humble beginnings. His most famous works are *Clayhanger* (1910) (a trilogy) and *The Old Wives Tale* (1908). He saw ordinary people as interesting subjects for his stories.

Aldous Huxley (1894-1963) was a political thinker, essayist, and novelist. His works foresee the future of man. Born in a family of scientists, Huxley's novels taught man how to live and deal with the changes in modern society. He hailed the *Bloomsbury group* of English writers. The Bloomsbury group was a set of writers, philosophers and intellectuals who met in Bloomsbury through the twentieth century. Some of its prominent members included E.M. Forster, Virginia Woolf and Lytton Strachey. His works concentrated on the dehumanising effect of our scientific progress. His *Brave New World* (1932) anticipated the development in "reproductive technologies" and "sleep learning" that combined to change society. *Eyeless in Gaza*, *Ends and Means* are his other notable works.

W. Somerset Maugham (1874-1965) was a famous modern novelist, dramatist, short story writer and critic. Maugham was a very keen observer of human nature. His *The Magician* (1907) is a supernatural thriller. *Of Human Bondage* (1915) is an autobiographical novel which was initially criticised. It was eventually recognized as a masterpiece and this was aided by the positive criticism of Theodore Dreiser. Maugham loved discipline and showed in his works that what we inculcate in childhood is a part of us throughout our lives.

Evelyn Waugh (1903-1966) was a prominent novelist of the modern age. He wrote *Decline and Fall*, *Vile Bodies*, *Black Mischief* (1932), *A Handful of Dust* (1934), and *Brideshead Revisited* (1945). His novels satirised "bright young things" of the two decades 1920s and 1930s. But his *Brideshead Revisited* is about theology. He had travelled wide and far in his life and his works reflect this beautifully.

James Joyce (1882-1941) was an Irish novelist and a contemporary of Mrs. Woolf. He experimented with the form of novel throughout his life. He was one of the most influential writers of the modern England. He practised the *Stream-of-Consciousness* technique most vigorously and effectively. He left an immovable imprint on the mind through his works. His major works are *Dubliners* (1914), *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man* (1916), *Ulysses* (1922) and *Finnegans Wake* (1939). He is chiefly considered for his experimental narrative, literary allusions, and free dream associations. He not only explored the world of themes, but also the language, plot, form, technique, everything. He was a thorough artist who lived by the principle *Art for Art's sake*. In all senses, Joyce's only three, but perfect novels, remain as icons of modern literature.

Agatha Christie (1890-1976) was a writer of Crime fiction. She wrote many detective novels. Her works introduced the legendary characters Hercule Poirot and Miss Marple. They were the sleuths in her fiction. She explored mysterious happenings, the typical outcome of modern life, with a deft handling of plot. *Murder on the Orient Express* (1934), *Death on the Nile* (1937), *And then There Were None* (1939) are a few of her notable novels. Dorothy L. Sayers is also a great writer of this genre.

Graham Greene (1904-1991) wrote novels which explored human psyche and reflected human actions related to the psyche. He based his novels in the colonial states of Britain. As a practising Roman Catholic, his novels depicted the theme of sin and guilt. *Brighton Rock*, *The Power and the Glory* (1940), *The End of The Affair* are a

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few of his Catholic novels. The *Confidential Clerk*, *The Third Man*, *The Quiet American*, *Our Man in Havana* and *The Human Factor* are a few of his novels related to international politics and espionage. Crime was a major theme in Greene's works. He portrayed the modern world most minutely with its complexities. He was one of the most prolific writers of the post-modern era.

Born to Polish parents, Joseph Conrad (1857-1924) was a very prominent English novelist. For a major part of his life, he worked with the British Merchant Marine and remained at sea. His novels are set either in sea or on a sea port. His novels have the British colonial States as a background. Using the point-of-view technique, he explored the human psyche in his works. *Victory*, *Lord Jim*(1900), *The Secret Agent*, *An Outcast of the Islands*, *Heart of Darkness*(1902), and *Nostromo* are some of his notable novels.

William Golding(1911-1993) received the Nobel Prize for literature for his *Lord of the Flies* (1954). In this novel, he explored the psychology of man. He said that the obstinate, cruel and sinning nature of man is inborn. His another famous novel is *Pincher Martin*(1956). Golding came across as being a realist and innovator in his works.

### 3.2.3 Literature in the Victorian Age

There are two distinct generations of novelists in the Victorian period. The early Victorian novelists comprised of William Thackeray, Charles Dickens, Trollope, Disraeli, and Mrs. Gaskell. One of the prominent features common to these novelists was their shared concern with 'the Condition of England Question', as proposed by Thomas Carlyle. They chose for their themes the specific contemporary problems of the society caused by industrialization and utilitarianism, keeping true with the spirit of the age, which was realism. The Victorian novel not only gave expression to the crucial problem of the time, but also adapted itself to the material realities of the era. Despite the Victorian Age producing two great poets in Tennyson and Browning, the age is also remarkable for the excellence of its prose.

A significant shift in the English novel during the Victorian era was the change of its emphasis from action to character. The neo-classical concept of novel as 'comic-epic in prose' gave central emphasis to action whereas the early Victorians gave primacy to character, which is why the novel with Dickens and Thackeray become panoramic than picturesque. Incidents were used not only to expose the character, but also to probe deeper into them. As a principle of their realism, they focused on the mundane affairs and social activities.

Another significant change in the later Victorian novel, was its shift from life in the city to country life. These novels introduced new ethics and human relation inspired by the Darwinian concepts of 'struggle for distance' and 'survival of the fittest'. These new ideas made the novelists look at human society from a new perspective. Thus, the city novels of Dickens and Thackeray were replaced by the provincial novels of George Eliot and Hardy.

Culturally, the novel continued to thrive through this time. It is important to note that this era could easily be compared to the importance of the plays of Shakespeare for the Elizabethans. Some of the great novelists of the time were, Sir Walter Scott, Emily, Anne, and Charlotte Bronte, Anthony Trollope, George Eliot, Oscar Wilde, and, of course, Charles Dickens. That is not to say that poetry did not thrive - it did with the works of the Browning, Alfred, Lord Tennyson, the verse of Lewis Carroll and Rudyard Kipling.

Tennyson had been publishing poetry since 1827, his first poems appearing almost simultaneously with the last work of Byron, Shelley, and Keats, but it was not until 1842, with the publication of his collected poems, in two volumes, that England recognized in him one of her greatest literary leaders. Elizabeth Barrett had been writing since 1820, but not till twenty years later did her poems become deservedly popular. Browning had published his *Pauline* in 1833, but it was only until 1846, when he published the last of the series called *Bells and Pomegranates*, that the reading public began to appreciate his power and originality. Moreover, even as romanticism seemed passing away, a group of great prose writers—Dickens, Thackeray, Carlyle, and Ruskin—had already begun to proclaim the literary glory of a new age, which now seems to rank only just below the Elizabethan and the Romantic periods.

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### 3.2.4 Background on Charles Dickens

...in the most memorable, engaging and complex realisation of London and the Londoner ever to get into print, Dickens endowed his contemporaries and their successors with an insatiable appetite for exploring his London.

—Jerry White, *London in the Nineteenth Century*

History bears testimony to the fact that very rarely does a writer emerge whose musings in literature enunciate contemporary life in ways his peers cannot match. One such scribe of the Victorian Age was Charles Dickens. Not only was Dickens immensely popular during his lifetime, but also remains seemingly unparalleled even centuries later as his stories, essays and letters bring Victorian London lifestyle to life like none other.

Dickens was the most popular writer of his age and his works appealed to both the masses and the classes alike. This along with technological advancements in the field of publishing enabled him to quickly become a world renowned author. Dickens was much more than a great entertainer. His works vividly depicted the range, compassion, and intelligence of his apprehension of his society and its shortcomings enriched his novels and made him both one of the great forces in 19th century literature and an influential spokesman of the conscience of his age.

Dickens' own story is one of rags to riches. Charles John Huffam Dickens was born to John and Elizabeth Dickens on 7 February 1812, in Portsmouth, England. He was the second amongst eight siblings and spent his early years as part of a lower middle-class yet comfortable family in Kent. His parents had taught him to read and write and as a young boy his father, John, encouraged him to tell stories to his co-workers.

Dickens' mother had been in the service of Lord Crew while his father John was employed as a clerk at the Naval Pay Office. While Charles was only a little kid, his father was imprisoned for debt fraud. At the age of twelve, he had to work at a blacking warehouse run by one of the relatives on his mother's side. This was Charles Dickens' tryst with hard times and poverty which affected him deeply. His hardships are accounted for in his semi-autobiographical piece called *David Copperfield*. His concern for reformation and social justice that emerged in his later writings stemmed from his harsh experiences working at the warehouse.

As a young lad, Charles was introduced to several artistic and literary works that helped grow his own writing and creative faculties. He was highly influenced by the tales his nursemaid used to amuse him with and also the many visits to the theatre. Furthermore, he loved reading and among his favourites were the likes of *Don Quixote*

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by Miguel de Cervantes, *Tom Jones* by Henry Fielding, and *Arabian Nights*, all of which were picaresque novels comprising of a bunch of lightly connected adventures. This form undoubtedly had a profound impact on his future writings.

Post his father's release from prison, Dickens left his blacking job at the warehouse and continued his education at the Wellington House Academy. Despite having limited formal education, Dickens launched himself in the field of journalism after skilling himself in the art of shorthand. His journalistic career was launched at the age of sixteen when he got the job of a court reporter and further became a staff on *A Mirror of Parliament* which was a newspaper specializing in Parliamentary decisions. Dickens was a voracious reader and he continued this habit even during his journalistic days, especially spending hours at the British Library along with trying his hand at acting and stage-managing amateur theatricals. His theatrical works reflected in the characters he created in his writings often describing himself as the character in prose in his novels.

The 19th century was a time of turmoil and great social upheavals. A young Dickens ostensibly became disenchanted with politics and developed keen interest in social reforms and began contributing to the radical newspaper, *True Sun*. Although his primary arena of work remained fictional novels, he continued working as a journalist until the end of his life editing publications such as *The Daily News*, *Household Words* and *All the Year Round*. Dickens' association as a political journalist with several newspapers and magazines gave him the chance to begin publishing his own fictional works at the start of his career. Throughout his career, Dickens wrote a total of fifteen novels and the last one *The Mystery of Edwin Drood* remained unfinished at the time of his death on 9 June 1870.

Even though several of his works were published in magazines, he tasted true success with the serial publication of the *Pickwick Papers* from 1836-1837. This was a publishing phenomenon and was published in a monthly instalment and sold over one hundred forty thousand copies of each issue. Dickens is also credited with being the first novelist to profitably serialize his novels, one that appealed to even those audiences who normally would not afford such literary works. Within a few years of this, Dickens came to be known as one of the most successful novelists of his time with almost a tenth of the population in Victorian England closely following and reading his literary works.

Dickens married Catherine Hogarth in the year 1836. She was the daughter of a work colleague at the newspaper. The two had ten children over a span of twenty-two years before separating in 1858. Interestingly, Charles was very attached with Catherine's younger sister, Mary, who lived with them until her death at the age of seventeen. Her demise left him highly traumatized. Mary is believed to be the inspiration of many angelic heroines in his novels including *Little Nell* and *Florence Dombey*.

Dickens' empathetic understanding of the lower class London and his comic genius are vividly depicted in monthly instalments like *Oliver Twist* and *Nicholas Nickleby*. One of his most famous works *A Christmas Carol* was published in the year 1843. This work encapsulates his disenchantment with the world's economic drives. This is where he blames much of society's ills on people's obsession with earning money and acquiring status based on money.

In the 1840s, Dickens had had the opportunity to travel to America and Europe and this marked the beginning of a new phase in his life when his creations became more serious and bigger. *David Copperfield* (1849-1850) vividly depicts the harsh and rigidly stratified world which Dickens experienced as a young boy. Dickens used his



own weekly periodicals to publish some of his most popular novels, namely *A Tale of Two Cities* and *Great Expectations*, in his own weekly periodicals.

Dickens was inspired to write a novel set during the French Revolution owing to his annual ritualistic habit of reading Thomas Carlyle's book *The French Revolution* (1839). Dickens' acting stint in Wilkie Collins' 1857 play *The Frozen Deep* depicted his personal experience as a self-sacrificing lover during the times of great social changes. A year later, Dickens experienced his own form of social change while writing *A Tale of Two Cities*. Dickens had split with Catherine, his wife of twenty-two years and he also reenergised his career by planning a new literary journal by the name of *All the Year Round*. The following year in 1859, *A Tale of Two Cities* debuted in the form of a series in his own journal, *All the Year Round*. The popularity of this novel stemmed from not only its author's popularity but also for the fact of its short length and radical subject matter.

Dickens also collaborated with his friend novelist Wilkie Collins for theatrical productions and in the year 1857, whilst interviewing actresses for a play Dickens and Collins had co-written, Dickens met Ellen Ternan and fell in love with her despite their huge age gap of twenty-seven years. Dickens was a 45-year-old married man at that time. This meeting with Ellen proved to be the final nail in the coffin for Dickens' already troubled marriage with Catherine and he finally split with her in 1858. Whilst his relationship with Ellen was kept inconspicuous, they often travelled together and Dickens supported her with finances until his death.

Dickens' health started failing him in the 1860s. A couple of years before this started, on account of his escalating fame, Dickens had begun public reading of his works. The exertion of these sessions took a toll on his physical health. Dickens began an extremely profitable but a physically shattering series of readings in America in 1867-78 which aggravated his health issues to the level that he collapsed during a 'farewell' series in England.

Charles Dickens died on 9 June 1870 and his body lies buried in Poet's Corner in Westminster Abbey. Though he left *The Mystery of Edwin Drood* unfinished, he had already written fifteen substantial novels and countless shorter pieces. His legacy is clear. In a whimsical and unique fashion, Dickens pointed out the society's flaws in terms of its blinding greed for money and its neglect of the lower classes of society. Through his books, we come to understand the virtues of a loving heart and the pleasures of home in a flawed, cruelly indifferent world. Among English writers, in terms of his fame and of the public's recognition of his characters and stories, many consider him second only to William Shakespeare.

### 3.2.5 Dickens' Style of Writing

Now that we have learned about the life history of Dickens, let us have a look at his style of writing.

#### Dickens the Novelist: A Criticism

Charles Dickens is the most prolific and the most representative of the Victorian novelists. Despite the fact that Dickens may lack George Eliot's profundity, or the consuming passion espoused by Charlotte Brontë and Emily Brontë in their works or the peculiar éclat of Thackeray, yet, we may contend Charles Dickens to be the greatest as he exceeds all of his contemporaries by way of his elemental humanity, almost childlike naiveté and an amazingly prolific imagination.

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These qualities of Dickens propel him to the forefront of all English novelists. Dickens has achieved recognition as a writer from all quarters of society. The famous 19th century Lord and Chief Justice Campbell had remarked that he would have been prouder of having written *Pickwick Papers* than of all the honours he had earned at the Bar. Obviously Dickens' fame spread far and wide and his fame spread across Europe and also across to the Americas. While in the US, Dickens received a hero's welcome everywhere, with youngsters festooning him as if he were Santa Claus. Such was Dickens' fame that upon his death a newspaper in Italy carried the headline 'Our Charles Dickens is Dead.' There is no doubt that Dickens belonged to not just England but the entire world. He is one of those writers who will be read as long as books are read. This statement is based on the fact that Dickens' reputation and popularity as a novelist has reigned supreme even after his death in 1870, while several novelists' reputations have been made and marred.

### Social Reform and Dickens' Works

One must understand this fact and bear in mind that Dickens' literary art is art with a purpose. In the Victorian era of 19th century England, poetry was deemed the handmaiden of many social reforms as numerous writers took to this aesthetic department of literature for the said purpose of bringing about societal reforms. Lord Alfred Tennyson's is a typical case. The Pre-Raphaelites and others were not the typical Victorians as they were representative of revolt rather than tradition. Dickens was different in that he did not figuratively lock himself up in an ivory tower, the kinds that lovers and proponents of aesthetic culture and Gothicism do. Rather, in the novels of Dickens from the beginning till the end, he strikes a note of humanitarianism which happens to be the most profound and sonorous note of the Dickensian orchestra. Dickens has also been referred to as one of the greatest reformers of his time. For example, through the character of the narrator protagonist Pip in *Great Expectations*, Dickens elucidates how education and morality help break the old and rigid social norms of 19th century England and how one can be upwardly mobile and break the mould of the vicious cycle of inherited roles.

Dickens' seriousness is absolutely unquestionable as he does not engage in throwing tantrums or slide into quagmire of cynicism of which works of such eminent authors as John Ruskin is not wholly innocent. Dickens' novels are built around social themes. For example, his work *Bleak House* is an attack on the 'law's delays'; *Nicholas Nickleby*, the abuses of charity schools and the sadism of school-masters; *Hard Times*, the pet concepts of the then current 'political economy' which was also attacked by Ruskin and Carlyle; *Little Dornit*, the inhumanities to which poor debtors are often subjected; and so forth. But above all such social criticism is the basic lesson of humanness and charity which almost all Dickens' novels teach implicitly or explicitly. Besides these there is Dickens' ebullience and convivialism which is considered the ultimate word on the philosophical examination of human life and the entire world accepts his works because of its essential unrivalled humour and bubbling humanity. There is a common opinion about Dickens which goes: 'Despite its many evils—the Hardness of heart and—the selfishness of those in high places—the greed and hypocrisy which were so prevalent—the wicked class prejudices which divided man from man—the world was still for Dickens a very good world to live in.' In none of his works has Dickens ever mentioned that 'all is right with the world' and nowhere does he say '*all is wrong with the world.*' Dickens is a practical realist and no less an optimist.

The richness of Dickens' creative genius is absolutely unmatched. His genius at characterization is seen right from his very first novel. *Pickwick Papers* is seen teeming with neatly described characters and he continues this tradition of fine characterization across all his novels. What is unique about Dickens' works is that when all of them are joined together as one, creating a world of their own, we realize that it is somewhat different from our own world and even the world of his day and yet very similar to both the worlds in many ways. One may be unable to talk about the novels of Thackeray or George Eliot as they lack the recognizable contours and peculiarities of Dickens' novels and also because Dickens' novels are replete with amazing characters whom the readers know better than some of their own uncles or aunts. Pick out any of Dickens' characters from any of his novels and one will be astounded that that character is every bit a denizen of Dickens' world and difficult to identify with any one novel as such but we may certainly identify that character with the world he or she belongs to. Dickens depicts the life of his times in his novels like a painter depicts his world around him on a canvas and just like the painter uses colours too bright and colourful to be compatible with reality, Dickens too creates characters that are too extravagant and ahead of their times. Thus, Dickens is often charged with giving us caricatures and not characters. There may be some truth in this allegation but not all of his characters are caricatures. Renowned late 19th century and early 20th century writer Arthur Compton-Rickett segregates the characters from Dickens' novels as follows:

1. The Normal – Satirical Portraits
2. The Abnormal – The Villains
3. Special purpose characters – The Grotesques

The so called normal characters do not really symbolize 'normal' reality nor are they fundamentally unrealistic. Very interestingly Dickens seems to be more successful with the abnormal characters than with the normal ones. Evidently dullness and normality of 'normal' characters does not quite attract or impress Dickens.

Dickens very effectively portrays characters from the middle and lower classes of the society for the simple reason that Dickens himself had experienced their life as a child and during early adulthood. Hence, he relates and recreates them so well. This quality remained with him, as though in his blood, even after he had tasted success as a fiction writer and had made his riches. Dickens is less successful in depicting the aristocracy as they lacked the poignancy of the lower classes. According to critics, there are certain types of characters who make regular appearances in Dickens' novels. They are as given under:

- (a) 'The innocent little child, like Oliver, Joe, Paul, Tiny Tim, and little Nell, appealing powerfully to the child love in every human heart.'
- (b) 'The horrible or grotesque foil, like Squeer, Fagin, Quilp, Uriah Heep, and Bill Sykes.'
- (c) 'The grandiloquent or broadly humorous fellow, the fun master, like Micawber and Sam Walter.'
- (d) 'A tenderly or powerfully drawn figure like Lady Dedlock of Bleak House, and Sydney Carton of *A Tale of Two Cities*, which rise to the dignity of true characters.'

If putting to test the characters of Dickens based on E. M. Forster's 'flat' and 'rotund' distinction, we find that all of Dickens' characters are 'flat' and not 'rotund.' A

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Dickensian character is built around a single quality and like a Jonsonian 'humour' is seemingly incapable of surprising the readers convincingly. So it may be argued that Dickens' characters neither surprise nor do they develop. But, Dickens' characters, being the outpourings of an enormously creative mind, are 'living' beings and as such make up for their eccentricities and a lack of development.

### Dickens' Plot Construction

Dickens had only modest success on the structural aspects of his literary art as many of his works seem to mock that supposedly ideal of structure or even other principle of pattern. Dickens was able to create coherent plots only in his later novels including *Bleak House*, *A Tale of Two Cities*, and *Our Mutual Friend*. The rest of Dickens' works show complete negligence towards all artistic principles of structure and form as Dickens is keen to showcase separate incidents and separate characters than showcase integration of a well-proportioned pattern. It is further observed that Dickens, in several of his characters fails to depict any structural function, but, they are all so life like that we as readers wish them to be there despite the egregious structural irrelevance. Some mentionable characters in this category are Mr. Micawber, Mrs. Gamp, Mr. Crummels and Flora Pinching.

Dickens may be said to be a traditionalist novelist as he accepts and adopts the formal pattern of the novella handed down to him by the likes of Fielding, Richardson and Smollett—Dickens' boyhood loves. In some novels Dickens showcases the life and career of a character from childhood to adulthood often involving his handling transitions as veritable as life itself. To impose even a passable unity on the sprawling episodes representing these vicissitudes is definitely beyond him.

Structural unity in many of Dickens' novels is weak due to the mode of their original publication... as they were published in newspapers in the form of a series. It is common knowledge that the serial mode of publication requires the author to be very disciplined which may often be detrimental to the structural integrity and pattern of the novel so published. Owing to a week to week or fortnight to fortnight or even a month to month pattern of publication the author churns out his creativeness sans the clarity as to where he's headed. Often the authors receive fan-mails asking the author to make the characters' act as they want them to and to oblige the fans, an author often tends to add a 'kick' in their next episodic publication to please the fans. Thus, between instalments of publications the original organic plot loses intensity. Hence, most of Dickens' novels are poorly structured. David Cecil comments: 'Very often he leaves a great many threads loose till the last chapter; and then finds there is not enough time to tie them up neatly. The main strands are knotted roughly together the minor wisps are left hanging forlornly.'

### Dickens' Humour

The moment one comes across Dickens' brand of humour, one immediately excuses his architectonic lacking, as humour is nothing less than the very soul of Dickens' works. The readers of Dickens' works never get bored as sometimes do readers of Thackeray and not so often the readers of George Eliot. Dickens' humour stems from humane sympathy and is quite uplifting. So much so that critics compare him to some of the greatest humourists who came before him, namely, Fielding, Chaucer and Shakespeare. Dickens' humour continually exudes qualities of tolerance, geniality and charity despite being satirical and corrective in nature. For him, humour is a 'philosophy of life', not just

an occasional mood or viewpoint. There is a reference to Dickens' 'world' and this world is inhabited by with a large number of humorous characters owing to his amazing comic fertility. Humour of character is something that Dickens is a master of. Even though readers may come across an occasional Falstaffs in his novels, his 'comic fecundity' is greater than Shakespeare's.

Another important facet of Dickens' humour is its lack of subtlety. As a humourist he falls short of attaining the levels of Thackeray or Fielding. The latter was often viewed as farcical and coarse like Dickens and at times he even beat him. Nonetheless, that perceptiveness of continued ironical attitude found in Jonathan Wilde lies clearly outside the competence of Dickens. Dickens' humour is shallow instead of being profound and often farcical and even caricaturish in nature. Dickens' comic timing can be likened to that of a circus buffoon who continually reiterates a particular note which seems comical and this repetitiveness results in uproarious laughter after the third reiteration. For example, Mr. Micawber always waiting for something to 'turn up', Barkis who is always 'willing', Mrs. Gummidge always complaining that things are going contrary with her—all are abundantly comic figures; but they lack any subtle or profound touch.

### **Dickens' Pathos**

Despite the criticism of Dickens' humour, the pathos in his tone helps it rise above being only a superficial and flashy affair. Dickens' laughter is never removed from tears just as Lamb's. It will probably be biased to say that he is completely superficial, although superbly superficial and ignorant of the tragic facets of life. Dickens views life as a tragi-comedy and despite being aware of the tragedy, he laughs continually because his attitude is healthy and unblemished by morbidity. In novels such as *Hard Times*, he displays and exhibits an astoundingly deep knowledge and concern for the times during the Industrial Revolution era in England. And his adroit treatment of these issues of the time in *Hard Times* is far from frivolous.

There were quite a few influencers who moved Dickens. These included Goldsmith, Sterne, Fielding and Smollet. One can feel Sterne's sentimentalism and rather oversensitive human understanding as also Goldsmith's saccharinity and compassion often make themselves felt in Dickens' work. *Pickwick Papers* is a great example of Dickens' attempt at the description of pathos at the death of Chancery prisoners. He excels at describing the pathos of child life because as a child he himself had experienced much suffering and such accounts of his characters' life are always suggestive of his own personal sufferings. *Little Dorrit*, *Great Expectations*, *David Copperfield*, and many more novels are rich in pathetic accounts of the lives of their heroes during childhood. What is more, the mingling of the pathetic with humour, creates quite unique results.

### **Dickens' Autobiographic Touches**

Another unique aspect of Charles Dickens' art as a fiction writer is his propensity to be autobiographical as he continually draws from his own personal experiences and the resultant sympathies and antipathies are quite obstinately manifested by him in his works. These incidentally have their origins in Dickens' own adolescent years. As such, several of Dickens' works are accounts of his own life which have been cleverly modified by subjecting to the canons of art. *David Copperfield*, for one, is Dickens' autobiography in essence and *Oliver Twist* depicts many of his personal experiences of London's low life in his tender early years. His personal knowledge of law courts and legal affairs are manifest in *Bleak House* and in *Nicholas Nickleby*, Dickens reminisces his own school days and so on and so forth.

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In conclusion, it can be said that despite the numerous flaws and possible limitations which afflict Dickens' art as a novelist, he nonetheless stands among the greatest novelists. His depiction of basic sympathy, humour, pathos and his vibrant vitalising imagination are his most crucial basic assets, even though he is lacking in the architectural skill as well as other formal and 'technical' qualifications as a novelist. He may be coarse and superficial, but we must remember that he is never a bore.

### 3.3 *GREAT EXPECTATIONS'* PLOT AND OVERVIEW

We will begin this section by first giving an overview of the novel and then proceed to discuss the plot part by part.

#### 3.3.1 *Great Expectations: An Overview*

Charles Dickens' writings often mirror his own life experiences and *Great Expectations* forms one mirrored aspect of his own early life and this besides his *David Copperfield* is, in fact, his most autobiographical novel.

Set in early Victorian England, *Great Expectations* captures the massive societal changes that were sweeping England during the period. The social landscape had been transformed in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, due to Industrial Revolution. This was a time when capitalists and manufacturers of goods had amassed large fortunes.

The Industrial Revolution of the late 18th and early 19th centuries had changed the social landscape, helping manufacturers and capitalists to garner copious fortunes. Although social class was no longer entirely dependent on the circumstances of one's birth, the divisions between rich and poor remained nearly as wide as ever. London, a crawling mass of humanity, lit by gas lamps at night and darkened by black clouds from smokestacks during the day, formed a sharp contrast with the nation's sparsely populated rural areas. There was a significant rise in the number of people who were now shifting from countryside to the city looking for better opportunities of work. At this time in England, there could be observed very strict and conservative mannersims in the people from the upper class nationwide. It was expected that every gentleman and lady have a thorough knowledge of classical subjects. It was expected that they displayed very cultured and appropriate behaviour in every social situation.

The aforementioned conditions find themselves appropriately mentioned in every facet of Dickens' *Great Expectations*. Observe that Pip's immediate change in the social situation from that of a labourer from the countryside to a gentleman of the city swerves him from one extreme social situation to another. This is extremely important from the strict societal setting of the Victorian England. Ironically, even this novel was written by Dickens to meet his economic needs. *All the Year Round*, Dicken's magazine, had become very popular especially because of the success and popularity of works in serial form like Dickens' own *A Tale of Two Cities* and *The Woman in White* by Wilkie Collins. But after the publishing of *A Day's Ride* by Charles Lever, the magazine had experienced a lull in popularity. It is known that Dickens' *Great Expectations* was created to elevate the magazine to its former glory. And today, after more than a century and half, the book is still very popular.

On analysing the form under which *Great Expectations* operates, it is easy to observe that it very easily represents the 19th century popular fiction: **Bildungsroman**.

#### Check Your Progress

1. Name the semi-autobiographical novel written by Charles Dickens.
2. Name the two works in which Dickens presents his empathetic understanding of the lower class London and his comedic genius.
3. Sum up Dickens' style and perspective on showcasing social reform in his works using a single sentence.
4. Who were the authors who influenced Dickens and his works?

This is a form of novel in which the protagonist's personal transformation and growth is depicted through the tracing of the life history from boyhood to manhood, which in the case of *Great Expectations* is reflected through Pip. The genre gained popularity through Goethe's work *Wilhelm Meister* (1794-1796). Further, works such as *Robinson Crusoe* by Daniel Defoe, *Jane Eyre* by Charlotte Bronte and *David Copperfield* by Charles Dickens himself continues and cemented the bildungsroman tradition. All of these works follow the style of representing and externalizing the maturation and self-discovery of the characters from their childhood to their adulthood.

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In *Great Expectations*, there are characters from various different social standing, which allows the readers to get varied perception towards money in the Victorian era. For example, the upperclass is represented by Miss Havisham and Estella; the middle class by Herbert Pocket; the peasant class by Joe and Mrs. Joe and Magwitch who is shown as a criminal. It is important to note that despite the distinct classes to which the characters belong, they are all at their current position in the social ladder on the virtue of their hard work. Interesting to note is another fact that Dickens has not incorporated characters from the aristocratic and nobility as he was more interested in depicting the manner in which social classes and commerce interacted with each other rather than showcasing a social class who had only inherited money. The focus on money and fortune is very prominent in this novel. For instance, in Pip's opinion acquisition of money is the cure of all his problems; he is visibly engaged in observing the class and status of people around him throughout the novel. When he grows up in the novel, the most important lesson he learns is that personal worth is not measured with money but through the possession of qualities like kindness, responsibility and integrity.

When Pip becomes unwell, he gets the chance to mend his relationship with Joe. On his recovery to good health, Pip takes the decision to work in mercantile trade abroad with Herbert. Later, when he comes back to the Satis house when several years have passed, he meets Estella, who is widowed now. There is a change in Estella's nature, where sad kindness has found a place over cruelty and coldness that was hardcoded into her while she was growing up. In the end, Pip and Estella are seen exiting the garden hand-in-hand implying that they will never part again.

### 3.3.2 Plot Summary

This section describes the plot summary of the novel.

#### Part I

Pip is an orphan who lives with his sister and her husband, the village blacksmith, Joe Gargery, on the marshes of Kent near London. One night while looking around in the churchyard near the tombs of his parents, Pip the protagonist, is accosted by an escaped convict, Magwitch, who coerces him into bringing him food and a file to saw off the prisoner's shackles on his legs. The convict has a profound effect on Pip to the extent that he returns with the food and file only to discover that there's a second escaped convict who is an enemy of Magwitch. However, both are arrested once again whilst they are fighting.

Pip has a very pompous uncle, Pumblechook, who arranges for him to go to Satis House, the home of a wealthy woman Miss Havisham, so that he could play with and entertain Estella, her adopted daughter. Satis House is a nightmarish place and the lady of the house Miss Havisham who's an elderly woman and is wheelchair bound, still wears her old wedding gown to this day even though she was jilted by her fiancé on their

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wedding day. Since that day on, the house has been left as it is so much so that the wedding cake could be soon placed on the table.

Estella is high headed, cold and rude to Pip. Hinting at his lower social status, she tells him how coarse and common he is. However, Pip is immediately attracted towards Estella whom he sees as the epitome of class and sophistication, this despite his ill treatment at the hands of Miss Havisham and Estella herself. Although Pip gets ill-treated at the hands of Estella and Miss Havisham, he continues to go to Satis House to play with Estella and to wheel Miss Havisham around. In the course of his visits, Pip also meets Estella's and Miss Havisham's toady relatives who are only after their money and hate Pip. One day when Pip beats up one of the relatives, he earns a kiss from Estella for doing so. In order to win her affections further, Pip works harder with his friend Biddy at night school which is run by Biddy's grandmother.

A few months go by when Miss Havisham pays for Pip's blacksmithing apprenticeship with Joe. This was something which Pip had looked forward to for years, but being familiar with Satis House and its occupants and guests, he is now familiar with 'genteel' life and detests the idea of working at the forge. But, he struggles on with this job without letting Joe know about his true feelings.

Pip continues to visit Miss Havisham on his birthday and on one of these occasions, his leaving work early instigates a fistfight between Joe and Joe's assistant, Dolge Orlick. Orlick resents Pip and hates Pip's abusive sister. On his way home from that visit, Pip finds out his sister was almost murdered and is now mentally crippled. Biddy comes to live with them to help out. Pip is attracted to her even though she is not educated and polished like Estella.

One evening, a lawyer from London by the name of Mr Jaggers visits Pip and Joe and informs him that he is the beneficiary of a big fortune and must travel to London. Pip assumes that his secret benefactor is none other than Miss Havisham who wishes to prepare him and make him worthy of Estella.

Pip is given a new set of clothes and is astonished as to how differently he is treated with new clothes on. Right from Mr Trabb, the tailor to Uncle Pumblechook, all treated him differently. When the tailor's shop boy was reprimanded for not treating Pip with respect, he realises how money changes peoples' perception about individuals. Pip speaks with Biddy to improve Joe. He accuses Biddy of being jealous of his newfound wealth and tells her there is no need of improving Joe. By the end of that week Pip was off to London on his way to becoming a rich gentleman.

**Part II**

Jaggers meets Pip in London along with his clerk Mr Wemmick who takes Pip to the apartment of one Herbert Pocket. Pip recognises Herbert Pocket as the pale young gentleman whom he had fought at Miss Havisham's Satis House. Here Pip is supposed to study to become a gentleman under the guidance of Herbert's father Mr. Matthew Pocket. It is here that Herbert and Pip become good friends burying their past differences and Herbert even nicknames Pip as Handel. Besides Herbert, Pip gets to spend time with the Pocket family too. There are two other 'gentlemen students' Startop and Bentley Drummle living at the Pocket family household. But, Drummle and Pip do not get along well especially later on when Pip sees that Drummle gets romantically involved with Estella.

When Joe visits Pip in London with a message from Miss Havisham, he is embarrassed by his very presence there and cannot wait for Joe to leave. When Pip



returns to Kent to meet Miss Havisham, he avoids going to Joe's forge. He is informed by Miss Havisham that he is to accompany Estella to London where she's supposed to stay with a high society woman. This convinces Pip that this is being done because finally Miss Havisham intends Estella for him. While in London, Pip spends his time paying visits to Estella and spending excessive amounts of money with Herbert and also joined the Finches, a group of useless rich spoilt brats. He also befriends Wemmick, Jaggers' clerk, only to discover that the otherwise still legal clerk has a softer side too.

Pip becomes aware of his role in financially becoming a burden of Herbert and to correct his mistakes, he takes Wemmick's help. Pip sets a job for Herbert secretly with Clarriker, a merchant of Wemmick's acquaintance.

It is at this time, that Pip's sister dies. On his return for her funeral, Pip is regretful about his stranding Joe and Biddy. In an effort to improve their relations, Pip makes a promise of calling on them more often than before, but Biddy is not convinced, which angers Pip.

In London, things take a dramatic turn when on a stormy evening, Pip is visited by a tattered stranger who Pip knows for sure is the convict he accidentally met many years ago in the marshes. He discovers that the stranger's name is Magwitch and he was sentenced to live in Australia and never land himself in England, for he was given death penalty. In Australia, Magwitch had made a fortune for himself, but risked it all to return to England, to let Pip know that he is the one fulfilling Pip's expectations. Magwitch, who is consumed on the happiness on meeting his 'gentleman', fails to notice that Pip is disgusted and broken on learning this truth. Pip is slowly coming to grips with the realization that Miss Havisham is in fact not grooming him to be Estella's betrothed and the fact that since the money is actually being sourced from a convict is declining his chances greatly of ever having Estella. Further, he realizes that it was for a convict's money that left Joe and moved ahead in life.

### Part III

Magwitch was in England to hand over his entire inheritance as a kind of gratitude to Pip for helping him in the marshes several years ago. He also informs Pip about another convict who was with him, Compeyson. Pip discovers that Compeyson is none other than the man who had toyed with and finally betrayed Miss Havisham. Pip takes a decision of not accepting Magwitch's money any more, but feels that he is the one responsible for the risk the man has taken, and it is upon him to ensure his safety and so he decides to make sure that Magwitch safely moves out of the country.

Another significant blow to Pip's heart comes on his learning that Estella is now promised to be married to Bentley Drummle. He approaches Estella along with Miss Havisham to plead her to not go through with the marriage. He further, expresses his intense love for her, which is incomprehensible to Estella. Pip tells Estella that he would be content if she marries anyone but Drummle. During this discussion, Estella and Miss Havisham get in a heated exchange which reveals that Estella is incapable of any love, even towards Miss Havisham. It is at this time, that Miss Havisham comes to grip with the reality of the mess she has made of Estella and is devastated.

On his return from London, Wemmick informs Pip that the other convict Compeyson is actually keeping a tab on Magwitch. In response to this, Herbert and Pip first hide Magwitch and then hatch a plan for his safe escape. In the meantime, Pip receives an anonymous note asking him to come to the marshes for someone has important

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information related to Magwitch. Before acting on the letter and going to the marshes, Pip goes home and meets Miss Havisham. She is deeply regretful and apologises to Pip, she also consents to contribute towards Herbert Pocket's new venture. When Pip while leaving, comes back to see that Miss Havisham's dress is somehow on fire. He rescues her, but she becomes extremely unwell following this incident. When Pip goes to the marshes, he is apprehended by Orlick who has all the intention of murdering him. Herbert and Startop, who followed him back from London, come as rescue. They both were directed towards the marshes by the shop boy from Trabb's.

When the part comes back to London to give light to the Magwitch escape plan, they are stopped by the authorities who were tipped off by Compeyson. When all this happens, Compeyson and Magwitch get into a scuffle and they both fall into the river. While Compeyson is unable to survive in the water and drowns, Magwitch gets injured, captured by the authorities and sentenced to death.

Pip now learns that it is actually Magwitch who is the father of Estella. Until Magwitch dies in prison, Pip takes it upon himself to pay visits and take care of him. Later, Pip goes to Wemmick's wedding. Further, he himself gets arrested on account of failure to pay off the debts.

It is Joe now who comes to Pip's side to nurse him back to good health and inform him that Miss Havisham has died away. He also tells him that Miss Havisham has left her inheritance to Mr. Matthew Pocket. Joe then pays all of Pip's debt and returns to his forge. Pip too returns home to save his relations with Joe and intentions of marrying Biddy. But when he arrives home, he sees the celebration of Joe's marriage to Biddy. A little while later, Pip departs to Cairo for eleven years, to work with Herbert in his business. On his return, he pays visit to Joe, Biddy and their son, little Pip. He then meets Estella who he learns is a widow now after years of abusive marriage to Drummle. In the end, Estella and Pip part, but it is implied that now they will be with each other.

### 3.4 CHARACTER ANALYSIS

In this section, we will analyse the major characters in Dickens' *Great Expectation*.

#### 3.4.1 Pip, the Narrator of Dickens' *Great Expectations*

Dickens' *Great Expectation* is the story of Pip, the orphan, who's bent on his mission for maturation. It is a Bildungsroman in which the protagonist Pip narrates his own life's story in retrospect starting from childhood through adolescence to adulthood. As the protagonist relives his life's story as a child and tells it to us as a grown up adult, there are two Pips in the novel. There's the one whose actions make up the novel's main plot, and there's the other whose thoughts and attitudes shape the reader's perception of the story. As Pip's story progresses in retrospect, and he has attained his desired level of learning about life as it were and Pip grows up into the man who narrates the story, thus, effecting the Bildungsroman.

What is unique about *Great Expectations* is that it is divided into three parts which mark the three stages of Pip's attainment of his expectations. According to Dr Nicola Bradbury of the University of Reading, each part consists of nineteen chapters which describes Pip's life as a child, as a youth and his life as a mature man. Dickens chooses a very thought provoking name for the novel and impels readers to wonder what these great expectations are. In fact, the irony in the very title is quite suggestive of

#### Check Your Progress

5. Define bildungsroman.
6. Which character represents the middle class in *Great Expectations*?
7. What does Pip do to help out Herbert when he realizes that he is being a burden on him financially?

the triviality of Pip's life which concerns the enigmatic fortunes he aspires to. *Great Expectations* may also be considered a semi-autobiography of Charles Dickens as much of it is a recreation of his own life's experiences and acquaintance with people. Dickens wrote the entire novel in the first person to ensure that the readers see from the protagonist Pip's viewpoint and may identify with him from the very start. This novel is Dickens' only one besides *David Copperfield* that's told entirely in the first person.

The first part of *Great Expectations* which contains nineteen chapters is concerned with the world of Pip as a child who expresses all his feelings of childhood, his meeting with the escaped convict Magwitch and his own introduction with Miss Havisham and Estella with whom he is smitten and remains as such.

The novel is replete with the narrative instances and one such is evident very early on when the narrator Pip addresses the evocative side of the readers when he mentions that his only memories of his father are from his tombstone, thus, pleasing the readers with the comical aspects of the narrative. On page 1 of the novel we see Pip saying:

As I never saw my father or my mother, and never saw any likeness of either of them (for their days were long before the days of photographs), my first fancies regarding what they were like, were unreasonably derived from their tombstones.

Suggestiveness is an innovative aspect of Dickens' writing. The very reference of reality as given by the narrator while attempting to describe his past is more concerned with his imagination than reality. Pip's experiences as a child are shown at the beginning of the novel when the narrator is telling readers about how he came to be called Pip and why he calls himself Pip:

My father's family name being Pirrip, and my Christian name Philip, my infant tongue could make of both names nothing longer or more explicit than Pip. So, I called myself Pip, and came to be called Pip.

The fact is that the whole novel is told to us by an autodiegetic narrator which is very unique in that the narrator tells the readers his own story by structuring the viewpoint, organising the time and manipulating different kinds of distance. In the novel, the protagonist narrates his story as an adult, but, very conveniently begins to describe things as he saw and felt like a child. For example, when the escaped convict hangs him upside down by his feet, Pip thinks that in fact, it is the church which is upside down and not him. Principally, narration and focalization are separate undertakings, but, they may sometimes be combined as described in a rather long paragraph in the same section of the novel when Pip describes the river and the marshes as his identifiable environment. The definite article indicates something that is familiar to the speaker, that is, it suggests that these features are presented as knowledge shared between the speaker and reader since they are familiar territory to the narrator or focalizer.

The most significant incident in the plot narrative is Pip's meeting with the convict, which happens in the very first part of the novel. Pip is unusually affected by Magwitch, the escaped convict. At this point in the novel, the narrator abruptly adopts the role of the character who observes his speaker from his own perception, and changes from the external narrator to the internal focalizer, that is, changing the perspective from the outside to the inside. An example of this change is expressly explicit when Pip meets the convict and a dialogue ensues: 'Hold your noise'. According to Gérard Genette, it may be pertinent to take note of the fact that the narrative perspective which suggests the point of view adopted by the narrator is called focalization. Genette distinguishes one of

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the three kinds of internal focalization in which the narrator is aware as much as the character (in the story) and filters the information provided to the reader. Pip the narrator describes Magwitch from an individual viewpoint, privileging the psychological criteria of persuasion: 'A fearful man, all in coarse grey, with a great iron on his leg'. This narrative strategy emphasizes the verisimilitude of the plot.

In Chapter 2 of the novel, Magwitch orders Pip to get him a file to which Pip complies by bringing him some food and a file. So significant was this act of kindness by Pip that it would change the course of his life forever and as Pip would himself discover towards the end of the novel that Magwitch greatly influenced his own expectations and had paid him back his generosity for being his benefactor. Pip also discovers that the escaped convict is in fact the father of his first love Estella. The readers are able to feel that Magwitch is not as bad as he seemed to be. On the flip side, Pip is guilt ridden for having taken the file to the convict as though it were a living being and this guilt torments him till the very end so much so that he has nightmares about it: 'I was haunted by the file', he recalls; or also: 'In my sleep I saw the file coming at me out of a door, without seeing who held it and I screamed myself awake'.

Endless changes are set off in Pip's life the day he is introduced to Miss Havisham and Estella, his first love whom he fell for at first sight and is consumed with strong desires for her as he thinks she is symbolic of culture and wealth and as such is presented before Pip like an impossible dream.

The novel's title itself is suggestive of the protagonist's hopes for social advancement and romantic success with Estella. Driven by intense desires he even avoids a deeper relationship with Biddy and uses her as a ladder to reach at Estella who was always beyond bounds for him. Estella, on the other hand, is quite manipulative and cold and had been brought up to be a heartbreaker as the readers find out in the novel. She proves this when she kisses Pip after thoroughly degrading and insulting him. This makes the readers develop feelings of sympathy and confusion towards Pip when she invites him to kiss her after he knocks Herbert down: 'Come here! You may kiss me, if you like'. Nobody had expected this to come from Estella.

Pip's relocation to London is a big turning point and marks the second stage of the novel as his ascension of the social ladder is marked by a resultant decline in self-confidence and happiness. The most painful and piteous thing for Pip was that the 'coldly glittering distant star', Estella, treats him as badly as ever upon his return to Satis House. The difference between the narrator and character-focalizer becomes very apparent as Pip in his confused state of mind started considering Joe with unnerving hostility during his visit to London. As an internal focalizer and as a character in the novel, Pip experiences anger and unhappiness about his attitude and as the narrator of the story, he evaluates himself critically for expressing such feelings and writes, 'God forgive me!' This is suggestive of the fact that as a grown up narrator of the story, he was capable of judging his life from a broader outlook. The realization of his bad behaviour towards Joe and Biddy makes Pip quite guilt ridden and miserable. The awkwardness of Pip's position between the social classes is evident in his being embarrassed by Joe, as he was conscious of his own attitude towards Joe during his visit as in-admirable and cold. An instance of this spectacle is expressed in 'I had neither the good sense nor the good feeling to know that this was all my fault, and that if I had been easier with Joe, Joe would have been easier with me. I felt impatient of him and out of temper with him; in which condition he heaped coals of fire on my head'.

Another very relevant and crucial incident in Pip's maturation was his sister's death. Pip's 21st birthday marks his transition to becoming an adult and letters a new phase in *Great Expectations*. He is addressed as 'Mr Pip' by Jaggers at this juncture and onwards.

Both Estella and Pip share a common knowledge and history of self-humiliation. Both of them have been exploited and made use of. Pip is the creation of Magwitch as his revenge on society and Estella by Miss Havisham, as the unwilling-to-love girl. Both Pip and Estella have much to regret about what happened to them. As an external focalizer describes Estella who's accused of being heartless and cruel owing to the Miss Havisham's grooming of her, is well depicted in Chapter 38 of the novel:

Or, said Estella, '—which is a nearer case—if you had taught her, from the dawn of her intelligence, with your utmost energy and might, that there was such a thing as daylight, but that it was made to be her enemy and destroyer, and she must always turn against it, for it had blighted you and would else blight her—if you had done this, and then, for a purpose, had wanted her to take naturally to the daylight and she could not do it, you would have been disappointed and angry?'

So, said Estella, 'I must be taken as I have been made. The success is not mine, the failure is not mine, but the two together make me'.

Daylight used as a metaphor for love indicates that it would be futile to expect Estella to understand things for the fact that she was never brought up to feel that way. This insight shows her arrival at self-awareness. In Pip's case, his humiliation is excruciatingly deep because his dream world was his own creation and so is responsible for his plight. Apart from this, he also feels he's been misused by Magwitch before the reality dawns upon him that his fortunes are not because of Miss Havisham. Pip makes a lots of mistakes of interpretation as his vision is as innocent as that of a child and as such is a purblind focalizer. In doing so Pip exposes himself and thus, gives the readers an opportunity to judge him and as his honesty cannot be pretentious, the readers find greater confidence in his narrative.

The afore stated example along with the forthcoming are representative of irony, in which the opposite of what is being conveyed, meant. 'You stock and stone! ... You cold, cold heart!' (283) These words are spoken by Miss Havisham for Estella who was being too harsh and cold. The fact is that it is Miss Havisham who is to blame for Estella's harsh and cold demeanour.

In the second part of *Great Expectations*, many chapters give the impression that the narrator Pip acts like a camera's lens, who describes, as in case of external focalization, the characters' gestures and actions (as though from outside) without participating in it. While it is the writer-narrator who is talking, it is the character that sees and reacts to the events.

Pip's discovery of his real benefactor is an important milestone in the narrative of *Great Expectations* as this discovery by the protagonist marks the end of the second very significant stage in the novel. This also ascertains the connect with the last one which is resolved through several surprises.

One of the shrewdest inventions in the *Great Expectations* is the character of Magwitch as he haunts Pip throughout his growing-up years but renders him no harm. He is in fact Pip's secret benefactor as the protagonist finds out as the story unfolds. Ironically, Pip would rather prefer that his fortunes had come from Miss Havisham's

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inheritance rather than Magwitch's hard work. Through his character Dicken's conveys the message that several convicts are in reality good people and that often crimes committed by 'gentlemanly' criminals such as the likes of Compeyson are much more gruesome and how the judiciary emphasizes on this aspect and thereby enabling the oppression of the poor at the hands of the rich. Pip is unaware of the fact that it was indeed Compeyson who led Magwitch into crime and as such he realizes his mistake when he learns as to who his wealth springs from. Pip makes several mistakes and one of notable ones was Pip hears that a run-away criminal is to blame for the attack on his sister and feels guilty for having helped Magwitch with food and a file, he says: 'it was horrible to think that I had provided the instrument, however undesignedly.'

The last and the third part of the novel shows Pip as a grown-up and self-aware adult who has lived through the problems of his childhood without bothering to know the truths, now, begins to understand and realize his follies made throughout his life. He realizes that Magwitch is a good man despite being an ordinary criminal and grows fond of him and even nurses him. This love for him was Pip's end of many mistakes, snobbery and doubt.

The third main part of the novel deals with Pip's feelings of conflict, his drive to find the truth about Estella's origins and the reasons for Magwitch's death. Pip's world of expectations and his secret guilt stem from the same reason – his fear of the convict and also the worries for his safety. In the beginning Pip sees Magwitch as his unwanted father figure whereas towards the end of the novel, in the third part, his bond with Magwitch grows so deep that he thinks of him as his new father figure. Pip says: 'For now my repugnance to him had all melted away, and in the hunted wounded shackled creature who held my hand in his, I only saw a man who had . . . felt affectionately, gratefully, and generously toward me with great constancy through a series of years'.

In this part of the novel, the protagonist narrator Pip learns the most important moral lessons of life. He realises that loyalty, conscience, love and human affections are more important in life than one's social stature and ambitions. In the afore-quoted words such as 'gratefully', 'affectionately' and 'generously' seem to imply a powerful evaluative force used by the narrator. This recognition is the most evident example of structural irony created by the difference in knowledge of the events and understanding between the adult Pip and the child. Focalization is apparent at this point and changes from the outside to the inside, as there appears to be an identification of the character and an evaluation made by the focalizer as can be seen when Pip is describing Magwitch's disguise: 'To my thinking, there was something in him that made it hopeless to attempt to disguise him'.

Also Pip's finding out that Estella was actually Magwitch's illegitimate daughter and not the princess she thought her to be, makes the adult Pip see her the way she is and someone who is able to change despite her damaging influences and someone who can return to him at the end of the novel as a much better human being. The melting of Estella's heart and the loss of her usual coldness too is somewhat ironic which is evident in Pip's narration of this scene: 'The freshness of her beauty was indeed gone, but its indescribable majesty and its indescribable charm remained. Those attractions in it, I had seen before; what I had never seen before, was the saddened softened light of the once proud eyes; what I had never felt before, was the friendly touch of the once insensible hand'. It appears that Estella's life was used to elucidate the point that a higher social status is no guarantee for a happy life. Her painful life compels Estella to begin listening to her inner feelings, as is evident in these lines: 'And if you could say that

to me then, you will not hesitate to say that to me now—now, when suffering has been stronger than all other teaching, and has taught me to understand what your heart used to be. I have been bent and broken, but—I hope—into a better shape. Be as considerate and good to me as you were, and tell me we are friends’.

The analysis of Pip’s narration illustrates the exploration of the relationship between narrator and the story. An examination of these characteristics and especially those of the narrative mode, the methods of the narrative act can be clarified and methodological choices made by the author can be pointed out. The usage of various narratological processes gives rise to different outcomes for the readers of the novel and provide them with a sense of credibility and realism. In the *Great Expectations*, a naïve narrator is created and the readers share the knowledge of the author’s ironic intention but the speaker does not take part in this sharing nor does he understand the facts.

*Great Expectations* depicts vividly English life in the mid-nineteenth century, the effects of industrialization and the distinct class divide (between rich and poor) it created as a result. Pip sees that the rich people were respected and thus ensues his struggle to elevate his social standing. His desire to become a respected and a wealthy person so as to win Estella’s respect and affections never leaves him. *Great Expectations* is quite a realistic novel which mirrors the trials, tribulations and aspirations of the society of mid-nineteenth century England and through Pip the author has been able to do justice in achieving the desired effect on the readers. Such is the realism in the novel that people and events depicted in it seem real and readers actually identify with the characters and events depicted.

In the novel, we move from the everyday life of the real world into the grotesqueness of the outside world’s time and place with logic. The novel depicts characters who face problems just like real life people and thus, the readers come to feel that they are as real as themselves. Truth is that the characters and events are so life like that that the readers are impelled to imagine a narrative sequence that are not expressed in writing by the novelist. Instead they’re only suggested as if something were left unfinished. This is the reason why readers sometimes get astonished at the way some novels end. In Dickens’ *Great Expectations*, for example, in the novel’s last paragraph it is suggested that Estella and Pip will never part ways again. Pip takes Estella’s hand as they walk around the grounds, and says ‘I saw no shadow of another parting from her’, it seems that the world perhaps provided him with new expectations of fulfilment and, who knows, some romantic success and happiness which was so long hoped for and is intimately linked to the title of the novel.

*Great Expectations* is a complex and engaging novel in which the application of irony is one of Dickens’ remarkable strategies to create diversity and he has great skills to make use of them all in several different ways. Dickens uses irony to better highlight the changes that the characters experience throughout the book, mainly Pip’s transformation into adulthood and awareness of understanding of attitudes and events by performing either as an adult narrator, being aware of the problems once lived or as purblind focalizer, being totally unaware of his so many misinterpreted mistakes. *Great Expectations* is the sort of literary work that exhibits structural features to sustain duplicity of meaning and evaluation throughout the work with great ability and style.

### 3.4.2 Estella

Estella has often been quoted as Dickens’ first credible female character. She is a study in contrasts as we learn towards the end of the novel. She undermines all that romantic

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love stands for. She is bogged down in a certain class system that she represents in a negative way.

Estella has been raised by Miss Havisham since the age of three. As she was no more than a babe, it was easy for Miss Havisham to mould her as she pleased. This was done with perfection and Estella grew into a cold hearted woman, raised to torture men and 'break their hearts'. Even though Estella practices deliberate cruelty, she wins Pip's love and affection. Unlike the warm, loving and charming woman of traditional love, Estella is cold, contemptuous and conniving. She is the first representation of the ideal life among the upper class that Pip craves so much. Ironically, it turns out that she is actually more low born than Pip, it being discovered that she is the daughter of Magwitch, the coarse convict whom Pip had helped when he was just a little child.

Paradoxically, Estella's life among the upper class does not spell deliverance for her. On the contrary, she is victimized twice by the society she has been raised in. Being raised by Miss Havisham is her undoing. Her ability to express emotion and interact normally with the world is destroyed. She would have been better off being raised by the noble Magwitch, who though of low class, had lofty ideals. And rather than marrying the kindhearted commoner Pip, Estella marries the cruel nobleman Drummle, who treats her harshly and makes her life miserable for many years. In this way, Dickens uses Estella's life to reinforce the idea that one's happiness and well-being are not deeply connected to one's social position: had Estella been poor, she might have been substantially better off. In spite of her distant attitude and the detrimental effects on her life, Estella is still a sympathetic character. She struggles with her inner self and attempts to discover and act on her own feelings rather than on the imposed motives of her upbringing. In this way, the reader gets a glimpse of her inner life which gives us some hint of what Pip must have liked about her. It seems to be beyond Estella's control not to hurt Pip. Even though she does so, she repeatedly tells him to let go of her because he would get hurt as she had 'no heart'. She urges him to leave her and find happiness elsewhere. Finally, Estella's long, painful marriage to Drummle causes her to develop along the same lines as Pip—that is, she learns, through experience, to rely on and trust her inner feelings. In the final scene of the novel, she has become her own woman for the first time in the novel. As she says to Pip, 'Suffering has been stronger than all other teaching. . . I have been bent and broken, but—I hope—into a better shape.'

### 3.4.3 Miss Havisham

Miss Havisham's character is truly a memorable one. She is not exactly a character that could actually exist outside a novel. As a wealthy dowager living in a rotting mansion, she cuts a pathetic figure with her eccentric ways. Her heart burns with revenge and revenge is the focus of her life. Her life is defined by one tragic event; her being jilted by Compeyson on what was to be their wedding day. Miss Havisham continues to wear her old wedding dress every day of her life. The clocks in her house have been stopped at twenty minutes to nine as that was the time she discovered that her soon to be husband had fled. She wears only one shoe, because when she learned of his betrayal, she had not yet put on the other shoe. Miss Havisham does not want her life to move beyond her heartbreak. She exacts her revenge on men in general as a compensation for the heartbreak she suffered and for this she very cruelly uses Estella. Estella has been raised by her since the age of three and it was very easy for the embittered Miss Havisham to instill into her young subject, a hatred for men. She teaches Estella to be cold and calculating and to play havoc with the emotions of men. She makes Estella



believe men are toys to be played around with and then thrown aside, just the way she was jilted by her fiancé. Obsessed with the desire for revenge, she works single mindedly towards fulfilling her goal. Both Miss Havisham and people around her suffer greatly due to her intense hatred and vengeance but she is oblivious to the harm she is creating. At the end of the novel her sins are atoned when she realizes she has broken Pip's heart in much the same way as hers had been. She is remorseful about her behaviour and acknowledges the worthlessness of her attitude which caused Pip so much misery. She begs Pip for forgiveness. Emphasizing the novel's theme that bad behaviour can be redeemed by contrition and sympathy.

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### 3.5 MAJOR THEMES IN *GREAT EXPECTATIONS*

This section will mainly concentrate on the themes which are dealt by Dickens in the novel.

#### 3.5.1 Class Structure in *Great Expectations*

The set of criteria revealing rifts between individuals leads to the formation of class structures in societies. Especially in England, the old model of class ranking in the 19th century dwelled on a rather rigid structure of occupational segregation. Towards the end of the century, a new model began taking shape, one that was based on the character and morality of persons. This new model threw open doors for self-motivated and determined people of the age and Dickens' *Great Expectations* depicts both these two models of class structure in 19th century England via the story of the protagonist, Pip. Because of the societal shifts occurring in 19th century England, Pip is unable to segregate himself and others into classes. Pip dictates his own fate and determines his place and identity in the society. *Great Expectations* encapsulates in itself and demonstrates the inequities and in-exactitudes existing during the time and enforces a stiff hierarchical segregation while embracing the novelty of the new social classification that relies on self-determination and the capacity to attain higher status by one's actions rather than heredity.

Readers of the *Great Expectations* notice a certain trend in Pip's character from the outset: he is confused about the concepts of class and hierarchy due to his lack of knowledge about his parents' lives and social stature. In the beginning of the novel, the readers see Pip playing at the graves of his parents whom he says he has not met. He is seen making constructs about their personalities and looks based on the shapes and messages inscribed on their tombstones. This action of his makes it evident that he relies on observations to mould all of his actions and knowledge about life. As an adult he reinterprets the graveyard scene and explains the engraving on the tombstones as: 'I read "wife of the Above" as a complimentary reference to my father's exaltation to a better world.' Pip in his ignorance confuses the ranked relationship between his mother and father and believes the terms 'above' meant a superior status rather than the positioning of their respective names on the tombstone. The notion that Pip has no story is enforced in the afore spectacle as he does not seem to have any personal past that we've been familiarised with, rather, the reader is informed only about his current status and state—that he is an orphan.

This confusion in Pip's mind about class structure makes his story that is one of self-discovery and self-definition. The sheer lack of self-knowledge, like a blank slate, impels him to discover more about himself. Due to the identities of those around him, and

#### Check Your Progress

8. Why did Dickens write the entire story of *Great Expectations* in first person?
9. Who is an autodiegetic narrator?
10. Name the shrewdest invention in the *Great Expectations*.
11. Why does Miss Havisham wear only one shoe?

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the lack of his own, Pip comes to believe that because people around him in the society are associated with occupations and ranks, he should find an occupation for himself to identify himself with. This creation of self by the protagonist can happen only if he becomes aware of all the types of identities that exist with the society and picks which of these specific roles he wishes to achieve. In the course of identifying himself, the protagonist Pip must face and overcome barriers that will eventually facilitate him to achieve expectations he creates for himself. But, in order to do so, Pip must educate himself about the entire society that he lives in so as to reach this point of achievement. What drives Pip to create expectations for himself is the existence of the various identities and old structures of class hierarchy existing in the 19th century England. However, his inability to understand social class and ranks and the societal terms perhaps reflect the class ambiguities that were prevalent in England during the 19th century.

Based on the concept of early 19th century class structure, Pip was to have the same social status and quality of life if he were to remain with his sister and brother-in-law. Pip is an orphan and does not have any knowledge about his parents and is being brought up by his sister and brother-in-law Joe, in their home. Due to the fact that Pip lives in that house he is on the same path as his brother-in-law Joe Gargery, to becoming a blacksmith. This was the prevalent trend of inherited occupation and rigid social class with little hope for one to change occupations that prevailed during the early 19th century. This concept of inheritance derives from the early structural idea that once a family is classified by a certain position or job title through their familial roots then they will maintain that.

Pip envisages his own future looking at Joe's current life and character. He fears that if he too were to maintain the rigid parameters of class structure and societal ideologies that accompany it, he too would remain a lowly blacksmith. Under these circumstances Pip views himself as Joe's equal as a blacksmith as that is the profession he was in line to take over from him. This equal status between the two is evident from their conversations, particularly when Pip enquires about Joe's level of education this specifically pertaining to his spelling abilities, 'How do you spell Gargery, Joe?' and Joe's response which shows his obvious lack of education, 'I don't spell it at all'. Joe's state of illiteracy only indicates the fact that education was not necessary to maintain the occupation he currently held as inheritance. The shortness of Joe's sentences further indicates his lack of vocabulary and also the fact that he cannot express himself using many words. Joe's lack of education and the simplicity of his character and language makes him an easy character for Pip to connect with and equate himself with. These facets of Joe Gargery's character make him a representative of Pip's future.

Pip gets a glimpse of the upper class lifestyle while playing at Miss Havisham's Satis House. In doing so, Pip develops expectations which contrast with his upbringing through his exposure to upper class living at Satis House as he starts evaluating himself based on by the opinions and perceptions of other people as he was earlier oblivious of such differences. As the story progresses, readers observe that due to Pip's exposure to the other characters, there is an increased sense of consciousness and self-evaluation of class roles.

The rigid class structure in early 19th century England was problematic. Dickens shows this through the characters that Pip encounters during his youth. Pip's interactions with Estella and Miss Havisham at the Satis House is a constant reminder to Pip of his position as a working class family member in the British society. Through his visits to Satis House, Pip is introduced to the upper class life. It is observed that there is a

marked difference between the level of education and manners of both Pip and Estella. Based on their first series of interactions when Estella refers to Pip as 'boy' which goes to show that Estella not only thinks that she is above Pip in social stature but also that she can define Pip without the knowledge of his exact age. In their interactions, Estella also shows greater sense of enlightenment by the use of much refined language that indicates her position as being superior to that of Pip. In her response to Miss Havisham's command to play with Pip, Estella remarks: 'With this boy! Why he is a common labouring-boy'. Estella's choice of words for describing Pip shows exactly how other characters perceive Pip and was suggestive of the fact that besides Pip, social roles were a concern to others. Another thing that can be derived from her words and actions is that even small affairs such as playing must be restricted to specific classes of individuals. Estella further asserts her superior position within the upper class by constantly belittling Pip and emphasizing on their differences especially by making it known by pointing out their different ways of thinking. She emphasizes and points out the differences in definitions which she and Pip use for the names of cards as if his terminology is something to be ashamed of. Pip admits, 'I had never thought of being ashamed of my hands before but I began to consider them a very indifferent pair'. At this moment and onwards, Pip begins to acknowledge his differences from others around him and the priority that is placed on status by others.

Hands can be construed as the physical element that assists in distinguishing between members of upper and lower classes. Peter J. Capuano attributes the discussion of hands, such as the one made by Pip, within Dickens' work as a means to further emphasize differences between classes. Capuano evaluates the symbolism associated with hands throughout history. He explains that hands are the indicators of social status, and those of low class rank often have hands associated with animals. Specifically, he details that members of the working class tended to have 'large palms and short fingers interpreted not only as indicators of a propensity to handle shovels, pickaxes, and barrows, but as signs of animality itself.' The looks and appearance of one's hands only further establish the differences between classes by stressing on physical elements of an individual. In *Great Expectations*, Estella refers to Pip's hands exclaiming: 'And what coarse hands he has!' This attention to Pip's physical appearance indicates his identity and Estella uses her perceptions to gauge her perception of him. As Pip spends more and more time at the extravagant Satis House, he begins to understand not only the existing differentiating ideologies, but also that one's physical differences also contribute to one's status in the society. Furthermore, Estella's outbursts also add to Pip's negativity while rendering his services around Satis House.

There are constant reminders for Pip about the traditional structure of social class due to his own low standing and his lack of mobility during his experiences as a young boy at the Satis House. Estella's apparent cold and pompous behaviour is due to Miss Havisham's upbringing of her engraining the ideals of rigid social classes. Thus, Estella acts as she has been brought up to. On the very first day of Pip's presence at Satis House, it is explicitly communicated to him that he shall have little flexibility and commentary in behavioural terms, mannerisms and discussions within the household. Whenever Pip is spoken to especially by Estella or Miss Havisham, he is spoken to in command. Pip recollects Estella's demands, 'I have a sick fancy that I want to see some play. "There, there!" with an impatient movement of the fingers of her right hand; "play, play, play!"'. This persistent mannerism is suggestive that Estella owing to her superior status wields power over Pip and all his actions. Estella passes pithy comments on Pip without any sugar coating and she often comes forth as impassive and assertive. Pip is

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so affected by all this that he decides to take his life decisions based upon the way Estella sees him owing to her role as a menacing and authoritative figure. Due to Pip's lower social status Estella pays no attention towards him and instead she only has him fulfil her demands. Pip mentions: 'I want to be a gentleman on her account'. Initially Estella's powers over Pip seem to only fuel his expectations for himself and his desire rise up in status and also to please her as it felt like the most appropriate thing to do at Satis House. The demanding nature of Estella seems like a support to her beliefs that she is entitled to making decisions not just for herself but also on behalf of others. Pip construes this controlling behaviour as being derived from class as he finds the same controlling and commanding behaviour with everyone at Satis House.

Pip finds that Miss Havisham too embodies the same persona that Estella does. She commands: 'Estella, take him down. Let him have something to eat, and let him roam and look about him while he eats. Go, Pip'. In this specific command Miss Havisham even goes as far as telling him when he can eat and all the actions he is allowed to exhibit while doing so. This extreme control of bodily functions, such as vision and hunger, is as a result of the arrogance and entitlement that accompanies her high-ranking role. Miss Havisham further reinforces the tenets of a rigid structure in discussing the lack of association that should accompany two members of different classes.

Miss Havisham is very high headed indeed as she reminds both Estella and Pip of Pip's inability of having a relationship with Estella owing to his lower social stature. However, she gives Estella the permission to break his heart. She says: 'You can break his heart'. Unlike any other kind hearted person, Miss Havisham is opposed to the idea of them having any kind of relationship and instantly dismisses any possibilities even before they even arise. This behaviour stems from the idea that persons of differing social classes could never date one another and in the case of Estella and Pip they could only be nothing more than play mates. In the early 19th century, the preservation of a strict social structure was a norm and Miss Havisham's character coincides with upholding this norm.

The constant demands and commands meted out to Pip at Satis House affect him adversely. He is continually engaged in carrying out various tasks so much so that his behaviour and speech are hindered with these commands. He has no freedom to move around or even to voice his thoughts and feelings the moment he enters Satis House. Pip only takes orders and sees them through and one day when he is ordered to spar with a pale young gentleman he carries out the orders well. Notwithstanding the fact that fighting can be viewed as an act of barbarism or animal like behaviour, Pip engages in the morally incorrect behaviour explaining: 'I never have been so surprised in my life, as I was when I let out the first blow, and saw him lying on his back, looking up at me with a bloody nose.' Pip's behaviour can be seen as puppetish owing to his low status at Satis House. All members at Satis House and everyone else who comes over there, only impress upon Miss Havisham the idea that bad behaviour, inferiority and barbarism are behaviours associated with the lower classes. In the end, Pip's actions at Satis House bring with it destruction and negativity and the whole experience at Satis House including Pip's interactions with Miss Havisham and Estella can be viewed as symbolic of the understanding that the rigidity of 19th century English class structure has nothing but negative social implications.

The description of Satis House in *Great Expectations* and its eventual demolition later on in the novel is symbolic of the destruction of the old and rigid class model existing in the 1800s. Estella explains the meaning of the name Satis House to Pip on his

first visit. She says: 'Its other name was Satis; which is Greek, or Latin, or Hebrew, or all three—or all one to me—for enough'. The significance of calling the household in translation 'Enough House' is suggestive of the notion that the scale of the house was just enough for the wealthy owners initially. The largeness of the house being enough is also suggestive of the greed of the upper class owners and occupants of the house. Both Miss Havisham and Estella may be seen as harbouring characteristics like that of the house—pompous and greedy.

Satis House can also be seen as symbolic of Pip's formative years and youth. The novel's plot also depicts the influencers that drive Pip's expectations for himself. Satis House is important to Pip as it was here that he first discovers his expectations. And in the course of the story as well, Pip returns to Satis House a few times while on his path to realize his expectations. Satis House essentially remains the same just as the protagonist trudges his path to fulfilling his expectations. In the words of Peter Brooks, 'the returns always bring his regression, in Satis House, to the status of the coarse and common boy'. Satis House is like a constant reminder to Pip of his expectations and also that of his low status that he was so made aware of during his time there. Owing to Pip's recurrent returns to Satis House, the readers of *Great Expectations* can certainly identify with Pip and his desire to overcome the ways of his past.

It may further be argued that Pip returns to Satis House time and again because of his dissatisfaction at the way he is progressing in life and returning to Satis House was his only way to remind himself of his expectations and seek motivation to achieve more. It is only towards the end of the novel that quick turn of events take place suggestive of a downfall of the past. The fire that engulfs Satis House only acts as a further critique of its dwellers who inhabited it.

It is ironic when Pip returns to the Satis House and Miss Havisham catches on fire, only to lose much of her speech. Miss Havisham had used her tongue to command and control Pip all his life and now that she is wounded she cannot command him anymore. Towards the end of the novel, quite interestingly when Pip returns to Satis House, he finds that 'There was no house now, no brewery, no building whatever left, but the wall of the old garden'. The absence of the house, the brewery is suggestive of the demolition of the upper class wealth and the old ideologies of rigid class structure. The symbol of oppression of the lower classes by the upper classes, one that stood for control and wealth and the old model ideologies no longer exists and this is significant in that it is suggestive of the fact that the old model of social class was corrupt as it was based on the ill treatment and exploitation of the lower classes. It becomes amply clear by the end of the novel that the rigidity of the class structure only induces the negativity that surrounds the protagonist narrator Pip. This experience of negativity is thrust right in his face while growing up around Satis House.

By the end of the novel, it is clear that elements relating to a rigid class structure induce much of the negativity that surrounds Pip and his experience growing up around the Satis House. However, the Satis House serves as the catalyst in driving Pip's expectations for himself. Due to the unfair treatment he receives from the upper class members, he finds himself desiring their lifestyle in order to escape the belittlement and inferiority he experienced.

The Satis House is the driving force that influences Pip's expectations for himself. Pip's experience as an inferior individual within the Satis House causes him to desire a new position within society. His ability to experience and observe the lifestyle of the upper class causes him to break from his role of inferiority and achieve a position of

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higher standing. Due to his desire to change the conditions of inequality and class based prejudice at the Satis House, Pip creates a new model of social class for himself founded on the basis of self-determination. Stephen Greenblatt suggests that ‘self-fashioning,’ or the creation of oneself, is dependent upon the institutional influences and the lifestyle of the individual. Based on this idea, it is clear that the influential figures within the Satis House assist in Pip’s creation of himself. Greenblatt argues that there is not one specific path for the individual to take in order to achieve their ‘new self,’ but those who self-fashion simply achieve it on their own. The fact that there is not one linear path or pattern for the individual to take in order to achieve their desired place in the society suggests that it is primarily based on the individual and their level of determination. Dickens constructs Pip as a character with expectations for himself. In doing so, he also creates a character who possesses a great deal of self-determination that he uses to achieve these expectations. According to Robin Gilmour, ‘The story of Pip is the “classic legend of the nineteenth century”’ (118). Pip can be understood as the new type of class structure based on the idea that each individual can determine what position they occupy in society.

The role of Pip as the main character and narrator supports the idea that he is in the position to decide his own path in life. Dickensian critics such as Sean Grass and Keith Easley argue that Pip’s ‘self-authoring’ is further support for his ability to decide his own fate. Grass reads *Great Expectations* as an autobiography of Pip in which, ‘his narrative centres upon a profound anxiety regarding his self-authorship and the way in which written narrative necessarily entangles the subject in power relations rooted in production and exchange’ (635). The view provided by Grass supports the idea that because Pip is both the main character and in a sense the author of his own story, he contradicts ideas of the control that others have on him and his story. He outlines the story of his own pursuits in his own way that furthers the control he has over his fate and the retelling of the events that he undergoes. The power he possesses over his own story can be understood as a reflection of his power to determine his own path in life.

Pip’s power to decide his own fate is solidified by his position as the author of his own story. Keith Easley explains the control Pip has over himself arguing, ‘He can (establish grounds for self-desire) because through a process of objectification whereby he sees others in himself and himself in others, he achieves the non-coincidence between his older and younger selves’ (179). Pip can understand himself from the experiences he has with other characters in finding his own place, as he ‘tries on’ the identities of others in different positions from him. Easley explains, ‘The knowledge that gives Pip the power to act decisively for the first time is intimately associated with a growing sense of himself as the object of others’ perception, rather than solely as a subject living outwards from within himself’ (194). From this idea, it can be understood that the experiences and knowledge that Pip gains in experiencing different roles in his youth is what gives him the ability to recognize what he needs to become in order to achieve his own expectations and in turn, the status he wishes to embody. By placing Pip in the position that enables him to dictate which elements of the story to include and the way to include each, creates the opportunity for him to develop a support system from the audience. Pip’s story places him in a role of vulnerability from the very beginning of the novel, as he is an orphan. This plays on the sensitivity of the audience and sparks the opportunity for a sympathetic reaction. As a result of sympathetic feelings, the audience roots for Pip on his quest for identity and wants him to achieve his expectations. This rooting for him further suggests that self-determination is the way to achieve what the individual desires, even if it means shifting social ranking. The concept of self-authoring and the achievement

of his expectations reinforce the success of the self-determining ideology created by Dickens' text.

It must be noted that all through the novel, it is only Pip who freely moves across various occupations giving the idea that he disproves the otherwise traditional and rigid class structure of the times. Even at the beginning of the novel it is noticed that Pip adopts a different role than the originally intended role of a blacksmith. Instead of taking on blacksmithing as a career in line with the prevailing idea of early 19th century, Pip takes on the role of a criminal. He does this and behaves as such so as to survive. Even as a youngster, Pip smuggles a piece of bread in his pocket and conceals it from his sister and brother-in-law even as he is forced to execute tasks. While stirring pudding, Pip explains: 'I tried it with the load upon my leg (and that made me think afresh of the man with the load on his leg)', the load here refers to the iron anklet (shackles) that criminals are made to wear in prison. Pip freely adopts this life and mannerisms of a criminal without facing any persecution from society. This transitory role of a criminal enacted by Pip only prepares him for what was to come in the hardened and rigid society. Contrary to the old rigid class structure of 19th century society, Pip gets another chance and it enables him to move out of his destined path in life.

Pip was able to achieve what he did due to the benevolence of a benefactor instead of familial ties and an inherited occupation. The new shift in class in the 19th century ushers in new opportunities for Pip which are supported by ideas exuded in the later part of the 19th century. Pip's opportunities and the changes in his occupations are representative of the ideas of the later portion of the century. Pip's education may be construed as the reliance on morality to ascertain a higher position in society, which was in contradiction to the old societal structure which guaranteed education and money only to the upper classes and Pip was given both! The fact that Pip only needed to gain education so as to break free from his predestined occupation (blacksmith) contradicts fully the stiff structure that constituted the British society.

The extra weightage to morality in the mid-19th century further bolsters the idea that a person can elevate one's social status by educating oneself. Pip's opportunity for education helps him elevate himself to a higher social class. This was an opportunity that people from middle and lower classes did not have in those times. Education was not something they could obtain or afford on their own. A change occurs in Pip's life when he begins to play at Satis House to when he is faced with the opportunity to become gentlemanly. In the beginning Pip is oblivious of any expectations that he may have but when given the opportunity to become a gentleman after being at Satis House, and developing expectations for the self, Pip embarks on a journey of self-realization with the utmost determination. Mr Jaggers, the lawyer from London who represented Pip's benefactor, suggested that in order for Pip to fully occupy a new position in society Pip, 'should immediately be removed from his present sphere of life and from this place, and be brought up as a gentleman—in a word, as a young fellow of great expectations.' This removal of Pip former destined life is indicative of the possibility of shifting from a lower class to a higher one. It is only education that can change the roles that one occupies in civil life and it is no more imperative for the entire family to be wealthy or educated. Given the opportunity anyone can be upwardly mobile. In Pip's case, it was imperative for him to get an education in order to achieve his expectations which he has seen stem from wealth and education. Expansion of his morality and mannerisms were the result of his education. Pip develops a strong influential personality due to his ability to interact with people, thus giving him a flexible persona.

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The attitude of self-determination was a necessary attribute to Pip becoming a gentleman. Even though Pip holds the temperament of a person who does as he is told to do, he eventually attains a position where his expectations and relentlessness begin to yield results. Pip elucidates on his achieving of his expectations saying, 'I had the great satisfaction of concluding that arrangement. It was the only good thing I had done, and the only completed thing I had done, since I was first apprised of my great expectations'.

Pip also has his weak moments when he doubts he will not be able to achieve the level of happiness as he closes in on the efficacious implementation of his new identity, he says, 'I was so doubtful of myself now'. Pip's doubts arise as an indicator of the relationships he is surrounded with; along with a sense of self as he began to move through his role as a gentleman and take on the opportunities and requirements that coincide with such. However, it was only towards the end of *Great Expectations* that Pip's submissiveness is overtaken by his self-determination.

The novel's end depicts Pip as having achieved his expectations which only solidifies Pip's self-creation and the downfall of the rigid old social hierarchy model. Pip ultimately achieves peace with Satis House when due to his self-determination he achieves his expectations towards the end of the novel, this, despite all the initial inequalities and discrimination meted out to him at the Satis House in his younger years. His achievement of expectation is shown in the joining with Estella towards the end of the novel. Pip clarifies, 'I heard of her leading a most unhappy life, and as being separated from her husband, who had used her with great cruelty'. Pip saw Estella's unhappiness as his opportunity to bring about expectations for her as she had for him. Also in the end, her unhappiness is also suggestive of the fact that her life has taken a turn towards destruction and that of Pip towards success. Estella's unhappiness represents her dissatisfaction with her position in life and is symbolic of the old model of class structure. The success that Pip enjoys in life and the balance that he strikes between his new life and attainments of his expectations and his old life with the relationships he's had in his youth suggest the new model of class structure as being based on self-determination. The readers can see that Pip's expectations with Estella also pay off in these words, 'I work pretty hard for a sufficient living, and therefore—Yes, I do well!'. Thus, proving that Pip's self-determination or with anybody's for that matter, it is probable to achieve things that were undoable earlier. The new basis of success was hard work as can be found at the end of the novel. The closure that Pip has with Estella is also important as he determines their friendship and a demolition of their incapacity to become friends due to their class difference. Pip has broken that wall and great divide too.

At the end of the novel, the state of Satis House symbolizes the new state of social order. By the time Pip returns, Satis House has been destroyed and all that remains on the estate is the flora. Plants taking over the remnants of the building is suggestive of the fact that old rigid class ideologies have been destroyed. It is important that plant life is all that remains on the Satis House estate besides just one wall that remains which has been taken over by plants as this imagery is symbolic of the new model of self-determination in that anyone can attain a new identity other than the one that they were born with. It is a known fact that plants change constantly depending on weather conditions and the same can be said about a person who represents the new order of upward and lateral mobility driven by self-determination.

Dickens' *Great Expectations* is a great novel and acts as a pedestal for showing with social class structure existing in 19th century England. The author creates images of English society of the time and is critical of its rigidity. These depictions tend to end in



corruption or breaking down of class structures that suggests the impression that there are issues with the way that society is run with the constraint of social interactions, mobility, and attitudes within upper class classification. Pip's eventual ability to be at peace with both Satis House and Estella is suggestive of the truth that morality is the indicator of self-worth of a person and that it can only be achieved through self-determination. The story of Pip in the *Great Expectations* comes full circle in the last scene of the novel which shows two contrasting social structures through the shift in events at the Satis House with the members of a higher class.

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### 3.5.2 Ambition and Self Improvement

The novel, *Great Expectations* has an underlying moral theme. It propounds the view that affection, loyalty and conscience are more important than social advancement, wealth and loss. The story shows Pip caught in this web, exploring the ideas of ambition and self-improvement. This is the central theme of the novel and the nexus around which the plot revolves. The psychological drive that is the moving force behind Pip's character is explored in this story. Pip is seen an idealist at heart; one who strives to achieve a level of perfection. Whenever he sees that something that is attainable is within his reach, he tries his best to attain that improvement. Seeing Satis House inspires in him a desire to be a gentleman. His own moral shortcomings lead to a longing to be good. Being uneducated sparks in him a desire to learn to read and write. Pip has 'Great Expectations' about his future and this becomes the basis of his wanting to improve and advance in life.

Ambition and self-improvement take three forms in *Great Expectations*—moral, social, and educational; these motivate Pip's best and his worst behaviour throughout the novel. First, Pip wishes for moral improvement. His feeling of guilt motivates him to act better in the future. While leaving for London, he feels a terrible guilt as he had behaved badly toward Joe and Biddy.

Pip wishes to rise to a certain level in society. He wants to become worthy of Estella and for this he has to become a gentleman if he ever hopes to catch her attention. He is encouraged in this venture by Mrs. Joe and Pumblechook. Pip's attempt to work out his fantasy becomes the basic plot of this novel. The social set up is gently mocked by Dickens. The irony is that Pip's life as a gentleman is in no way better than one as a blacksmith's apprentice.

Third, Pip wants to be an educated person. This longing is closely connected with his longing to gaining entry into the upper rungs of society and to become worthy of Estella. To be a gentleman, it is imperative that he be educated. As long as he is considered a country bumpkin he has no hopes of furthering his social status. This fact is quite clear to Pip even as a little boy when he read at Mr Wopsle's aunt's school and later when he took lessons from Mathew Pocket. In the end, however, through the examples of Joe, Biddy and Magwitch, Pip realizes that a person is not valued according to his education or his social status. Conscience and affection are to be valued above scholarly knowledge and social standing.

### 3.5.3 Crime, Guilt and Innocence

Another theme that has been looked into in depth in this novel is crime, guilt and innocence. This has been largely studied through the characters of the convicts and the criminal lawyer, Jaggers. The novel points out, a number of times, to images relating to this theme like the handcuffs which Joe mends at the smithy to gallows at the London prison. These

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images are important in conveying Pip's struggle to come to terms with his own inner conscience within the institutional system. Just as Pip had to overcome social barriers which class consciousness had imposed and had to look ahead in a bid to improve his way of living, the outward façade of the criminal justice system (police, courts, jail, etc.) became a phony standard of morality that Pip had to ignore in order to believe in his own inner conscious. For example, Pip is at first frightened by Magwitch as he is a convict; he is guilty of helping him and is scared of the police. Later, however, Pip is able to recognize Magwitch for who he really is, a noble human being with a large heart. Pip can now push aside the knowledge that Magwitch's status in society is that of a criminal and he is wanted by the police. Pip is now able to appreciate Magwitch's character and feels no qualms about helping him. Putting his trust in his conscience, Pip has replaced an external standard of value with an internal one.

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### 3.6 SUMMARY

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- Dickens was the most popular writer of his age and his works appealed to both the masses and the classes alike. This along with technological advancements in the field of publishing enabled him to quickly become a world renowned author.
- Dickens concern for reformation and social justice that emerged in his later writings stemmed from his harsh experiences working at the warehouse.
- As a young lad, Charles was introduced to several artistic and literary works that helped grow his own writing and creative faculties. He was highly influenced by the tales his nursemaid used to amuse him with and also the many visits to the theatre. Furthermore, he loved reading and among his favourites were the likes of *Don Quixote* by Miguel de Cervantes, *Tom Jones* by Henry Fielding, and *Arabian Nights*.
- Although Dickens' primary arena of work remained fictional novels, he continued working as a journalist until the end of his life editing publications such as *The Daily news*, *Household Words* and *All the Year Round*.
- Throughout his career, Dickens wrote a total of fifteen novels and the last one *The Mystery of Edwin Drood* remained unfinished at the time of his death on 9 June 1870.
- Even though several of Dickens' works were published in magazines, he tasted true success with the serial publication of the *Pickwick Papers* from 1836-1837.
- Dickens' empathetic understanding of the lower class London and his comic genius are vividly depicted in monthly instalments like *Oliver Twist* and *Nicholas Nickleby*. One of his most famous works *A Christmas Carol* was published in the year 1843. This work encapsulates his disenchantment with the world's economic drives.
- *David Copperfield* (1849-1850) vividly depicts the harsh and rigidly stratified world which Dickens experienced as a young boy.
- Despite the fact that Dickens may lack George Elliot's profundity, or the consuming passion espoused by Charlotte Bronte and Emily Bronte in their works or the peculiar éclat of Thackeray, yet, we may contend Charles Dickens to be the greatest as he exceeds all of his contemporaries by way of his elemental humanity, almost childlike naiveté and an amazingly prolific imagination.

#### Check Your Progress

12. What is the factor that drives Pip to create expectations for himself?
13. Name the element used to distinguish between member of upper and lower classes.
14. What does Pip realize about the measurement of people's worth and value in the novel?

- What is unique about Dickens' works is that when all of them are joined together as one, creating a world of their own, we realize that it is somewhat different from our own world and even the world of his day and yet very similar to both the worlds in many ways.
- A Dickensian character is built around a single quality and like a Jonsonian 'humour' is seemingly incapable of surprising the readers convincingly.
- Dickens had only modest success on the structural aspects of his literary art as many of his works seem to mock that supposedly ideal of structure or even other principle of pattern.
- Dickens' humour stems from humane sympathy and is quite uplifting. So much so that critics compare him to some of the greatest humourists who came before him, namely, Fielding, Chaucer and Shakespeare. Dickens' humour continually exudes qualities of tolerance, geniality and charity despite being satirical and corrective in nature.
- Dickens views life as a tragi-comedy and despite being aware of the tragedy, he laughs continually because his attitude is healthy and unblemished by morbidity.
- Another unique aspect of Charles Dickens' art as a fiction writer is his propensity to be autobiographical as he continually draws from his own personal experiences and the resultant sympathies and antipathies are quite obstinately manifested by him in his works.
- Set in early Victorian England, *Great Expectations* captures the massive societal changes that were sweeping England during the period.
- On analysing the form under which *Great Expectations* operates, it is easy to observe that it very easily represents the 19th century popular fiction: bildungsroman. This is a form of novel in which the protagonist's personal transformation and growth is depicted through the tracing of the life history from boyhood to manhood, which in the case of *Great Expectations* is reflected through Pip.
- As the protagonist relives his life's story as a child and tells it to us as a grown up adult, there are two Pips in the novel. There's the one whose actions make up the novel's main plot, and there's the other whose thoughts and attitudes shape the reader's perception of the story.
- What is unique about *Great Expectations* is that it is divided into three parts which mark the three stages of Pip's attainment of his expectations.
- The most significant incident in the plot narrative is Pip's meeting with the convict, which happens in the very first part of the novel. Pip is unusually effected by Magwitch, the escaped convict.
- Endless changes are set off in Pip's life the day he is introduced to Miss Havisham and Estella, his first love whom he fell for at first sight and is consumed with strong desires for her as he thinks she is symbolic of culture and wealth and as such is presented before Pip like an impossible dream.
- One of the shrewdest inventions in the *Great Expectations* is the character of Magwitch as he haunts Pip throughout his growing-up years but renders him no harm. He is in fact Pip's secret benefactor as the protagonist finds out as the story unfolds.

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- Pip's finding out that Estella was actually Magwitch's illegitimate daughter and not the princess she thought her to be, makes the adult Pip see her the way she is and someone who is able to change despite her damaging influences and someone who can return to him at the end of the novel as a much better human being.
- *Great Expectations* depicts vividly English life in the mid-nineteenth century, the effects of industrialization and the distinct class divide (between rich and poor) it created as a result.
- The novel depicts characters who face problems just like real life people and thus, the readers come to feel that they are as real as themselves.
- Estella has often been quoted as Dickens' first credible female character. She is a study in contrasts as we learn towards the end of the novel. She undermines all that romantic love stands for. She is bogged down in a certain class system that she represents in a negative way.
- Miss Havisham's character is truly a memorable one. She is not exactly a character that could actually exist outside a novel. As a wealthy dowager living in a rotting mansion, she cuts a pathetic figure with her eccentric ways.
- *Great Expectations* encapsulates in itself and demonstrates the inequities and in-exactitudes existing during the time and enforces a stiff hierarchical segregation while embracing the novelty of the new social classification that relies on self-determination and the capacity to attain higher status by one's actions rather than heredity.
- There are constant reminders for Pip about the traditional structure of social class due to his own low standing and his lack of mobility during his experiences as a young boy at the Satis House.
- It must be noted that all through the novel, it is only Pip who freely moves across various occupations giving the idea that he disproves the otherwise traditional and rigid class structure of the times.
- The novel, *Great Expectations* has an underlying moral theme. It propounds the view that affection, loyalty and conscience are more important than social advancement, wealth and loss. The story shows Pip caught in this web, exploring the ideas of ambition and self-improvement.

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### 3.7 KEY TERMS

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- **Bildungsroman:** It is the popular 19th century style of novel in which the protagonist's personal transformation and growth is depicted through the tracing of the life history from boyhood to manhood.
- **Autodiegetic narrator:** It refers to a narrator that tells the readers his own story by structuring the viewpoint, organising the time and manipulating different kinds of distance.

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### 3.8 ANSWERS TO 'CHECK YOUR PROGRESS'

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1. The semi-autobiographical novel written by Charles Dickens is *David Copperfield*.

2. Dickens' empathetic understanding of the lower class London and his comic genius are vividly depicted in monthly instalments like *Oliver Twist* and *Nicholas Nickleby*.
3. Dickens' perspective on social reform in his works can be summed by the sentence Dickens is a practical realist and no less an optimist.
4. There were quite a few influencers who moved Dickens. These included Goldsmith, Steme, Fielding and Smollet.
5. Bildungsroman is the popular 19th century style of novel in which the protagonist's personal transformation and growth is depicted through the tracing of the life history from boyhood to manhood.
6. The middle class is represented through the character of Herbert Pocket in *Great Expectations*.
7. When Pip realises that he is being a burden on Herbert financially he decides to correct his mistakes by taking Wemmick's help. Pip sets a job for Herbert secretly with Clarriker, a merchant of Wemmick's acquaintance.
8. Dickens wrote the entire novel in the first person to ensure that the readers see from the protagonist Pip's viewpoint and may identify with him from the very start.
9. An autodiegetic narrator is a narrator that tells the readers his own story by structuring the viewpoint, organising the time and manipulating different kinds of distance.
10. The shrewdest invention in the *Great Expectations* is the character of Magwitch.
11. Miss Havisham wears only one shoe because when she learned of Compeyson's betrayal, she had not yet put on the other shoe.
12. What drives Pip to create expectations for himself is the existence of the various identities and old structures of class hierarchy existing in the 19th century England.
13. Hands can be construed as the physical element that assists in distinguishing between members of upper and lower classes.
14. Pip realizes that a person is not valued according to his education or his social status. Conscience and affection are to be valued above scholarly knowledge and social standing.

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### 3.9 QUESTIONS AND EXERCISES

#### Short-Answer Questions

1. Give a brief history of Charles Dickens' life.
2. Write a short note on the plot of the novel *Great Expectations*.
3. State how Dickens describes the character of Miss Havisham.
4. How are the supporting characters helpful in taking the story forward in the novel?
5. Write a short note on the character of Magwitch.
6. How important is ambition to the plot of *Great Expectations*?

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**Long-Answer Questions**

1. Critically evaluate Dickens' writing style.
2. Analyse the journey of the character of Estella in *Great Expectations*.
3. What does the Satis House signify in the novel *Great Expectations*?
4. Describe the journey of Pip in the novel *Great Expectations*.
5. Discuss the theme of class structure as explored in the novel *Great Expectations*.
6. What changes does the first person narration bring to the novel *Great Expectations*?

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**3.10 FURTHER READING**


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- Bloom, Harold, ed. 2002. *Charles Dickens: Bloom's BioCritiques*. New York: Chelsea House Publishers.
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# UNIT 4 ESSAY WRITING

## Structure

- 4.0 Introduction
- 4.1 Unit Objectives
- 4.2 Effective Writing Skills
  - 4.2.1 Characteristics of a Good Essay
  - 4.2.2 Essay and its Types
- 4.3 Parts of an Essay
- 4.4 Selected Essays
- 4.5 Summary
- 4.6 Key Terms
- 4.7 Answers to 'Check Your Progress'
- 4.8 Questions and Exercises
- 4.9 Further Reading

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### 4.0 INTRODUCTION

The Concise Oxford Dictionary defines an essay as 'a literary composition (usually prose and short) on any subject.' In fact, an essay is a short piece of writing on any topic which expresses the author's personal opinion on it. However, the term may also be extended to any written composition which provides information on a given subject or a narrative or descriptive piece of writing. It may include statement of facts, explanation of a topic or can be based on imagination. Depending on the nature of writing, essays are classified into different types.

In this unit, we will be discussing certain skills that one must cultivate for effective writing, the characteristics of an essay, its parts and types. Some hints and guidelines for good essay writing along with sample essays have been given for the convenience of students.

### 4.1 UNIT OBJECTIVES

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

- Explain the term 'essay', its characteristics and types
- Define the characteristics of good writing skills
- Discuss the various steps in essay writing
- Analyse how to approach essays on different topics

### 4.2 EFFECTIVE WRITING SKILLS

Writing is that form of communication which reveals the sender's clarity of thought and expression in encoding a message. Barbara Tuchman, a well-known historian, has very aptly said that though effective communication needs both a sender and a receiver, this process can become more successful if the writer (who is the sender in this case) keeps the written form (the message) simple, concise and brief.

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Effective writing does not happen just on its own. It is a skill which needs to be cultivated. In other words, it involves the practice of following what is commonly called ABC, i.e., Accuracy, Brevity and Clarity. Accuracy here means use of correct facts and figures, language and tone. By brevity is meant the ability to express oneself in a few words, leaving out unnecessary details. Clarity refers to the expression of thought in a clear and simple language.

Since the success of communication, to a large extent, depends on the receiver and how he responds to the message, recognizing the needs, expectations, fears and attitudes of the receiver/s is very essential. In written communication, the feedback is delayed and the receiver cannot immediately clarify his doubts in case of an unclear message. Therefore, getting our written communication right becomes a matter of prime concern.

The next important task for effective writing is to identify and determine the purpose of communication. The purpose of written communication, as communication in general, is two-fold—to inform and to persuade. Informative writing presents information and is expository in nature. Its purpose is to disseminate knowledge, i.e., to educate and not to persuade. Therefore, maintaining maximum objectivity is very essential. Persuasive or argumentative writing aims at convincing the readers about a matter. It expresses opinions rather than facts.

Effective writing skills, therefore, entails planning before writing, identifying the purpose of writing, considering the needs of the audience, choosing appropriate language and effective tone. The ability to communicate a message in a simple, concise and accurate written form makes a person's writing skills effective.

#### 4.2.1 Characteristics of a Good Essay

A good essay must have the following qualities:

1. **Unity:** Unity is the first principle of a good essay. This means that the essay must develop a single idea with a definite purpose. Though the idea must be dealt with in a variety of ways and from different points of view, but all unnecessary details must be excluded.
2. **Order:** The essay should be so ordered in a logical sequence that it comes to a definite conclusion. Thus, planning the structure is important so that thoughts flow in an order without being haphazard and unorganized.
3. **Brevity:** Though the length of an essay depends on the nature of the subject, it must be brief, direct in style and expressed precisely.
4. **Style:** An essay has a literary value. Hence, the style of an essay must be dignified and formal. Colloquial terms, slang words and informal expressions that are non-conventional must be avoided as far as possible. The language used should be simple, clear and direct without any attempts at unnecessary embellishments.
5. **Personal touch:** An essay reflects the personal feelings and opinions of an individual.

Therefore, it must give expression to his unique individuality. One must not be afraid to express himself freely in an essay. The personal touch can be given despite maintaining one's objectivity.

Apart from the above mentioned features, appropriate subject-matter, proper organization and powerful expression of thoughts make an essay effective.



## 4.2.2 Essay and its Types

Essays can be classified as follows:

1. Descriptive
2. Narrative
3. Reflective
4. Imaginative
5. Expository
6. Discursive

However, they cannot be put into water tight compartments and some essays might include features of two or more types. For example, a narrative essay may contain descriptive elements and all essays will be more or less reflective.

1. **Descriptive essays:** A descriptive essay includes the description of some person, place or thing. For example, mother, father, friend (person), Delhi, Bombay, the Taj Mahal (place), cars, aspects of nature like the sun, moon, etc. (thing). As the word suggests, a descriptive essay primarily focuses on specific details and facts pertaining to animate and inanimate things. You could describe a particular creature, or types of clouds. Describing places, buildings and objects, requires familiarity with the subject or close observation. The selection and arrangement of facts should highlight specific characteristics and if there is anything unique or special, you could mention it. A descriptive essay has many images and the tone is usually objective and impersonal. However, the writer's response to the subject he is describing is evident from his choice of words.
2. **Narrative essays:** Narration is extensively used in fiction. It consists mainly in the narration of some event, or series of events. Narrative essays will include reflection and some imagination. It can be a historical story, biography of a great leader, incidents and accidents, a journey or voyage and a real or imaginary story. Narrative essays incorporate features of other styles of essay writing. While the primary emphasis is on narrating or talking about, 'recounting and relating' events in an orderly fashion, descriptive and reflective features are present. A narrative account of any historical event, individual or, episode has to be given in a logical and sequential manner. The narrative could be dramatically presented, but you have to keep an overall coherence in mind. Most newspaper articles tend to be narrative and students find it easier to write narrative essays.
3. **Reflective essays:** Reflection means pondering over a subject or idea. It can include qualities like heroism, honesty, patriotism, socio-political issues such as education, corruption, democracy, philosophical and religious topics.
4. **Imaginative essays:** In an imaginative essay, the writer is required to put himself in someone else's shoes and visualize a situation or experience. For example, an essay on 'If I were the Prime Minister of India' or 'The autobiography of a cow' would be imaginative in nature. Imaginative essays are among the most interesting because the writer gives rein to his imagination and the essay is often characterized by wit, humour, originality. The writer has complete freedom to develop the topic in whichever way he wants to and the style can be personal and subjective. In an imaginative essay, you

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are visualizing a particular situation, which you may not have experienced, except imaginatively, for example, 'The day my father cooked dinner'. Such a situation may never have taken place, yet you can vividly imagine what might transpire if your father had to cook dinner. Imaginative essays are lively in tone, have an original perspective and are personal in expression.

Fictionalizing an episode and writing creatively about it, is also considered as an imaginative essay, for example, 'My summer holidays'. You can write about events that may not have actually taken place, but what you have imagined.

Imaginative essays are fun to write and students should be encouraged to use their imagination and express themselves.

5. **Expository essay:** An expository essay consists of explanation of a subject or topic. For example, institutions or occupations (parliament, farming), scientific subjects (global warming, evolution of man) and literary topics (nature of poetry, the plays of Shakespeare, the poetry of Keats). The word expository means 'to explain'. An essay that deals with the explanation of a particular process, for example, rain harvesting, an institution, (how legislative bodies function) or a natural phenomenon, (black holes in the universe) or the discussion of a particular text or style of writing, is classified as an expository essay. The writer attempts to explain why and how something happens. Here, the writer is expected to demonstrate his familiarity with the subject, provide the necessary information, elaborate wherever possible. It is better to write in a linear, sequential manner and it is important to see that your material is well structured. If you are going to talk about rain harvesting, you need to first explain the term, tell the reader what is required and go through a systematic process, so that the reader understands the entire process and the importance of rain harvesting.
6. **Discursive essay:** Quite often, an essay requires that the writer to discuss a particular subject and come to a conclusion, after examining the merits and demerits of the topic, for example, 'Attendance should be compulsory in a university'. A statement like this challenges a response. You have to be clear about your own view and structure the essay such that the body of the essay examines the arguments that eventually lead to the conclusion.

As far as possible, it is advisable to objectively state both sides and then proceed to your personal conclusion. An essay like this tends to be more analytical as both arguments and counter arguments have to be rationally debated and concluded with a statement or point of view.

### Check Your Progress

1. What is the ABC of effective writing skills?
2. How can a little personal touch make an essay more authentic?
3. What is an expository essay?
4. What do reflective essays express?

## 4.3 PARTS OF AN ESSAY

An essay consists of paragraphs arranged in a sequence. A paragraph is a group of sentences linked together to form a unit. Each paragraph deals with a single idea. In an essay, each paragraph explains or demonstrates a key point or thought of the central idea, usually to inform or persuade. The sentence which expresses the main idea of the paragraph is called the topic sentence. It is also known as key sentence or theme sentence. The topic sentence can come anywhere in the paragraph, either at the beginning, middle or end. All the other sentences in the paragraph are explanations or illustrations of the topic sentence.

In a paragraph, the sentences are in cohesion, i.e., they stick together in unison. Coherence is also an essential requirement of a paragraph. Coherence means the clear and logical linking of ideas in a paragraph. Thus, each sentence should be well linked with the sentence that precedes and follows it. There should be unity in the sense that all the ideas contained within a given paragraph ‘hang together’ in a way that is easy for the reader to understand. When the writer changes the idea, he must begin a new paragraph. This helps the reader to go along with the writer’s thoughts and flow of ideas. The reader knows that the writer is dealing with one main topic and the beginning of a new paragraph signals that the writer is moving on to a new topic. Consider the following example:

*Employees’ attitude at National Electric Company should be improved.* The workers do not feel that they are a working team instead of just individuals. If people felt they were a part of a team, they would not misuse the tools, or deliberately undermine the work of others.

*Management’s attitude towards its employees should also be improved.* Managers at National Electric act as though their employees are incapable of taking decisions or doing their own work. Managers treat workers like objects, not human beings.

In the above example, two ideas are discussed in separate paragraphs. In the first paragraph, the writer deals with the subject of employees’ attitudes. The first sentence is the topic sentence and the other sentences are linked together in a logical sequence and are illustrations of the topic sentence. When the writer changes his idea from employees’ attitudes to management’s attitude, he begins a new paragraph. This new paragraph has a different topic sentence which is written in italics. The second paragraph, too, displays the features of cohesion, coherence and unity.

Now that we are familiar with the idea of a paragraph, let us discuss the different parts of an essay. An essay basically has three paragraphs, namely, introduction, description (or body) and conclusion. The body of the essay may have more than one or several paragraphs depending on the topic. Before the conclusion, there can be a transitional paragraph.

The introductory paragraph introduces the topic and familiarizes the readers with the main idea of the essay. It should be brisk and to the point. The purpose of an introduction is to supply sufficient background information and orient the readers with the subject matter. It may consist of a definition, or a quotation, proverb, a brief story or a general remark, leading up to the subject.

Description means the discussion of the topic in detail. It can include explanations and illustrations on the main idea. The length of the description will depend on the topic in question, but the description should be proportionate with each part getting the due weight. It should be to the point and the use of unnecessary words should be avoided. Words and phrases should be carefully chosen so that they match the subject matter and best express the ideas in mind. The sentences should be so framed that they are quite clear and forcefully explain the topic. The paragraphs should be well-constructed and should be related to one another according to the direction of the essay.

After the body, comes the transitional paragraph which anticipates the conclusion and prepares the readers for the end. The concluding paragraph stems directly from the description and must sum up the whole discussion. An effective and satisfying end to an

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essay is as important as an arresting beginning. An abrupt or feeble ending may spoil the whole effect of the essay. A good conclusion can include a suitable quotation or a striking sentence that would leave the readers satisfied.

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The following essay will make clear the above discussion:

*Consumerism has killed our Humanitarian Values*

*Little Dorothy called her mother,*

*'Mama there's a penniless child,*

*His eyes filled with tears of hunger,*

*Why does no one feed him?'*

*'He's 'penniless' and 'hungry',*

*That's the very reason*

*They don't feed him,'*

*Replied she.*

A round ivory bed covered with golden linen, a walk-in closet, mink blankets, marble floor, a personal Jacuzzi, a huge hall lighted with Swarovski chandeliers, an elaborate meal with the most exotic dishes from different parts of the world, vacations in Paris, Switzerland, Australia, a black 'ROLLS' (Royce), a huge clock that chimes every hour..... I open my eyes with a start as my alarm goes off, I wake up from my dream to face the stark reality of life. Each of us has been into a dreamland (at least once in a while) only to wake up and face reality.

Many of us are extremely brand conscious or rather 'brand freaks', but we forget that there are thousands who die of cold in the dark alleys of the city simply because they cannot wrap a single piece of cloth around their body. And all we do is pity them, but they do not need our pitiful glances. Where has all our compassion for mankind gone? Have we become so self-centered that we do not have a single tear in our eyes when we see penniless little creatures shivering in the cold?

We love going to fancy restaurants for a weekly dine-out. If our parents do not take us out on one Sunday evening, we become cranky and throw tantrums till they give in. But there are millions who cannot have even one square meal a day, countless people who starve to death and do not even have a respectable funeral.

Have you heard of concierge doctors? They are those doctors who tend to the 'needs' of wealthy people in town by paying them a home visit and treating them at home (even the most sophisticated machines are brought to their home), while there are people who die of undiagnosed diseases on the streets.

You would have heard the term 'Born with a silver spoon', it is then that I wonder why can we not, just collect the entire wealth of the world and distribute it equally amongst all the people? It is an absurd idea, but at the same time, it is a grotesque system which allows some people to have too much while many do not have enough.

In the above essay, the introductory paragraph introduces the concept of consumerism through the use of a metaphor. The next two paragraphs constitute the description or body of the essay. The paragraph about the concierge doctors forms the transitional paragraph and marks a change towards the conclusion. The concluding paragraph aptly wraps up the whole essay.

The following are some hints for good essay writing:

1. **Preparation:** One of the chief difficulties that one faces while writing an essay is the lack of content. This difficulty can be overcome by extensive reading and powerful and alert observation. Francis Bacon has very aptly said, 'Reading maketh a full man', i.e., a well-read man has a wide range of knowledge and is complete in all respects. For writing good essays, general knowledge on a variety of topics is very helpful. Apart from reading, a keen observation also adds to one's knowledge of things that are around him. Observation and a critical mind sharpen his intelligence and give him a grasp over any given subject matter. One also learns from other people's conversations and thoughts on a certain issue. Thus, interaction with people is also helpful in gathering information.
2. **Understanding the topic:** For good essay writing, the writer must have a clear and accurate understanding of what he is expected to write. In an essay, it is very important to come straight to the point instead of discussing unnecessary and irrelevant details. For example, if the topic is 'The influence of the media on Indian culture', the writer must understand that the essay has to talk about the specific influence that the media in India has on the culture of the country.
3. **Organizing the material:** The first thing to do is to read the topic a few times to get a clear idea of what is expected from the writer. Once you are clear about the subject, the next step is to reflect over it and think what can be written about it. Attempting to write down the first thing that comes to mind, without knowing what is to come next, is fatal to good essay writing.

As thoughts come in the mind regarding the topic, one must jot them down, lest they are forgotten. Once you have collected enough material, read it over and select the points that are most suitable for your purpose. Selection of points must be done very carefully, omitting repetitions, choosing relevant illustrations and so on. The process of selection will suggest to you the line of thought you may follow in the essay.

After selecting the points, one must arrange them in a logical order so that the essay is properly structured without being disproportionate or full of repetitions and irrelevant details. Hence, making the outline first and then filling in the details is a more effective method. What you are able to produce through this process is a well-articulated essay.

## 4.4 SELECTED ESSAYS

In this section, we will discuss some selected essays for the better understanding of the concept.

### 'Women and Wives' by Joseph Addison

#### Light minds are pleased with trifles.

When I was in France, I used to gaze with great astonishment at the splendid equipages, and party-coloured habits of that fantastic nation. I was one day in particular contemplating a lady that sat in a coach adorned with gilded Cupids, and finely painted with the Loves of Venus and Adonis. The coach was drawn by six milk-white horses, and laden behind with the same number of powdered footmen. Just before the lady were a couple of

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### Check Your Progress

5. What is a topic sentence?
6. State the difference between cohesion and cohesiveness.
7. What is a transitional paragraph?
8. Apart from reading, what is essential for increasing one's knowledge of the world around?
9. How many paragraphs should an essay have?
10. What kind of a style should one cultivate for good essay writing?

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beautiful pages, that were stuck among the harness, and, by their gay dresses and smiling features, looked like the elder brothers of the little boys that were carved and painted in every corner of the coach.

The lady was the unfortunate Cleanthe, who afterwards gave an occasion to a pretty melancholy novel. She had for several years received the addresses of a gentleman, whom, after a long and intimate acquaintance, she forsook upon the account of this shining equipage, which had been offered to her by one of great riches but a crazy constitution. The circumstances in which I saw her were, it seems, the disguises only of a broken heart, and a kind of pageantry to cover distress, for in two months after, she was carried to her grave with the same pomp and magnificence, being sent thither partly by the loss of one lover and partly by the possession of another.

I have often reflected with myself on this unaccountable humour in womankind, of being smitten with everything that is showy and superficial; and on the numberless evils that befall the sex from this light fantastical disposition. I myself remember a young lady that was very warmly solicited by a couple of importunate rivals, who, for several months together, did all they could to recommend themselves, by complacency of behaviour and agreeableness of conversation. At length, when the competition was doubtful, and the lady undetermined in her choice, one of the young lovers very luckily bethought himself of adding a supernumerary lace to his liveries, which had so good an effect that he married her the very week after.

The usual conversation of ordinary women very much cherishes this natural weakness of being taken with outside and appearance. Talk of a new-married couple, and you immediately hear whether they keep their coach and six, or eat in plate. Mention the name of an absent lady, and it is ten to one but you learn something of her gown and petticoat. A ball is a great help to discourse, and a birthday furnishes conversation for a twelvemonth after. A furbelow of precious stones, a hat buttoned with a diamond, a brocade waistcoat or petticoat, are standing topics. In short, they consider only the drapery of the species, and never cast away a thought on those ornaments of the mind that make persons illustrious in themselves and useful to others. When women are thus perpetually dazzling one another's imaginations, and filling their heads with nothing but colours, it is no wonder that they are more attentive to the superficial parts of life than the solid and substantial blessings of it. A girl who has been trained up in this kind of conversation is in danger of every embroidered coat that comes in her way. A pair of fringed gloves may be her ruin. In a word, lace and ribbons, silver and gold galloons, with the like glittering gewgaws, are so many lures to women of weak minds or low educations, and, when artificially displayed, are able to fetch down the most airy coquette from the wildest of her flights and rambles.

True happiness is of a retired nature, and an enemy to pomp and noise; it arises, in the first place, from the enjoyment of one's self, and, in the next, from the friendship and conversation of a few select companions; it loves shade and solitude, and naturally haunts groves and fountains, fields and meadows; in short, it feels everything it wants within itself, and receives no addition from multitudes of witnesses and spectators. On the contrary, false happiness loves to be in a crowd, and to draw the eyes of the world upon her. She does not receive any satisfaction from the applauses which she gives herself, but from the admiration she raises in others. She flourishes in courts and palaces, theatres and assemblies, and has no existence but when she is looked upon.

Aurelia, though a woman of great quality, delights in the privacy of a country life, and passes away a great part of her time in her own walks and gardens. Her husband,

who is her bosom friend and companion in her solitudes, has been in love with her ever since he knew her. They both abound with good sense, consummate virtue, and a mutual esteem; and are a perpetual entertainment to one another. Their family is under so regular an economy, in its hours of devotion and repast, employment and diversion that it looks like a little commonwealth within itself. They often go into company that they may return with the greater delight to one another; and sometimes live in town, not to enjoy it so properly as to grow weary of it, that they may renew in themselves the relish of a country life. By this means they are happy in each other, beloved by their children, adored by their servants, and are become the envy, or rather the delight, of all that know them.

How different to this is the life of Fulvia! She considers her husband as her steward, and looks upon discretion and good housewifery as little domestic virtues unbecoming a woman of quality. She thinks life lost in her own family, and fancies herself out of the world when she is not in the ring, the playhouse, or the drawing-room. She lives in a perpetual motion of body and restlessness of thought, and is never easy in any one place when she thinks there is more company in another. The missing of an opera the first night would be more afflicting to her than the death of a child. She pities all the valuable part of her own sex, and calls every woman of a prudent, modest, retired life, a poor-spirited, unpolished creature. What a mortification would it be to Fulvia, if she knew that her setting herself to view is but exposing herself, and that she grows contemptible by being conspicuous!

I cannot conclude my paper without observing that Virgil has very finely touched upon this female passion for dress and show, in the character of Camilla, who, though she seems to have shaken off all the other weaknesses of her sex, is still described as a woman in this particular. The poet tells us, that after having made a great slaughter of the enemy, she unfortunately cast her eye on a Trojan, who wore an embroidered tunic, a beautiful coat of mail, with a mantle of the finest purple. 'A golden bow', says he, 'hung upon his shoulder; his garment was buckled with a golden clasp, and his head covered with a helmet of the same shining metal.' The Amazon immediately singled out this well-dressed warrior, being seized with a woman's longing for the pretty trappings that he was adorned with:

- Totumque incauta per agmen,  
Faemineo praedae et spoliolum ardebat amore.

AEn., xi. 781.

- So greedy was she bent  
On golden spoils, and on her prey intent.

Dryden

### **'True and False Humour' by Joseph Addison**

#### **Nothing so foolish as the laugh of fools.**

Among all kinds of writing, there is none in which authors are more apt to miscarry than in works of humour, as there is none in which they are more ambitious to excel. It is not an imagination that teems with monsters, a head that is filled with extravagant conceptions, which is capable of furnishing the world with diversions of this nature; and yet, if we look into the productions of several writers, who set up for men of humour, what wild, irregular fancies, what unnatural distortions of thought do we meet with? If they speak nonsense, they believe they are talking humour; and when they have drawn

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together a scheme of absurd, inconsistent ideas, they are not able to read it over to themselves without laughing. These poor gentlemen endeavour to gain themselves the reputation of wits and humorists, by such monstrous conceits as almost qualify them for Bedlam; not considering that humour should always lie under the check of reason, and that it requires the direction of the nicest judgment, by so much the more as it indulges itself in the most boundless freedoms. There is a kind of nature that is to be observed in this sort of compositions, as well as in all other; and a certain regularity of thought which must discover the writer to be a man of sense, at the same time that he appears altogether given up to caprice. For my part, when I read the delirious mirth of an unskillful author, I cannot be so barbarous as to divert myself with it, but am rather apt to pity the man, than to laugh at anything he writes.

The deceased Mr Shadwell, who had himself a great deal of the talent which I am treating of, represents an empty rake, in one of his plays, as very much surprised to hear one say that breaking of windows was not humour; and I question not but several English readers will be as much startled to hear me affirm, that many of those raving, incoherent pieces, which are often spread among us, under odd chimerical titles, are rather the offsprings of a distempered brain than works of humour.

It is, indeed, much easier to describe what is not humour than what is; and very difficult to define it otherwise than as Cowley has done wit, by negatives. Were I to give my own notions of it, I would deliver them after Plato's manner, in a kind of allegory, and, by supposing Humour to be a person, deduce to him all his qualifications, according to the following genealogy. Truth was the founder of the family, and the father of Good Sense. Good Sense was the father of Wit, who married a lady of a collateral line called Mirth, by whom he had issue Humour. Humour, therefore, being the youngest of this illustrious family, and descended from parents of such different dispositions, is very various and unequal in his temper; sometimes you see him putting on grave looks and a solemn habit, sometimes airy in his behaviour and fantastic in his dress; insomuch that at different times he appears as serious as a judge, and as jocular as a merry-andrew. But, as he has a great deal of the mother in his constitution, whatever mood he is in, he never fails to make his company laugh.

But, since there is an impostor abroad, who takes upon him the name of this young gentleman, and would willingly pass for him in the world; to the end that well-meaning persons may not be imposed upon by cheats, I would desire my readers, when they meet with this pretender, to look into his parentage, and to examine him strictly, whether or no he be remotely allied to Truth, and lineally descended from Good Sense; if not, they may conclude him a counterfeit. They may likewise distinguish him by a loud and excessive laughter, in which he seldom gets his company to join with him. For as True Humour generally looks serious while everybody laughs about him, False Humour is always laughing whilst everybody about him looks serious. I shall only add, if he has not in him a mixture of both parents—that is, if he would pass for the offspring of Wit without Mirth, or Mirth without Wit, you may conclude him to be altogether spurious and a cheat.

The impostor of whom I am speaking descends originally from Falsehood, who was the mother of Nonsense, who was brought to bed of a son called Phrensy, who married one of the daughters of Folly, commonly known by the name of Laughter, on whom he begot that monstrous infant of which I have been here speaking. I shall set down at length the genealogical table of False Humour, and, at the same time, place under it the genealogy of True Humour, that the reader may at one view behold their different pedigrees and relations:



Falsehood  
Nonsense  
Phrensy—Laughter  
False Humour  
Truth  
Good Sense  
Wit—Mirth  
Humour

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I might extend the allegory, by mentioning several of the children of False Humour, who are more in number than the sands of the sea, and might in particular enumerate the many sons and daughters which he has begot in this island. But as this would be a very invidious task, I shall only observe in general that False Humour differs from the True as a monkey does from a man.

First of all, he is exceedingly given to little apish tricks and buffooneries.

Second, he so much delights in mimicry, that it is all one to him whether he exposes by it vice and folly, luxury and avarice; or, on the contrary, virtue and wisdom, pain and poverty.

Third, he is wonderfully unlucky, insomuch that he will bite the hand that feeds him, and endeavour to ridicule both friends and foes indifferently. For, having but small talents, he must be merry where he can, not where he should.

Fourth, being entirely void of reason, he pursues no point either of morality or instruction, but is ludicrous only for the sake of being so.

Fifth, being incapable of anything but mock representations, his ridicule is always personal, and aimed at the vicious man, or the writer; not at the vice, or at the writing.

I have here only pointed at the whole species of false humorists; but, as one of my principal designs in this paper is to beat down that malignant spirit which discovers itself in the writings of the present age, I shall not scruple, for the future, to single out any of the small wits that infest the world with such compositions as are ill-natured, immoral, and absurd. This is the only exception which I shall make to the general rule I have prescribed myself, of attacking multitudes; since every honest man ought to look upon himself as in a natural state of war with the libeler and lampooner, and to annoy them wherever they fall in his way. This is but retaliating upon them, and treating them as they treat others.

### **‘A City Night Piece’ by Oliver Goldsmith**

The clock has just struck two, the expiring taper rises and sinks in the socket, the watchman forgets the hour in slumber, the laborious and the happy are at rest, and nothing wakes but meditation, guilt, revelry, and despair. The drunkard once more fills the destroying bowl, the robber walks his midnight round, and the suicide lifts his guilty arm against his own sacred person.

Let me no longer waste the night over the page of antiquity or the sallies of contemporary genius, but pursue the solitary walk, where Vanity, ever changing, but a few hours past walked before me, where she kept up the pageant, and now, like a froward child, seems hushed with her own importunities.

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What a gloom hangs all around! The dying lamp feebly emits a yellow gleam; no sound is heard but of the chiming clock, or the distant watch-dog. All the bustle of human pride is forgotten; an hour like this may well display the emptiness of human vanity.

There will come a time when this temporary solitude may be made continual, and the city itself, like its inhabitants, fade away, and leave a desert in its room.

What cities, as great as this, have once triumphed in existence! had their victories as great, joy as just and as Unbounded, and, with short-sighted presumption, promised themselves immortality! Posterity can hardly trace the situation of some; the sorrowful traveler wanders over the lawful ruins of others; and, as he beholds, he learns wisdom, and feels the transience of every sublunary possession.

‘Here’, he cries, ‘stood their citadel, now grown over with, weeds; there, their senate house, but now the haunt of every noxious reptile; temples and theatres stood here, now only an undistinguished heap of ruin. They are fallen: for luxury and avarice first made them feeble. The rewards of the state were conferred on amusing and not on useful members of society. Their riches and opulence invited the invaders, who, though at first repulsed, returned again, conquered by perseverance, and at last swept the defendants into undistinguished destruction.’

How few appear in those streets which, but some few hours ago, were crowded! And those who appear now no longer wear their daily mask, nor attempt to hide their lewdness or their misery.

But who are those who make the streets their couch, and find a short repose from wretchedness at the doors of the opulent? These are strangers, wanderers, and orphans, whose circumstances are too humble to expect redress, and whose distresses are too great even for pity. Their wretchedness rather excites horror than pity. Some are without the covering even of rags, and others emaciated with disease: the world has disclaimed them; society turns its back upon their distress, and has given them up to nakedness and hunger. These poor shivering females have once seen happier days and been flattered into beauty. They have been prostituted to the gay, luxurious villain, and are now turned out to meet the severity of winter. Perhaps, now lying at the doors of their betrayers, they sue to wretches whose hearts are insensible, to debauchees who may curse but will not relieve them.

Why, why was I born a man, and yet see the sufferings of wretches I cannot relieve! Poor houseless creatures! The world will give you reproaches, but will not give you relief. The slightest misfortunes of the great, the most imaginary uneasinesses of the rich, are aggravated with all the power of eloquence, and held up to engage our attention and sympathetic sorrow. The poor weep unheeded, persecuted by every subordinate species of tyranny; and every law, which gives others security, becomes an enemy to them.

Why was this heart of mine formed with so much sensibility! Or why was not my fortune adapted to its impulse! Tenderness, without a capacity of relieving, only makes the man who feels it more wretched than the object which sues for assistance. Adieu.

### ‘The Sagacity of Certain Insects’ by Oliver Goldsmith

Animals in general are sagacious in proportion as they cultivate society. The elephant and the beaver show the greatest signs of this when united; but when man intrudes into their communities, they lose all their spirit of industry, and testify but a very small share of that sagacity, for which, when in a social state, they are so remarkable.

Among insects, the labours of the bee and the ant have employed the attention and admiration of the naturalist; but their whole sagacity is lost upon separation, and a single bee or ant seems destitute of every degree of industry, is the most stupid insect imaginable, languishes for a time in solitude, and soon dies.

Of all the solitary insects I have ever remarked, the spider is the most sagacious, and its actions to me, who have attentively considered them, seem almost to exceed belief. This insect is formed by nature for a state of war, not only upon other insects, but upon each other. For this state nature seems perfectly well to have formed it. Its head and breast are covered with a strong natural coat of mail, which is impenetrable to the attempts of every other insect, and its belly is enveloped in a soft pliant skin, which eludes the sting even of a wasp. Its legs are terminated by strong claws, not unlike those of a lobster, and their vast length, like spears, serve to keep every assailant at a distance.

Not worse furnished for observation than for an attack or a defence, it has several eyes, large, transparent, and covered with a horny substance, which, however, does not impede its vision. Besides this, it is furnished with a forceps above the mouth, which serves to kill or secure the prey already caught in its claws or its net.

Such are the implements of war with which the body is immediately furnished; but its net to entangle the enemy seems what it chiefly trusts to, and what it takes most pains to render as complete as possible. Nature has furnished the body of this little creature with a glutinous liquid, which proceeding from the anus, it spins into a thread coarser or finer, as it chooses to contract or dilate its sphincter. In order to fix its thread when it begins to weave, it emits a small drop of liquid against the wall, which hardening by degrees, serves to hold the thread very firmly. Then receding from the first point, as it recedes the thread lengthens; and when the spider has come to the place where the other end of the thread should be fixed, gathering up with its claws the thread which would otherwise be too slack, it is stretched tightly, and fixed in the same manner to the wall as before.

In this manner it spins and fixes several threads parallel to each other, which, so to speak, serve as the warp to the intended web. To form the woof, it spins in the same manner its thread, transversely fixing one end to the first thread that was spun, and which is always the strongest of the whole web, and the other to the wall. All these threads, being newly spun, are glutinous, and therefore stick to each other wherever they happen to touch, and in those parts of the web, most exposed to be torn, our natural artist strengthens them, by doubling the threads sometimes six-fold.

Thus far naturalists have gone in the description of this animal: what follows is the result of my own observation upon that species of the insect called a *House-Spider*. I perceived about four years ago, a large spider in one corner of my room making its web; and, though the maid frequently leveled her fatal broom against the labours of the little animal, I had the good fortune then to prevent its destruction, and I may say, it more than paid me by the entertainment it afforded.

In three days the web was, with incredible diligence, completed; nor could I avoid thinking that the insect seemed to exult in its new abode. It frequently traversed it round, examined the strength of every part of it, retired into its hole, and came out very frequently. The first enemy, however, it had to encounter, was another and a much larger spider, which, having no web of its own, and having probably exhausted all its stock in former labours of this kind, came to invade the property of its neighbour. Soon then a terrible encounter ensued, in which the invader seemed to have the victory, and the laborious spider was obliged to take refuge in its hole. Upon this I perceived the victor using every

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art to draw the enemy from his strong hold. He seemed to go off, but quickly returned, and when he found all arts vain, began to demolish the new web without mercy. This brought on another battle, and, contrary to my expectations, the laborious spider became conqueror, and fairly killed his antagonist.

Now then, in peaceable possession of what was justly its own, it waited three days with the utmost patience, repairing the breaches of its web, and taking no sustenance that I could perceive. At last, however, a large blue fly fell into the snare, and struggled hard to get loose. The spider gave it leave to entangle itself as much as possible, but it seemed to be too strong for the cobweb. I must own I was greatly surprized when I saw the spider immediately sally out, and in less than a minute weave a new net round its captive, by which the motion of its wings was stopped, and when it was fairly hampered in this manner, it was seized, and dragged into the hole.

In this manner it lived, in a precarious state, and nature seemed to have fitted it for such a life, for upon a single fly it subsisted for more than a week. I once put a wasp into the net, but when the spider came out in order to seize it as usual, upon perceiving what kind of an enemy it had to deal with, it instantly broke all the bands that held it fast, and contributed all that lay in its power to disengage so formidable an antagonist. When the wasp was at liberty, I expected the spider would have set about repairing the breaches that were made in its net, but those, it seems, were irreparable, wherefore the cobweb was now entirely forsaken, and a new one begun, which was completed in the usual time.

I had now a mind to try how many cobwebs a single spider could furnish, wherefore I destroyed this, and the insect set about another. When I destroyed the other also, its whole stock seemed entirely exhausted, and it could spin no more. The arts it made use of to support itself, now deprived of its great means of subsistence, were indeed surprizing. I have seen it roll up its legs like a ball, and lie motionless for hours together, but cautiously watching all the time; when a fly happened to approach sufficiently near, it would dart out all at once, and often seize its prey.

Of this life, however, it soon began to grow weary, and resolved to invade the possession of some other spider, since it could not make a web of its own. It formed an attack upon a neighboring fortification with great vigour, and at first was as vigorously repulsed. Not daunted, however, with one defeat, in this manner it continued to lay siege to another web for three days, and at length, having killed the defendant, actually took possession. When smaller flies happen to fall into the snare, the spider does not sally out at once, but very patiently waits till it is sure of them; for, upon his immediately approaching the terror of his appearance might give the captive strength sufficient to get loose: the manner then, is to wait patiently till, by ineffectual and impotent struggles, the captive has wasted all its strength, and then he becomes a certain and easy conquest.

The insect I am now describing lived three years; every year it changed its skin and got a new set of legs. I have sometimes plucked off a leg, which grew again in two or three days. At first it dreaded my approach to its web, but at last it became so familiar as to take a fly out of my hand, and upon my touching any part of the web, would immediately leave its hole, prepared either for a defense or an attack.

To complete this description, it may be observed, that the male spider is much less than the female, and that the latter are oviparous. When they come to lay, they spread a part of their web under the eggs, and then roll them up carefully, as we roll up things in a cloth, and thus hatch them in their hole. If disturbed in their holes, they never attempt

to escape without carrying this young brood in their forceps away with them, and thus frequently are sacrificed to their paternal affection.

As soon as ever the young ones leave their artificial covering, they begin to spin, and almost sensibly seem to grow bigger. If they have the good fortune, when even but a day old, to catch a fly, they fall too with good appetites; but they live sometimes three or four days without any sort of sustenance, and yet still continue to grow larger, so as every day to double their former size. As they grow old, however, they do not still continue to increase, but their legs only continue to grow longer; and when a spider becomes entirely stiff with age, and unable to seize its prey, it dies at length of hunger.

### **‘Sights and Monsters’ by Oliver Goldsmith**

Though the frequent invitations I receive from men of distinction here might excite the vanity of some, I am quite mortified, however, when I consider the motives that inspire their civility. I am sent for, not to be treated as a friend, but to satisfy curiosity; not to be entertained so much as wondered at; the same earnestness which excites them to see a Chinese, would have made them equally proud of a visit from the rhinoceros.

From the highest to the lowest, this people seem fond of sights and monsters. I am told of a person here who gets a very comfortable livelihood by making wonders, and then selling or showing them to the people for money; no matter how insignificant they were in the beginning, by locking them up close, and showing for money, they soon became prodigies! His first essay in this way was to exhibit himself as a wax-work figure behind a glass door at a puppet show. Thus, keeping the spectators at a proper distance and having his head adorned with a copper crown, he looked extremely *natural, and very like the life itself*. He continued this exhibition with success, till an involuntary fit of sneezing brought him to life before all the spectators, and consequently rendered him for that time as entirely useless as the peaceable inhabitant of a catacomb.

Determined to act the statue no more, he next levied contributions under the figure of an Indian king; and by painting his face, and counterfeiting the savage howl, he freighted several ladies and children with amazing success: in this manner, therefore, he might have lived very comfortably, had he not been arrested for a debt that was contracted when he was the figure in wax-work: thus his face underwent an involuntary ablution, and he found himself reduced to his primitive complexion and indigence.

After some time, being freed from jail, he was now grown wiser, and instead of making himself a wonder, was resolved only to make wonders. He learned the art of pasting up of mummies; was never at a loss for an artificial *lusus naturae*; nay, it has been reported, that he has sold seven petrified lobsters of his own manufacture to a noted collector of rarities; but this the learned Cracovius Putridus has undertaken to refute in a very elaborate dissertation.

His last wonder was nothing more than a halter, yet by this halter he gained more than by all his former exhibitions. The people, it seems, had got in their heads, that a certain noble criminal was to be hanged with a silken rope. Now there was nothing they so much wished to see as this very rope; and he was resolved to gratify their curiosity: he therefore got one made, not only of silk, but to render it more striking, several threads of gold were intermixed. The people paid their money only to see silk, but were, highly satisfied when they found it was mixed with gold into the bargain. It is scarcely necessary to mention, that the projector sold his silken rope for almost what it had cost him, as soon as the criminal was known to be hanged in hempen materials.

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By their fondness of sights, one would be apt to imagine, that instead of desiring to see things as they should be, they are rather solicitous of seeing them as they ought not to be. A cat with four legs is disregarded, though never so useful; but, if it has but two, and is consequently incapable of catching mice, it is reckoned inestimable, and every man of taste is ready to raise the auction. A man, though in his person faultless as an aerial genius, might starve; but if stuck over with hideous warts like a porcupine, his fortune is made for ever, and he may show himself with impunity and applause.

A good woman in my neighbourhood, who was bred a habit-maker, though she handled her needle tolerably well, could scarcely get employment. But being obliged, by an accident, to have both her hands cut off from the elbows, what would in another country have been her ruin, made her fortune here: she was now thought fit for her trade than before; business flowed in apace, and all people paid for seeing the mantua-maker who wrought without hands.

A gentleman showing me his collection of pictures, stopped at one with peculiar admiration: there, cries he, is an inestimable piece. I gazed at the picture for some time, but could see none of those graces with which he seemed enraptured: it appeared to me the most paltry piece of the whole collection: I therefore demanded where those beauties lay, of which I was yet insensible. Sir, cries he, the merit does not consist in the piece, but in the manner in which it was done. The painter drew the whole with his foot, and held the pencil between his toes: I bought it at a very great price; for peculiar merit should ever be rewarded.

But these people are not more fond of wonders, than liberal in rewarding those who show them. From the wonderful dog of knowledge, at present under the patronage of the nobility, down to the man with the box, who professes to show the best imitation of nature that was ever seen, they all live in luxury. A singing-woman shall collect subscriptions in her own coach and six: a fellow shall make a fortune by tossing a straw from his toe to his nose; one in particular has found that eating fire was the most ready way to live; and another who jingles several bells fixed to his cap, is the only man that I know of, who has received emolument from the labours of his head.

A young author, a man of good-nature and learning, was complaining to me some nights ago of this misplaced generosity of the times. Here, says he, have I spent part of my youth in attempting to instruct and amuse my fellow-creatures, and all my reward has been solitude, poverty, and reproach; while a fellow, possessed of even the smallest share of fiddling merit, or who has perhaps learned to whistle double, is rewarded, applauded, and caressed! Prythee, young man, says I to him, are you ignorant, that in so large a city as this, it is better to be an amusing than a useful member of society? Can you leap up, and touch your feet four times before you come to the ground? No, Sir. Can you stand upon two horses at full speed? No, Sir. Can you swallow a pen-knife? I can do none of these tricks. Why then, cried I, there is no other prudent means of subsistence left, but to apprise the town that you speedily intend to eat up your own nose, by subscription.

I have frequently regretted that none of our Eastern posture-masters, or showmen, have ventured to England. I should be pleased to see that money circulate in Asia, which is now sent to Italy and France, in order to bring their vagabonds hither. Several of our tricks would undoubtedly give the English high satisfaction, Men of fashion would be greatly pleased with the postures as well as the condescension of our dancing girls; and the ladies would equally admire the conductors of our fireworks. What an agreeable surprise would it be to see a huge fellow with whiskers flash a charged blunderbuss full

in a lady's face, without singeing her hair, or melting her pomatum. Perhaps, when the first surprise was over, she might then grow familiar with danger; and the ladies might vie with each other in standing fire with intrepidity.

But of all the wonders of the East, the most useful, and I should fancy the most pleasing, would be the looking-glass of Lao, which reflects the mind as well as the body. It is said, that the Emperor Chusi used to make his ladies dress their heads and their hearts in one of these glasses every morning; while the lady was at her toilet, he would frequently look over her shoulder; and it is recorded that not one was found whose mind was not even more beautiful than her person.

I make no doubt but a glass in this country would have the very same effect. The English ladies would undoubtedly cut very pretty figures in so faithful a monitor. There, should we happen to peep over a lady's shoulder while dressing, we might be able to see neither gaming nor ill-nature; neither pride, debauchery, nor a love of gadding. We should find her, if any sensible defect appeared in the mind, more careful in rectifying it, than plastering up the irreparable decays of the person; nay, I am even apt to fancy, that ladies would find more real pleasure in this utensil in private, than in any other bauble imported from China, though ever so expensive or amusing.

### **'On Friendship' by A. Clutton-Brock**

Friendship is above reason, for, though you find virtues in a friend, he was your friend before you found them. It is a gift that we offer because we must; to give it as the reward of virtue would be to set a price upon it, and those who do that have no friendship to give. If you choose your friends on the ground that you are virtuous and want virtuous company, you are no nearer to true friendship than if you choose them for commercial reasons. Besides, who are you that you should be setting a price upon your friendship? It is enough for any man that he has the divine power of making friends, and he must leave it to that power to determine who his friends shall be. For, though you may choose the virtuous to be your friends, they may not choose you; indeed, friendship cannot grow where there is any calculated choice. It comes, like sleep, when you are not thinking about it; and you should be grateful, without any misgiving, when it comes. So no man who knows what friendship is, ever gave up a friend because he turns out to be disreputable. His only reason for giving up a friend is that he has ceased to care for him; and, when that happens, he should reproach himself for this mortal poverty of affection, not the friend for having proved unworthy. For it is inhuman presumption to say of any man that he is unworthy of your friendship, just as it is to say of any woman, when you have fallen out of love with her, that she was unworthy of your love. In friendship and in love we are always humble, because we see that a free gift has been given to us; and to lose that humility because we have lost friendship or love is to take a pride in what should shame us. There are men who cannot be friends except when they are under an illusion that their friends are perfect, and when the illusion passes there is an end of their friendship. But true friendship has no illusions, for it reaches to that part of a man's nature that is beyond his imperfections, and in doing so it takes all of them for granted. It does not even assume that he is better than other men, for there is egotism in assuming that. A man is your friend, not because of his superiorities, but because there is something open from your nature to his, a way that is closed between you and most men. You and he understand each other, as the phrase is; your relation with him is a rare success among a multitude of failures, and if you are proud of the success you should be ashamed of the failure.

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## ‘The Origin of Species’ by Charles Darwin

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Authors of the highest eminence seem to be fully satisfied with the view that each species has been independently created. To my mind it accords better with what we know of the laws impressed on matter by the creator that the production and extinction of the past and present inhabitants of the world should have been due to secondary causes, like those determining the birth and death of the individual. When I view all beings not as special creations, but as the lineal descendants of some few beings which lived long before the first bed of the Silurian system was deposited, they seem to me to become ennobled. Judging from the past, we may safely infer that not one living species will transmit its unaltered likeness to a distant futurity. And of the species now living very few will transmit progeny of any kind to a far distant futurity; for the manner in which all organic beings are grouped, shows that the greater number of species in each genus, and all the species in many genera, have left no descendants, but have become utterly extinct. We can so far take a prophetic glance into futurity as to foretell that it will be the common and widely spread species, belonging to the larger and dominant groups, which will ultimately prevail and procreate new and dominant species. As all the living forms of life are the lineal descendants of those which lived long before the Silurian epoch, we may feel certain that the ordinary succession by generation has never once been broken, and that no cataclysm has desolated the whole world. Hence, we may look with some confidence to a secure future of equally inappreciable length. And as natural selection works solely by and for the good of each being, all corporeal and mental endowments will tend to progress towards perfection. It is interesting to contemplate a tangled bank, clothed with many plants of many kinds, with birds singing on the bushes, with various insects flitting about, and with worms crawling through the damp earth, and to reflect that these elaborately constructed forms, so different from each other, and dependent on each other in so complex a manner, have all been produced by laws acting around us. These laws, taken in the largest sense, being growth with reproduction; Inheritance which is almost implied by reproduction; variability from the indirect and direct action of the conditions of life, and from use and disuse; a ratio of increase so high as to lead to a struggle for life, and as a consequence to natural selection, entailing divergence of character and the extinction of less-improved forms. Thus, from the war of nature, from famine and death, the most exalted object which we are capable of conceiving, namely, the production of the higher animals, directly follows. There is grandeur in this view of life, with its several powers, having been originally breathed by the creator into a few forms or into one; and that, whilst this planet has gone cycling on according to the fixed law of gravity, from so simple a beginning endless forms most beautiful and most wonderful have been, and are being, evolved.

### ‘Of Parents and Children’ by Francis Bacon

The joys of parents are secret; and so are their griefs and fears. They cannot utter the one; nor will they not utter the other. Children sweeten labors; but they make misfortunes bitterer. They increase the cares of life; but they mitigate the remembrance of death. The perpetuity by generation is common to beasts; but memory, merit, and noble works, are proper to men. And surely a man shall see the noblest works and foundations have proceeded from childless men; which have sought to express the images of their minds, where those of their bodies have failed. So the care of posterity is most in them that have no posterity. They that are the first raisers of their houses, are most indulgent towards their children; beholding them as the continuance, not only of their kind, but of their work; and so both children and creatures.



The difference in affection, of parents towards their several children, is many times unequal; and sometimes unworthy; especially in the mothers; as Solomon said, ‘a wise son rejoiced the father, but an ungracious son shames the mother. A man shall see, where there is a house full of children, one or two of the eldest respected, and the youngest made wantons; but in the midst, some that are as it were forgotten, who many times, nevertheless, prove the best. The illiberality of parents, in allowance towards their children, is a harmful error; makes them base; acquaints them with shifts; makes them sort with mean company; and makes them surfeit more when they come to plenty. And therefore the proof is best, when men keep their authority towards the children, but not their purse.

Men have a foolish manner (both parents and schoolmasters and servants) in creating and breeding an emulation between brothers, during childhood, which many times sorted to discord when they are men, and disturbed families. The Italians make little difference between children, and nephews or near kinsfolks; but so they be of the lump, they care not though they pass not through their own body. And, to say truth, in nature it is much a like matter; insomuch that we see a nephew sometimes resembled an uncle, or a kinsman, more than his own parent; as the blood happens. Let parents choose betimes, the vocations and courses they mean their children should take; for then they are most flexible; and let them not too much apply themselves to the disposition of their children, as thinking they will take best to that, which they have most mind to. Younger brothers are commonly fortunate, but seldom or never where the elder are disinherited.

### **‘How to Observe Nature’ by Elizabeth Brightwen**

There is all the difference between taking a walk simply for exercise, for some special errand, or to enjoy conversation with one’s friends, and the sort of quiet observant stroll I am going to ask my kind readers to take with me to-day. This beautiful world is full of wonders of every kind, full of evidences of the Great Creator’s wisdom and skill in adapting each created thing to its special purpose. The whole realm of nature is meant, I believe, to speak to us, to teach us lessons in parables—to lead our hearts upward to God who made us and fitted us also for our special place in creation.

In the nineteenth Psalm of the Bible, David speaks of the two great books God has given us for our instruction. In the first six verses he speaks of the teachings of the book of nature and the rest of the Psalm deals with the written Word of God. We acknowledge and read the Scriptures as the book which reveals the will of God and His wondrous works for the welfare of mankind, but how many fail to give any time or thought to read the book of nature! Thousands may travel and admire beautiful scenery, and derive a certain amount of pleasure from nature, just glancing at each object, but really observing nothing, and thus failing to learn any of the lessons this world’s beauty is intended to teach, they might almost as well have stayed at home save for the benefit of fresh air and change of scene. The habit of minute and careful observation is seldom taught in childhood, and is not very likely to be gained in later life when the mind is filled with other things. Yet, if natural objects are presented attractively to the young, how quickly they are interested! Question after question is asked, and unconsciously a vast amount of information may be conveyed to an intelligent child’s mind by a simple, happy little chat about some bird or insect. Our ramble might be indefinitely prolonged and still be full of interest and instruction, but in these simple remarks enough has been shown, I trust, to lead many to think and observe closely even minutest thing that catches their attention whilst out for a ramble in lanes and fields. Even a microscopic moss upon an old wall has been suggestive of many lovely thoughts, with which I will conclude our ramble and this chapter.

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It is not news that every third adult of the world smokes and it is a bad habit. It is bad because it causes harm to the smoker's health and puts his life at risk. The worker spends his hard earned money to buy only diseases like mouth cancer, lung cancer, asthma and heart diseases.

In other words, smoking causes cancers of oral cavity, larynx, esophagus and bladder, lung cancer and lung disorders, TB, bronchitis that leads to asthma causing severe breathing trouble, which is a significant factor in the development of coronary heart diseases, damage to the fetuses in women and Buerger's disease (a disease in the veins of legs that may lead to the gangrene of foot) to name a few. Seven people die of tobacco use every minute. A cigarette contains 49 carcinogenic compounds and 4000 other toxins. These toxins cause lung disorders like emphysema, chronic obstructive pulmonary disease, bronchitis, lower immunity and the respiratory system becomes more prone to infections. These also cause high blood pressure, cardio-vascular diseases, stroke and brain hemorrhages. These cause both infertility in men and women, miscarriage, complicated pregnancies and early menopause. Nicotine damages the bones, joints and muscles of the body by causing osteopenia and osteoporosis. Smoking also causes loss of taste, bad breath, dental caries, stained teeth, mouth sores and receding gums. Medical costs incurred on the diseases caused by smoking directly affects the national economy. Smoking causes lower work-efficiency which in turn affects the output in any field.

The capitalists engaged in the manufacture and supply of tobacco products are not only trying to justify the habit of smoking by hiding the above hard facts about its harmful effects but also glorifying smoking as a mark of modern life style in order to promote their business. They are least bothered about the health of the common people. They mint money by brainwashing the common people and exploiting their weakness. The labels of cigar packets are thrown away along with the phrase 'Smoking is injurious to health', printed on it just to comply with the government's mandate. Right thinking people are worried about the glorification of this bad habit. Governments fail to implement their mandate in letter and spirit because of the influence the capitalists wield. One approach is to ban tobacco products altogether and another is to educate the people about the harmful effects of smoking. Successful government authorities lack will power, are morally weak and afraid of adopting the first approach. In order to hide their inability, the authorities put forward a hallow argument that the government gets huge income by way of tax from the cigar manufacturers and suppliers and the tobacco industry offers employment opportunities. Also, such companies spend some money on social rehabilitation and philanthropic activities and make tall claims of social cause. The authorities lack will power and are morally weak either to take firm policy decisions or to implement whatever decisions are taken in letter and spirit again because of rampant bribery and other lucrative favours. They conveniently hide the data on the social front as to how many people are inflicted with breath related diseases and the cost on account of maintenance of public health. The medical expenditure on breath related diseases caused by smoking is not less than the income the government derives from the cigar capitalists. Apart from public health, it also affects the public economy in a big way. By flashing fantastic advertisements on the mass-media they hide the truth about the harmful effects of smoking. Instead of opposing such anti-people advertisements, the mass-media rather shamelessly solicits such advertisements for money because it simply cannot sustain without such advertisements. Therefore, as a face saving formula, the authorities have no option but to take up the second approach—to educate the people against smoking. In the name of educating the people, the government spends crores of rupees

by way of releasing advertisements in the mass-media indicating the harmful effects of smoking. These advertisements are useless, just like drizzling water in the desert. Many doctors, despite knowing the harmful effects of smoking, get addicted to the habit and willingly become chain smokers. This being the influence of the capitalists' advertisements, what change of mind can we expect from the general public? We are obviously in the grip of a capitalist cobweb. Every smoker is supporting capitalistic designs, which makes the rich richer and the poor poorer and reduces ten billion people to paupers to produce ten billionaires.

### **The 'Reality' Of Reality Shows**

Breaking News! A 'so called' celebrity slapped another in a reality show and in an extraordinary example of betrayal, a man was found cheating on his wife of ten years. Sounds pretty exciting? Bet it is! After all, its all this unusual cut-throat 'action' we crave for and the producers of the show know exactly what we want and therefore invest money into it. Today's reality shows are a total package of emotion and action. As the name itself suggests, reality shows are television programmes, wherein, the participant, one amongst the ordinary crowd, gets a chance to be in the limelight for a variable period of time—it could be a few minutes, hours or even days and during his brief stay, tries his luck at winning the sought after prize of the show. These programmes are like contests where many people battle it out till one of the contestants emerges as the winner in the end. Add some spice to a normal competition and you get the perfect recipe of a reality show.

Television today is flooded with reality shows that are based on every random theme one can think of. It all started with quiz and musical talent hunt shows, which initially appeared to be legitimate. But then the great Indian market woke up to a new concept—'reality and lifestyles of famous people'. Now this new product attracted people like bees to honey. After all, who would not want to peek into the lives of our favourite superstars and who, in turn, did not disappoint us to say the least. Countless viewers watch these shows eagerly with their eyes glued to the screen to see the drama unfold before their eyes, making them feel as if it is happening just in front of them and not on the screen. Thus, they are dependent on them for their daily dose of fun-filled entertainment, which even the popular melodramatic daily soaps sometimes fail to offer.

Several people have shot to fame overnight after winning the most coveted possessions these shows offer—name, fame, money—well, that is what the game is all about. But in reality, what is the reality behind these reality shows? Are they genuinely as real as they claim to be? While the general public goes on enjoying these shows, somewhere in the back of the mind, one is always suspecting the genuineness of the product being served. Actually, it varies from show to show. These shows are generally not scripted, but sometimes the organizers themselves break the rules and introduce controversial content in the show in order to achieve higher TRPs (Television Rating Points). It is in such situations that people begin questioning the transparency of such shows. Whatever the reality may be, the truth is that despite all these allegations, people never miss even a single episode of their favourite shows and continue to watch them every day without fail.

### **'Toru Dutt as a Pioneer of Indo-Anglian Poetry'**

The Indo-Anglian poet faces a two-fold challenge. The experience going into Indo-Anglian verse must be authentically Indian; the language employed, on the other hand, must not violate the fundamentals of English music. Toru Dutt is numbered among

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the pioneers of Indo-Anglian verse because she has met this two-fold challenge with core and felicity.

Toru Dutt, like Keats and Chatterton, died before her poetry could come into its prime. And like the poems of Keats, her slender body of poems have the distinct mark of a genuinely gifted poetess. Her feelings, her words, her keen eye for the beauties of nature and her uncompromising sincerity make her one of the most significant of Indian poets writing in English. Though not quite as skilled as Sarojini Naidu, as a pure craftsman, she used the eight-line octosyllabic stanzas with both grace and unconstrained felicity. Her keen eye and delicately sensitive perception of natural beauty make her poems a colourful tapestry of sense imagery. Perhaps, the most significant feature of her poetry is its complete and relentless commitment to the Indian tradition and heritage. Many of her poems deal with myths and legends drawn from the Hindu scriptures. Notable among these is *Sita*. The sonnet *Baugmaree* is splendid as an evocation of the trees in Toru's garden. Apart from her lyrical grace and her astounding adept handling of the suggestive potentiality of words and images, the elegiac tone of many of her poems remind readers of Tennyson's haunting melancholy.

T. S. Eliot has claimed that there is a wide gulf separating the man who suffers from the poet who creates. However, there are artists like D. H. Lawrence in whose works the man and the writer are inseparable. In most of Toru Dutt's poetry too, the poet is inseparable from the person. Her poems are at their best when they are intimately related to her own most intense experiences. Apart from the rich tapestry of images she employs throughout her poems, her accomplishments as a metrical craftsman is of singular significance. Toru Dutt has modelled her poems on those of the English Romantic poets. The subjective element present in her poetry has a strain of Keats's verse. However, her poetry is far more than a mere imitation. It is so achingly expressive because it accomplishes what Herbert Read has called 'the true voice of feeling' and is enough to establish her as one of the most sincere, expressive and significant of Indo-Anglian poets.

### **'Portrayal of The Lower Classes in Mulk Raj Anand's Novels'**

Though our country has produced profound novelists like Sarat Chandra, Premchand and Tagore, none of them have produced realistic or naturalistic fiction after the manner of Balzac or Zola. It is this gap in the realms of Indian fiction which is filled by the novels of Mulk Raj Anand. Tagore was chiefly interested in the upper and middle classes and Sarat Chandra in the lower middle classes and Premchand chose his themes from the peasantry and the humble folk of Uttar Pradesh. Mulk Raj Anand is perhaps the first writer who has written about the misery, the exploitation and the humiliation suffered by the lowest classes of Indian society. Anand is essentially concerned with exposing the exploitation of the lower classes at the hands of the caste Hindus. Like Dickens, Mulk Raj Anand is essentially concerned with the lowest classes and the underdogs of society. His ability of projecting actual slices of Indian life in the minutest of details brings his technique very close to that of the Realists and the Naturalists like Flaubert, Balzac and Zola.

Influenced by Mahatma Gandhi and Karl Marx, Mulk Raj Anand was a great humanist. He believed that by practicing love and compassion for the underdogs, misery and unhappiness can be reduced and removed from this world. According to him, victory over pain and misery should be the supreme goal of all persons and nations. He insisted on the dignity of man, removal of distinctions based on caste, creed and wealth and the practice of compassion as a living value. He added great significance to art and poetry

as instruments for the development of all men and in his crusade against superstition, casteism and feudalism. Anand is a novelist with a mission and his novels are written with the purpose of arousing the social conscience and, by that method, to create in the affluent and powerful people a sense of responsibility towards the victims of injustice and exploitation.

Mulk Raj Anand had first-hand knowledge of the misery, the wretchedness and the squalor of the lower classes of Hindu society. His conscience had rebelled against the injustice meted out to them. His novels are novels of protest, dealing with some social evil, either poverty or injustice. And it is the unflagging realism of his manner and the naturalism of his technique which has made his novels a break-through in the world of Indian fiction. His novels do not employ a complex matrix of episodes and do not lead to a dramatic climax but they leave in us a rankling awareness of the evils of our caste-ridden society. Anand's naturalism is at the root of his triumph as an Indo-Anglian novelist. Though he lacks R. K. Narayan's sagacity and finesse and Raja Rao's sense of the metaphysical nature of man, he has a genuine and deep feeling for the deprived, a grasp of the social structure of his society and an extraordinary fluency of communication.

### R. K. Narayan's Style of Writing

R. K. Narayan was a great 20th century Indian novelist and short story writer whose wide range of representation of human life and society brought him fame both in India and abroad. He was a very keen observer of society and lover of human nature. He used simple language for his works which reflected an unaffected prose accompanied with humour. Throughout his life, he endeavoured to focus on the society through all his works. He portrayed the life of common man. His readers always saw his works as if it were their own life and society. His focus remained on ordinary life and people in everything that he created. He portrays the daily life of the Indian people with a psychological insight into their character and activities very intricately. He often used the contemporary description of the Tamil lifestyle. In fact, his stories focus on the life and culture of Tamil Nadu. But all the same, simplicity has the greatest part in the delineation of his characters which are universal types. Graham Greene compared him to Anton Chekhov because of his simplicity and lustre of prose, its gentle beauty, ironical portrayal of tragic situations interspersed with humour and vivid characterization.

**Realism:** Narayan used realism for all his narratives. He described what he saw around him. His novels and short stories tell the tales of men and women from our society. Malgudi, the backdrop of his novels is a fictionalized setting like any south Indian village. Malgudi acquainted the Indian readers with the local Tamil society where they could feel at home and relate to the incidents, people and their lives. It described the daily life of Indians in a small town. Anthony West of the New Yorker considered Narayan's style of writing full of realism and variety and likened it to Nikolai Gogol's art of storytelling.

**Transparency of vision:** Narayan was a keen observer of people and society and he used the minute details of our lives with simplicity in his books. He was detailed and his language is easily understood by everyone. He had studied the life of ordinary man very closely. The conversation between Raju and the villagers in *The Guide* is an example. Jhumpa Lahiri, the Pulitzer Prize winner Indian author, says that Narayan's short stories have the same captivating feelings as his novels. They are short but they are very interesting and engrossing because of their complete expression and this is where the greatest reward of a story-teller lies. People take lot of time to enjoy its short length and simplicity. According to her, what Narayan encapsulates from the beginning till the end

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of a short story, others strive to achieve in more than hundreds of pages. In fact, his insight, presentation, full expression of the lives of characters in their entirety are all matchless. The depiction of life and characters with full and minute details are a gift of keen insight, sharp observation and the capacity to read the life closely. It is because of these characteristics that he has been compared with O. Henry, Frank O'Connor, and Flannery O'Connor. Lahiri also compares him to Guy de Maupassant for his ability of precision without losing luster and interest in the narrative. Like Maupassant, the great French writer, Narayan also sketches commonplace characters of the middle class life and watches them as a silent spectator.

**Descriptive narrative:** R. K. Narayan's style of prose is descriptive and not analytical. His style is objective where the author is expected to create his characters without involving his personal sentiments and emotions into their actions. He puts them in the story as they are in their real lives. However, he takes full interest in describing his characters with a mild touch of humour. His works, on the whole, show that he was an avid reader of human life. His commonplace incidents are arranged so peculiarly in all their native simplicity that the readers attach their sentiments with them so naturally. The most important part of his style is his capacity of being imaginative. His *Malgudi* is its greatest example. It is a sketch of a local small town where people still take pride in a traditional outlook towards life. They hold superstition in great awe and flinch from accepting anything new or modern. He chose this set-up as a background to show also how modernity had been making inroads into Indian society. The world of *Malgudi* has a wide range of characters

**Humour and irony:** Narayan's writings are interspersed with a soft touch of humour and irony. In his *The Guide*, he chooses an ordinary man Raju who is mean and petty; but the author views him with indulgence. Narayan describes incidents related to him with mild humour and sarcasm adding colour to the portrayal of his character and story. The undercurrent of humour and irony are in the texture of the novel. For example, there is a description in the beginning when Raju takes refuge in a temple by the river and poses as a sage. The writer has given the intricate details of the behaviour of Raju and the villagers with the touch of humour and irony. But there is pathos also in his stories which he handles with great care. It is pity that a man who has been jailed as Raju had done, comes out in the society to cheat people as a pretended sadhu.

Humour and irony walk side by side in his works supporting each other. Humour is used to enliven an incident or a character-sketch whereas there is pathos, pity and irony to highlight the atmosphere of the situation. In this manner, Narayan's writing style can be compared to that of William Faulkner. Both of them were humanists. They picked up an individual to describe the whole society through them. The juxtaposition of the conflict between man and society is a part of the works of Narayan. Though there is similarity between their subjects, especially their vision for humanity. Faulkner used rhetorical prose and illustrated his points with extraordinary descriptions whereas Narayan used simple language and realistic situations.

**Humanism:** R. K. Narayan's works display a dedication to the cause of humanity. It is not patriotic or religious. But his descriptions touch the heart of his readers. His characters are chosen from ordinary life and the details about them are also commonplace, but the beauty lies in their description. Man and his behaviour are his prime interests. For instance, he depicts the character of Raju, the protagonist of his famous novel *The Guide*, from his journey as man of very ordinary and sordid interests to a man who is salvaged by

supreme spirituality. Narayan feels that common man is born with qualities which can lead him to the supreme goal of life. But a man has his shortcomings and to overcome those isn't easy. He deals with the life of a human being with details but his point of view remains humanitarian. All his works display a basic love towards mankind. He deals with even smaller incidents of a human life or a human character with neatness and objectivity to add charm and completeness to the characters.

**Conclusion:** Unlike his other contemporaries, Narayan was fond of simple prose. His style remained simple and precise. His narrative style is a descriptive type of prose. He looked deep into human life with sympathy and dedication and yet kept himself aloof while rendering his descriptions. His satires are mild and appealing to the readers. They are neither coarse nor uninteresting. All his portrayals may also be seen as psychological penetrations into a human heart. His artistic depth in character delineation is partly due to the fact that he was a great reader of human psychology and behaviour. Probably inspired by Thomas Hardy, a man who dedicated novels to the lost territory called Wessex, Narayan created the fictitious world of Malgudi, a small town in Tamilnadu. This imaginary setting is used in all his works. He was concerned with the upliftment of the society also because he was humane to the core looks into the life and actions of his characters sympathetically. He was influenced by many great English novelists. With widely acknowledged simplicity, Narayan's style remains chiefly as that of a humanitarian but he presented life with a touch of humour, irony and depth. He loved the traditional way of storytelling with all its nuances.

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### 4.5 SUMMARY

- Writing is that form of communication which reveals the sender's clarity of thought and expression in encoding a message.
- Effective writing does not happen just on its own. It is a skill which needs to be cultivated.
- In written communication, the feedback is delayed and the receiver cannot immediately clarify his doubts in case of an unclear message.
- The purpose of written communication, as communication in general, is two-fold—to inform and to persuade. Informative writing presents information and is expository in nature.
- Effective writing skills, therefore, entail planning before writing, identifying the purpose of writing, considering the needs of the audience, choosing appropriate language and effective tone.
- A descriptive essay includes the description of some person, place or thing. For example, mother, father, friend (person), Delhi, Bombay, the Taj Mahal (place), cars, aspects of nature like the sun, moon, etc. (thing).
- Narration is extensively used in fiction. It consists mainly in the narration of some event, or series of events. Narrative essays will include reflection and some imagination.
- Reflection means pondering over a subject or idea. It can include qualities like heroism, honesty, patriotism, socio-political issues such as education, corruption, democracy, philosophical and religious topics.

#### Check Your Progress

11. Who is the author of the essay 'True and False Humour'?
12. Name some of the essays of Oliver Goldsmith.
13. State R. K. Narayan's style of prose.

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- In an imaginative essay, the writer is required to put himself in someone else's shoes and visualize a situation or experience.
- An expository essay consists of explanation of a subject or topic. For example, institutions or occupations (parliament, farming), scientific subjects (global warming, evolution of man) and literary topics (nature of poetry, the plays of Shakespeare, the poetry of Keats).
- The word expository means 'to explain'. An essay that deals with the explanation of a particular process, for example, Rain harvesting, an institution, (how legislative bodies function) or a natural phenomenon, (black holes in the universe) or the discussion of a particular text or style of writing, is classified as an expository essay.
- Quite often, an essay requires that the writer to discuss a particular subject and come to a conclusion, after examining the merits and demerits of the topic.
- An essay consists of paragraphs arranged in a sequence. A paragraph is a group of sentences linked together to form a unit.
- Each paragraph deals with a single idea. In an essay, each paragraph explains or demonstrates a key point or thought of the central idea, usually to inform or persuade.
- In a paragraph, the sentences are in cohesion, i.e., they stick together in unison.
- Coherence is also an essential requirement of a paragraph. Coherence means the clear and logical linking of ideas in a paragraph.
- The introductory paragraph introduces the topic and familiarizes the readers with the main idea of the essay.
- Description means the discussion of the topic in detail. It can include explanations and illustrations on the main idea. The length of the description will depend on the topic in question, but the description should be proportionate with each part getting the due weight.

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## 4.6 KEY TERMS

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- **Descriptive essays:** It includes the description of some person, place or thing.
- **Reflective essays:** It means pondering over a subject or idea. It can include qualities like heroism, honesty, patriotism, socio-political issues such as education, corruption, democracy, philosophical and religious topics.
- **Imaginative essays:** In an imaginative essay, the writer is required to put himself in someone else's shoes and visualize a situation or experience.
- **Expository essay:** It consists of explanation of a subject or topic. The word expository means 'to explain'.

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## 4.7 ANSWERS TO 'CHECK YOUR PROGRESS'

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1. The ABC of effective writing skills are Accuracy, Brevity and Clarity.
2. An essay expresses the writer's personal reflection, thoughts, opinions and feelings. Hence, it is natural that it will have a personal touch which makes it more authentic.
3. An expository essay consists of explanation of a subject or topic.



4. Reflective essays express the thoughts of the writer which are recollected after much pondering.
5. The sentence which expresses the main idea of the paragraph is called the topic sentence.
6. Cohesion refers to the link between sentences in a paragraph while coherence refers to the logic which holds them together.
7. A transitional paragraph is one which anticipates the conclusion and prepares the readers for the end.
8. Apart from reading, a keen observation power and conversations with people are essential for increasing one's knowledge of the world around.
9. An essay must have at least three paragraphs—introduction, description and conclusion—though the actual number of paragraphs depends on the topic of the essay.
10. For good essay writing, one must cultivate a style which includes simple and direct language, avoiding repetitions and unnecessary information.
11. 'True and False Humour' is written by Joseph Addison.
12. Some of the essays of Oliver Goldsmith are as follows:
  - 'A City Night Piece'
  - 'The Sagacity of Certain Insects'
  - 'Sights and Monsters'
13. R. K. Narayan's style of prose is descriptive and not analytical. His style is objective where the author is expected to create his characters without involving his personal sentiments and emotions into their actions. He puts them in the story as they are in their real lives.

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## 4.8 QUESTIONS AND EXERCISES

### Short-Answer Questions

1. What is meant by the term 'essay'? Evaluate essay as a component of communicative writing.
2. What is meant by the term 'accuracy' in effective writing?
3. Why is determining the purpose of communication considered necessary to effective writing?
4. How is informative writing different from persuasive or argumentative writing?
5. What is meant by a 'theme sentence' in an essay?

### Long-Answer Questions

1. Identify and describe the various characteristics of a good essay.
2. Identify and explain the various types of essays.
3. What are the different parts of an essay? Distinguish between an introductory paragraph and the body of an essay.
4. What are the necessary steps for good essay writing?

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## 4.9 FURTHER READING

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### NOTES

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# UNIT 5 GRAMMAR AND USAGE

## Structure

- 5.0 Introduction
- 5.1 Unit Objectives
- 5.2 Phrases and Idioms
- 5.3 Synonyms and Antonyms
  - 5.3.1 Synonyms
  - 5.3.2 Antonyms
- 5.4 Modification of Words
  - 5.4.1 Interchange of Parts of Speech
  - 5.4.2 Diminutives
  - 5.4.3 Substitution of a Group of Words by a Single Word
- 5.5 Summary
- 5.6 Key Terms
- 5.7 Answers to 'Check Your Progress'
- 5.8 Questions and Exercises
- 5.9 Further Reading

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### 5.0 INTRODUCTION

While conversing or expressing an idea, it is extremely important that the words which are utilized express the thought very precisely for clear communication. Grammar in the English language is not solely a list of rules that must be followed while constructing sentences, but is also a guideline which assists us in the good use of the vocabulary. There are various different elements of grammar which if used appropriately conveys the message very clearly. These elements, also in a sense, help us to enrich the language and colour of our communication. In this unit, you will learn about the phrases and idioms; antonyms and synonyms; interchange of parts of speech; diminutives and substitution of a group of words by a single word.

### 5.1 UNIT OBJECTIVES

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

- Discuss phrases and meaning and identify different idioms
- Describe the interchange of parts of speech
- Explain the meaning of diminutives
- Discuss the substitution of a group of words by a single word

### 5.2 PHRASES AND IDIOMS

In this section, we will learn two interesting concepts of grammar, whose use make our daily conversations very interesting and lively: phrases and idioms.

## Phrases

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Phrases can be defined as a group of words forming a single combined entity in a clause or a sentence. Phrases do not have a subject or a verb and this is what differentiates it from a clause. Since, they do not have a subject or verb, phrases do not convey the complete thought, but they do form a meaningful unit. Phrases can be of different types noun phrase, verb phrase, adjective phrase, adverb phrase and prepositional phrase.

There are hundreds of phrases in the English language. Below are some commonly used phrases.

1. **Point-blank:** To say something directly or rudely, without explaining or apologising. *Example:* The company owner told the workers point-blank that their demands could not be met.
2. **So-so:** Not very satisfactory. *Example:* My new job is so-so but I cannot afford to give it up.
3. **Chit-chat:** Small talk or unimportant conversation. *Example:* The boss asked them to stop their chit-chat and get on with their work.
4. **See-saw:** Something that goes up and down. *Example:* The Indian rupee has been see-sawing for the last one year.
5. **Black-and-white:** Something which is extremely clear. *Example:* The employees have been told in black-and-white that they have to deliver or quit.
6. **Dos and don'ts:** The rules. *Example:* A good driver always follows the do's and don'ts of driving.
7. **Haves and have-nots:** Those who are rich and those who are not. *Example:* In India, there is a wide gap between the haves and have-nots of the population.
8. **Ins and outs:** The details. *Example:* As I don't know the ins and outs of the situation, I can't really comment on it.
9. **Pros and cons:** Advantages and disadvantages. *Example:* One must consider all the pros and cons before buying a new car.
10. **Tried and tested:** Something which has been well-tested. *Example:* Drinking green tea is a tried and tested way of improving the digestion.
11. **Ups and downs:** Very good times and very bad times. *Example:* He has had a lot of ups and downs in his business.
12. **Flesh and blood:** One's close family. *Example:* You must help your brother – after all, he's your flesh and blood.
13. **By and large:** Generally. *Example:* By and large, people prefer quality products to low prices.
14. **Dead and buried:** Something that is not going to happen again. *Example:* Their long dispute is now dead and buried.
15. **Wine and dine:** To entertain someone lavishly. *Example:* The Chopras are known for wining and dining their guests.
16. **Bread and butter:** The main source of income, or the most important issue. *Example:* Making shoes was the poor shoemaker's bread and butter.
17. **Spick and span:** Very clean and tidy. *Example:* Mrs Khanna's house is always spick and span.

18. **A bit much:** Something that is excessive or annoying. *Example:* All that violence in today's movies is a bit much.
19. **Bad egg:** A person who cannot be trusted. *Example:* Don't hire that man he is a bad egg.
20. **Behind bars:** To be in prison. *Example:* Corrupt people find themselves behind bars one day.

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### Idioms

Idioms can be defined as a group of words in set order which collectively convey a specific meaning. Individually, the words of the idiom have a different meaning of their own. There are hundreds of idioms in the English language. Below are some commonly used idioms:

1. **Add fuel to the fire:** To make a bad situation worse. *Example:* He was already in a bad mood and his wife's nagging added fuel to the fire.
2. **Now and then:** Occasionally. *Example:* We manage to go for a movie now and then.
3. **On the back burner:** To give an issue low priority. *Example:* The women's reservation bill was put on the back burner by the government.
4. **With bated breath:** Very excited. *Example:* We waited with bated breath for the magic show to begin.
5. **Beeline for:** To head directly to a place. *Example:* At the Diwali Mela, the children made a beeline for the snacks stalls.
6. **Neck and neck:** Very close. *Example:* The two candidates are running neck and neck in the elections.
7. **Apple of the eye:** Someone who is cherished above all others. *Example:* Abhishek is the apple of his father's eye.
8. **To cry wolf:** To raise a false alarm. *Example:* We were told that there was a fire in the building, but someone was just crying wolf.
9. **From rags to riches:** To go from being very poor to being very wealthy. *Example:* The famous actor went from rags to riches in one year.
10. **A knee-jerk reaction:** An automatic response. *Example:* Please think carefully about the proposal—don't give a knee-jerk reaction.
11. **Over the top:** Very excessive. *Example:* The businessman went over the top in spending money at his daughter's wedding.
12. **Pass the buck:** Avoid responsibility by giving it to someone else. *Example:* When the workers complained, the manager passed the buck to the supervisor.
13. **Go scot-free:** To escape without punishment. *Example:* The people who had started the fake finance company went scot-free.
14. **Turn a blind eye:** Refuse to acknowledge something. *Example:* Despite many accidents, the local authorities turned a blind eye to the bad roads.
15. **A cut above:** To be superior or better. *Example:* The actress who won the National Award is certainly a cut above the rest.
16. **Rain or shine:** No matter what the weather is like. *Example:* Rain or shine, he goes for a walk at the same time every day.

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17. **Wild goose chase:** A futile or hopeless pursuit. *Example:* The police thought that they would catch the gang leader, but they were on a wild goose chase.
18. **Last-ditch effort:** A final effort. *Example:* The team made a last-ditch effort and managed to win the match.
19. **Lock horns:** To have a heated argument. *Example:* The two politicians locked horns in Parliament over the issue of corruption.
20. **Nip something in the bud:** To end something at an early stage. *Example:* It is said that evil should always be nipped in the bud.
19. **Lock horns:** To have a heated argument. *Example:* The two politicians locked horns in Parliament over the issue of corruption.
20. **Nip something in the bud:** To end something at an early stage. *Example:* It is said that evil should always be nipped in the bud.
21. **To be born with a silver spoon in one's mouth:** To have opportunities that you did not earn but that you have from the influence of your family. *Example:* Bill was not born with a silver spoon in his mouth—he came from a poor family and earned his success through hard work.
22. **To be at daggers drawn:** To be angry and ready to fight or argue with each other. *Example:* Local residents are at daggers drawn with the council over rubbish collection.
23. **To be at sea:** To be confused; to be lost and bewildered. *Example:* When it comes to problems on trigonometry, Mustafa is totally at sea.
24. **To be in the dark:** Not to have knowledge about something. *Example:* Taha did not go for the party as he was in the dark about it.
25. **To be in hot water:** To be in trouble. *Example:* Sushila was in hot water as she had not submitted her practical file to her science teacher.
26. **To be on the run:** To try to avoid being caught. *Example:* The dreaded criminal was on the run after he managed to escape from prison.
27. **To be out of the woods:** To emerge safely out of danger. *Example:* It is true that the economy is getting stronger, but we are not out of the woods yet.
28. **To be under someone's thumb:** To be completely under someone's control. *Example:* The committee is firmly under his thumb and will agree to whatever he asks.
29. **To break the ice:** To attempt to become friends with someone. *Example:* It is very difficult to break the ice at formal events.
31. **To make a mountain of a molehill:** To make a major issue out of a minor one; to exaggerate the importance of something. *Example:* Lata aggravated the situation by making a mountain out of a molehill.
32. **To put a spoke in someone's wheel:** To deliberately hinder someone's plan. *Example:* Whenever Jalil embarked on a new venture, someone put a spoke in his wheel and he was not able to proceed.
33. **To put two and two together:** To make a correct guess from existing evidence. *Example:* When I saw the crumbs on the table, I put two and two together and guessed that Muzna had eaten the cake.

34. **To turn a deaf ear:** To ignore someone when they complain or ask for something. *Example:* Tanya's mother turned a deaf ear when she pleaded for more ice cream.
35. **To turn over a new leaf:** To begin afresh, to reform. *Example:* The teachers at school were pleasantly surprised when Mukesh turned over a new leaf and started taking his studies seriously.
36. **To turn the tables (on someone):** To cause a reversal in plans. *Example:* She turned the tables by playing a better game and recently has won most of her matches.
37. **To blow one's own trumpet:** To brag about yourself. *Example:* Sushil thinks that he will become popular if he blows his own trumpet.
38. **To burn the candles at both ends:** Someone who burns the candle at both ends lives life at a hectic pace, doing things which are likely to affect their health badly. *Example:* She'd been burning the candle at both ends studying for her exams and made herself ill in the process.
39. **To curry favour:** To try to make someone like you or support you by doing things to please them. *Example:* The government has promised lower taxes in an attempt to curry favour with the voters.
40. **To cut one's coat according to one's cloth:** To plan one's aims and activities in line with one's resources and circumstances. *Example:* We would like a bigger house, but we must cut our coat according to our cloth.
41. **To fish in troubled waters:** To involve oneself in a difficult, confused, or dangerous situation, especially with a view to gaining an advantage. *Example:* Frank is fishing in troubled waters by buying more shares of that company.
42. **To hit the nail on the head:** To do exactly the right thing; to do something in the most effective and efficient way. *Example:* Susan hit the nail on the head when she said that most people were expecting a holiday after the working weekend.
43. **To kill two birds with one stone:** To solve two problems with one single action. *Example:* Tanushree says that she kills two birds with one stone if she does her own housework because she gets the house clean and she gets some exercise at the same time.
44. **To know where the shoe pinches:** To know exactly what the problem is; to know how much someone else is suffering. *Example:* As I've been through this myself, I know where the shoe pinches.
45. **To let the cat out of the bag:** To reveal a secret. *Example:* Smita did not want anyone in the office to know that it was her birthday but her colleague let the cat out of the bag.
46. **To smell a rat:** To be suspicious. *Example:* Indraneil did not say anything but from his silence that evening, his mother could smell a rat.
47. **To wash one's hands off something:** to stop being involved with or responsible for someone or something. *Example:* Veena couldn't wait to wash her hands off the on-going project.
48. **To wash your dirty linen in public:** To talk to other people about personal things that you should keep private. *Example:* I was brought up to believe that it was wrong to wash your dirty linen in public.

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49. **To dig up:** To go to great effort to find someone or something. *Example:* Grandma dug up some toys from the large trunk in the attic.
50. **To lay your cards on the table:** To tell someone honestly, what you think or what you plan to do. *Example:* Sohail decided to lay his cards on the table and close the deal for the house.

### 5.3 SYNONYMS AND ANTONYMS

In this section, we will look at the grammar section dealing with vocabulary: words and their meanings. Under this, we will discuss the synonyms and antonyms.

#### 5.3.1 Synonyms

Effective expression in the English language—oral or written — comes from the knowledge of vocabulary.

Synonyms are words that mean the same or nearly the same thing but their usage in sentences may sometimes vary depending on the context of the passage. Synonyms are also used to avoid repetition of the same word in a sentence, yet conserve the meaning of the sentence. In fact, to have a good control over the English language, it is important to have a good command over synonyms.

Two words are often said to be synonymous if they have the same implication. Synonyms can be found in any of the parts of speech (e.g. nouns, verbs, adjectives, adverbs or prepositions), as long as both members of the pair belong to the same part of speech.

Examples of a few synonyms are:

- Baby (noun) - infant, child, toddler, new-born
- Petty crime - misdemeanour (noun), offence
- Student (noun)- pupil, learner, beginner, trainee
- Buy (verb) - purchase, procure, obtain, acquire, get
- Pretty (adjective) - attractive, good-looking, sweet, cute
- Sick (adjective) - ill, unwell, ailing, under the weather
- Quickly and speedily (adverb) - rapidly, hastily, promptly
- Freedom and liberty (noun) - choice, freewill, sovereignty
- Dead and deceased (adjective) - lifeless, departed, silent, boring

You must note that some synonyms are defined with respect to the sense of certain words. Look at the following examples:

The word *expired* as in ‘having lost validity’ (used in the context of medicines, or the tenure of a position held by someone) does not necessarily mean death.

The word ‘pupil’ as in ‘the iris of the eye’ does not necessarily mean student.

There are very few words which are truly synonymous in meaning, that is, have exactly the same meaning. Generally, there are some differences in the usage if not in the meaning.

For example, the words *aged*, *ancient*, *obsolete*, and *matured*.

*Aged* implies of *advanced age* and is applicable to people.

#### Check Your Progress

1. Give two examples of phrases and use them in sentences.
2. Give two examples of idioms and use them in sentences.



**Ancient** implies *of or in time long past* and is applicable to objects, animate or inanimate.

**Obsolete** implies *no longer in general use* and is applicable to fashion, mobile phones, gadgets.

**Matured** implies *ripe*, and is applicable to fruits, or fully aged, as in cheese or wine.

#### Examples of Synonyms

Let us now look at a few important synonyms.

##### 1. Absolute

**Part of Speech:** *adjective*

**Definition:** Having and exercising complete political power and control.

**Synonyms:** absolutistic, arbitrary, autarchic, autarchical

**Part of Speech:** *noun*

**Synonyms:** positiveness, positivity, totality, unconditionality

##### 2. Candid

**Part of Speech:** *adjective*

**Definition:** Manifesting honesty and directness, especially in speech.

**Synonyms:** artless, blunt, clear, direct,

**Part of Speech:** *noun*

**Synonyms:** candidness, candour, honesty

##### 3. Definite

**Part of Speech:** *adjective*

**Definition:** Having distinct limits.

**Synonyms:** determinate, fixed, limited

**Part of Speech:** *adjective*

**Definition:** Known positively.

**Synonyms:** certain, positive, sure

**Part of Speech:** *noun*

**Synonyms:** definiteness, definitude, finality, finitude, inevitability, precision, tangibility

##### 4. Economy

**Definition:** Careful use of material resources.

**Part of Speech:** *adjective*

**Synonyms:** cheese-paring, economic, economical, frugal,

**Part of Speech:** *noun*

**Synonyms:** administration, austerity, conservation, discretion,

**Part of Speech:** *verb*

**Synonyms:** curtail, cut back, economize, and retrench

##### 5. Fastidious

**Part of Speech:** *adjective*

**Definition:** Showing or marked by attentiveness to all aspects or details.

**Synonyms:** meticulous, painstaking, punctilious, scrupulous

##### 6. Gamut

**Part of Speech:** *noun*

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**Definition:** the full range or compass of recognized musical notes; by extension, the compass of an instrument or voice

**Synonyms:** compass, continuum, extent, field,

7. **Illiterate**

**Part of Speech:** *adjective*

**Definition:** Without education or knowledge.

**Synonyms:** ignorant, uneducated, unlearned, and unschooled

8. **Immaculate**

**Part of Speech:** *adjective*

**Definition:** Free from dirt, stain, or impurities.

**Synonyms:** flawless, clean, spotless, unblemished

9. **Innocuous**

**Part of Speech:** *adjective*

**Definition:** Devoid of hurtful qualities

**Synonyms:** harmless, innocent, inoffensive

10. **Morbid**

**Part of Speech:** *adjective*

**Definition:** Susceptible to or marked by preoccupation with unwholesome matters

**Synonyms:** diseased, sick, unhealthy, dreadful

**Part of Speech:** *noun*

**Synonyms:** cachexia, gruesomeness, morbidity

**Use Easy Words**

The golden rule for good English is to use small and easy-to-understand words. Avoid using big and difficult words. However, it is important to know both easy and difficult words. There are instances when big words are appropriate to drive home the meaning compared to the small ones. The following is a list of big words and their synonyms which are easy and simple to understand and use.

<i>Big words</i>	<i>Small words</i>	<i>Big words</i>	<i>Small words</i>
Cinerary	ashes	Mendicant	beggar
Accessory	additional	Salutary	beneficial
Contiguous	adjoining	Vaunt	boast
Pristine	ancient	Eructation	belching
Callisthenics	athletics	Clocher	belfry
Derelict	abandoned	Nigrescent	blackish
Eschew	avoid	Setaceous	bristly
Fortuitous	accidental	Vociferate	Bawl
Minauderie	affectation	Osseous	bony
Pugnacious	aggressive	Alacrity	briskness
Propitiate	appease	Succinct	brief
Supercilious	arrogant	Turpitude	baseness
Vituperate	abuse	Acerbity	bitterness
Fictitious	artificial	Compendious	brief

Plenipotentiary	ambassador	Pugilist	boxer
Dudgeon	anger	Benediction	blessing
Cecity	blindness	Grandiloquent	bombastic
Jeune	bare	Consuetude	custom
Audacious	bold	Recreant	coward
Sanguinary	blood-thirsty	Debonair	courteous
Encephalon	brain	Sangfroid	coolness,
Thrasonical	boasting	calmness	
Decapitate,	Malediction	curse	
Decollate	behead	Pureile	childish
Impeccable	blameless	Cupidity	covetousness
Terminus	boundary	Pellucid	clear
Credence	belief	Chanticleer	cock
Sterile	barren	Felicitation	congratulation
Delinquent	culprit	Lethal,	
Perfunctory	careless	Lethiferous	deadly
Chronometer	clock	Quotidian	daily
Querimonious,	Demise	death	
Querulous	complaining	Negation	denial
Vitiate	corrupt	Quiescent	dormant
Calcareous	chalky	Assiduity	diligence
Myriad	countless	Delectable	delightful
Coerce	compel		
	Lexicon,		
Vanquish	conquer	Thesaurus	dictionary
Insouciant	careless	Tenement	dwelling-house
Acatalectic	complete	Hallucination	delusion
Twaddle	chatter	Intrepidity	daring
Obsequious	cringing	Aphonia	dumbness
Hamate	hooked	Esculent	edible
Vouchsafe	condescend	Edible	eatable
Ingenuous	candid	Avidity	eagerness
Vicissitude	change	Aximious	excellent
Ludicrous	comical	Elucidate	explain
Frigid	cold	Inane, vacuous	empty
Coagulation	clotting	Sempirvirent	evergreen
Masticate	chew	Commutation	exchange
Tranquil	calm	Sempiternal	everlasting
Ambiguous	Equivocal	Tentative	experimental
	Adversary	enemy	
Dubious	doubtful	Exorbitant	excessive

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Opprobrium	disgrace	Oriental	eastern
Beguile	deceive	Reverberate	echo
Ignominy	disgrace	Interminable	endless
Desuetude	disuse	Gratuitous	free
Internecline	deadly	Valediction	farewell
Commination	denunciation	Intimidate	frighten
Inebriate	drunk	Obese	fat
Labefaction	decay	Quondam	former
Procrastinate	defer	Adulation	flattery
Sediment	dregs	Parsimonious	frugal
Defeasance	defeat	Absolution	forgiveness
Denegation	denial	Plenary	full
Evanesce	disappear	Plenitude	fullness
Insubordinate	disobedient	Decrepit	feeble
Portal	door	Oblivion	forgetfulness
Decadence	decay	Timorous	fearful
Traduce	defame	Aliment	food
Inundate	flood	Manacle	handcuff
Vapulation	flogging	Assuetude	habit
Prospicience	foresight	Co-adjutor	helper
Fatucus,	Pendulous	hanging	
Desipient	foolish	Colossal	huge
Prognosis	forecast	Recluse	hermit
Fugacious	fleeting	Asperity	harshness
Insipience	foolishness	Deleterious,	
Plumose	feathery	Noxious	hurtful
	Corneous	homy	
Adipose	fatty	Animosity	hatred
Pusilanimous	faint-hearted	Cursory	hasty
Mendacity	falsehood	Nostalgia	home-sickness
Spurious	false	Secrete	hide
Amity	friendship	Moiety	half
Fecundity	fruitfulness	Faineant	idle
Replete	full	Propensity	inclination
Amicable	friendly	Inadequate	insufficient
Aptitude	fitness		
Edacious	greedy	Incarcerate	imprison
Hiatus	gap	Irascible	irritable
Mucilage	gum	Nescient	ignorant
Cupidity	greed	Simulacrum	image
Vertigo	giddiness	Animus	intention

Confabulate	gossip	Valetudinarian	invalid
Garish	gaudy	Ameliorate	improve
Porraceous	Afflatus	inspiration	
Viridescent	greenish	Contumelious	insolent
Authentic	genuine	Disingenuous	insincere
Chivalrous	gallant	Inexorable	inflexible
Conjecture,			
Surmise	guess	Facetious	jocular
Jocund	gay	Succulent	juicy
Habiliment	garment	Convivial	jovial
Culpable	guilty		
Voracious	gluttonous	geniculate	knotted
Gravement	grievance	Osculate	kiss
Merchandise	goods		
Wraith	ghost	Erudite	learned
	Rapacious	greedy	Inanimate lifeless
Colleen	lass,	girl	
Domicile	house,home	Indolent	lazy
Gigantic	huge	Lascivious	lewd
Ululate	howl	Deficiency	lack
Innocuous			
Innoxious	harmless	Extortionate	oppressive
Acephalous	headless	Translucent	opaque
	Senile	old	
Missive	letter	Encomium	
Vivacious	lively	Eulogy	praise
Avocation	occupation	Fortitude	strength
Elliptical	oval	Contumacious	stubborn
Sudation	sweet		
Udometer	rain-gauge	Amorphous	shapeless
Veritable	real	Insomnia	sleeplessness
Alacrity	readiness	Subaltern	subordinate
Temerarious	reckless	Immaculate	spotless
Compunction	remorse	Asphyxia	suffocation
Refescent	reddish	Tardy	slow
Desultory	rambling	Conspectus	synopsis
Renovate	renew	Reticent	silent
Insurgent	rebel	Condiddle	steal
Insurrection	rebellion	Succeedaneous	substitute
Taciturn	silent		
Transgression	sin	Vilify	slander

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Exiguous	slender		
Vasid	sticky	Garrulous,	
Arenaceous	sandy	Loquacious	talkative
Deglutition	swallowing	Cogitate	think
Espionage	spying	Totile	twisted
Aspersio	slander	Endeavour	try
Truculent	savage	Lacerate,	
Velocity	swiftness	Lancinate	tear
Disseminate	scatter	Veracity	truth
Somnolence	sleep	Minacious	threatening
Edulcorate	sweeten	Sepulchre	tomb
	Expectorate	spit	Titillate      tickle
Lentitude	slowness	Anourous	tailless
Pertinacious	stubborn	Stratagem	trick
Acauline	slemless	Tenuity	thinness
Proclivitous	steep	Chicanery	trickery
Homily	sermon	Diaphanous	transparent
Consign	send	Edentate	toothless
Exiguous	small	Histrionic	theatrical
Obdurate	stubborn		
Surreptitious,	Consentaneous	unanimous	
Clandestine	secret	Incertitude	uncertainty
Acerbity	sourness	Incessant	unceasing
Interstice	space	Oecumenical	universal
Prehensile	seizing	Rectitude	uprightness
Declivity	slope	Inefidel	unspeakable
Pishogue	sorcery	Mendacious	untruthful
Amanuensis	secretary	Subterranean	underground

**Source:** Sidhu, C.D., Prem Nath and Kapil Kapoor. 2004. Comprehensive English Grammar and Composition. New Delhi: Khosla Publishing House.

### 5.3.2 Antonyms

You have already learnt about synonyms or words having similar meanings. Antonyms on the other hand, are more commonly known as opposites. An antonym is a word or a phrase that means the opposite of another word or phrase. An antonym is often the negative connotation of a particular word as is evident from the following examples:

Rich	Poor
Friend	Enemy
Truth	Lie
Knowledge	Ignorance
Win	Lose

While conversing, there is always an unavoidable need for an appropriate word suitable to the occasion. With a good knowledge of words, one can express one's thoughts and feelings exactly.

### Examples of Antonyms

- (i) The Finance Minister tried to be as **precise** as possible in his statement on public policy. One should try to be **exact** in his calculations.

#### Antonyms:

1. Incorrect
2. Inaccurate
3. Inexact
4. Wrong
5. False

- (ii) **Power** corrupts a man and absolute power corrupts absolutely.

#### Antonyms:

1. Submission
2. Obedience
3. Subjection
4. Thralldom
5. Slavery

- (iii) Ravi is a **bold** and **courageous** person.

#### Antonyms

1. Afraid
2. Cowardly
3. Daunted
4. Timid
5. Intimidated

- (iv) His approach was so **brutal** that we all maintained a distance from him.

#### Antonyms

1. Humane
2. Merciful
3. Kind
4. Sympathetic
5. Compassionate

- (v) He is **clever** at algebra.

#### Antonyms:

1. Foolish
2. Dull
3. Doltish
4. Incapable
5. Stupid

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(vi) She is **curious** to know what he said about her.

**Antonyms:**

1. Incurious
2. Indifferent
3. Uninterested

(vii) The **depraved** employees will come forward to raise their issues against the Company.

**Antonyms:**

1. Chaste
2. Decent
3. Ethical
4. Good
5. Honorable

(viii) Rita's stupidity will drive me to **despair**.

**Antonyms:**

1. Confidence
2. Encouragement
3. Elation
4. Hopefulness
5. Expectation

(ix) His **extravagant** habits explain why he is always in debt.

**Antonyms:**

1. Reasonable
2. Judicious
3. Moderate
4. Temperate
5. Economical

(x) She was **enchanted** with the poems you wrote for her.

**Antonyms:**

1. Disgusted
2. Repulsed
3. Replied
4. Nauseated

**Frequently used Antonyms**

Let us now look at a list of commonly used nouns, verbs and adjectives along with their antonyms.

**Nouns and their antonyms**

<i>Nouns</i>	<i>Antonyms</i>	<i>Nouns</i>	<i>Antonyms</i>
Absence	presence	Comparison	Contrast
	Darkness	light	
Arrival	departure	Day	night



Ascent	descent	Death	birth
Attack	defence	Delay	haste
Beginning	end	Disease, Sickness	health
Belief	disbelief, doubt	Dwarf	giant
	Equality	inequality	
Bravery	cowardice	Enemy	friend
Care	neglect	Entrance	exit
Exterior	interior	Master	servant
Fact	fiction	Merit	demerit
Failure	success	Miser	spendthrift
Falsehood	truth	Motion	rest
Freedom	slavery	Peace	war
	Pleasure	pain	
Gain, Profit	loss	Plenty	scarcity
	Pride	humility	
Glory	shame	Prose	poetry
Happiness	misery	Punishment	reward
Head	tail	Rear	front
Heaven	hell	Sea	land
Honour	shame, dishonour	Smile	frown
	Solid	liquid	
Hope	despair	Synonym	antonym
Ignorance	knowledge	Tolerance	intolerance
Import	export	Union	disunion
	discord; split		
Increase	decrease		
Interest	indifference	Use	disuse, abuse
Joy	sorrow	Victory	defeat
Likeness	difference	Virtue	vice
Love	hatred	War	peace

### Verbs and their antonyms

Accept	reject, refuse	Continue	discontinue
Acquit	convict	Contract	expand
Advance	retreat	Create,	destroy
Agree	disagree, differ	Encourage	discourage
	Enrich	impoverish	
	Enter	exit	
Allow	disallow, forbid	Enthroned	dethrone
Appear	disappear	Fail	pass, succeed
Approach	retire	Gather	scatter
Go	come		

### NOTES

**NOTES**

Assemble	disperse	Grant	reject
Collect	Scatter	Help	hinder
Attract	repel	Hide	seek
Beautify	disfigure	Hurt	heal
Borrow	lend	Include	exclude
Compare	contrast	inhale	exhale
Conceal	reveal	Join	disjoin
Confess	deny	Laugh	weep
Lead	follow	Remember	forget
Lessen	extend	Rise	fall, set
Lock	unlock	Sink	swim
Make	mar	Strengthen	weaken
Obey	disobey	take	give
Offer	refuse	Teach	learn
Open	shut	Tie	untie
Oppose	yield	Unite	disunite
Please	displease	Wake	sleep
Praise	defame	Wane	wax
Punish	reward	Win	lose
Raise	lower	Worry	comfort

**Adjectives and their antonyms**

<i>Adjectives</i>	<i>Antonyms</i>	<i>Adjectives</i>	<i>Antonyms</i>
Absent	present	Definite	indefinite, vague
Active	inactive, passive	Dense	sparse, rare
Acute	obtuse	Different	similar
All	none	Difficult	easy
Ancient	modern	Diligent	lazy
Animate	inanimate	Doubtful	sure
Artificial	natural	Dry	wet
Barren	fertile	Early	late
Base	noble	Equal	unequal
Beautiful	ugly	Eligible	ineligible
Bitter	sweet	Empty	full
Blunt	sharp	External	internal
Bold	timid	Fair	foul
Brave	cowardly	Faithful	faithless
Bright	dull	False	true
Broad	narrow	Far	near
Careful	careless	Familiar	strange
Certain	uncertain	Famous	notorious
Cheap	dear	Foolish	wise

Cheerful	cheerless	Fortunate	unfortunate
	Fresh	stale	
Clean	dirty	Friendly	unfriendly
Clever	stupid	Fruitful	fruitless
Coarse	fine	General	particular
Cold	hot	Glad, happy	sad
Cool	warm	Great	small
Correct	incorrect	Guilty	innocent
Cruel	kind	Hard	soft
Dead	alive	Heavy	light
Deep shallow	Hollow		

**NOTES**

**Source:** Sidhu, C.D., Prem Nath and Kapil Kapoor. 2004. Comprehensive English Grammar and Composition. New Delhi: Khosla Publishing House.

**Synonyms and Antonyms in Sentences**

1. This town is **famous** for its beautiful castles.

The above sentence can be rewritten, using either of the following synonyms, without changing the meaning.

**Synonyms:**

Noted

Celebrated

Renowned

However, the use of the antonyms of the word 'famous' would change the meaning of the sentence completely. For example, the use of obscure instead of 'famous' would result in a sentence like:

The castles in this town are **obscure**.

**Antonyms:**

Obscure

Fugitive

Inglorious

Let us now look at a few more examples:

2. His taking to alcohol was a great **grief** to his parents.

**Synonyms:**

Pain

Sorrow

Trouble

**Antonyms:**

Glee

Joy

Contentment

## NOTES

3. He told us a story full of **humour**.

**Synonyms:**

Wit

Fun

Comedy

**Antonyms:**

Solemnity

Gravity

Sobriety

4. When there is no work, one remains **idle**.

**Synonyms:**

Inert

Unoccupied

Lazy

**Antonyms:**

Active

Busy

Diligent

5. He is **innocent** like a newborn baby.

**Synonyms:**

Blameless

Sinless

Untainted

**Antonyms:**

Blameworthy

Culpable

Guilty

6. My college days are the most **joyous** days in my life.

**Synonyms:**

Ecstatic

Elated

Jovial

**Antonyms:**

Gloomy

Miserable

Morose

7. This **lonely** mountain village has produced many writers of high repute.

**Synonyms:**

Solitary

Desolate

Isolated

**Antonyms:**

Escorted

Attended

Befriended

8. His music was full of **melody**.

**Synonyms:**

Unison

Tune

Symphony

**Antonyms:**

Discord

Distortion

Disruption

9. Is the meaning of the word still **obscure** to him?

**Synonyms:**

Dark

Doubtful

Dim

**Antonyms:**

Apparent

Intelligible

Lucid

10. The atmosphere in that hotel is too **odious** to stay there even for a day.

**Synonyms:**

Abhorrent

Abominable

Detestable

**Antonyms:**

Agreeable

Charming

Congenial

11. Ram prefers quality to **quantity**.

**Synonyms:**

Measure

Amount

Bulk

**NOTES**

## NOTES

### Antonyms:

Shortage

Deficiency

Insufficient

12. How do you **rate** this movie?

### Synonyms:

Appraise

Compute

Estimate

### Antonyms:

Miscalculate

Underrate

Undervalue

13. The President is held in high **respect**.

### Synonyms:

Esteem

Regard

Consideration

### Antonyms:

Contempt

Disregard

Disown

14. He is lost in the **shallow** argument.

### Synonyms:

Trifle

Superficial

Slight

### Antonyms:

Wise

Intelligent

Shrewd

15. The **tedious** work took an entire day to complete.

### Synonyms:

Banal

Drab

Dreary

### Check Your Progress

3. Give three synonyms and antonyms of the word 'lonely'.
4. Provide the definition and synonyms of the word 'definite' as a noun, a verb and an adjective.

**Antonyms:**

Enjoyable

Enthralling

Exciting

**NOTES**

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**5.4 MODIFICATION OF WORDS**

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In this section, we will have a look at the various ways in which the words are modified to convey the exact meaning which is intended. To learn this, we will discuss the interchange of parts of speech, diminutives and substitution of words by a single word.

**5.4.1 Interchange of Parts of Speech**

Parts of speech refers to the categorization of words according to the function they play in the formation of a sentence. There are nine parts of speech: noun, pronoun, adjective, verb, adverb, interjection, conjunction, determiner and preposition. In the English language, the words can be distinguished from each other for their functionality as a part of speech on the basis of prefixes and suffixes. These when added to the begin or the end of a word makes it either a noun, a verb, an adjective or an adverb.

Verb	Noun	Adjective	Adverb
en-	-ment	-able -	ly
im-	-ness	-ible	
-es	-tion	-ive	
-ed	-sion	-ful	
-ire/ize	-ance	-al	
-fy	-cy	-ant	
-en	-ity	-ic	
-ate	-th	-ave	
-ish	-ce	-ent	
-dom	-ant		
-ship	-ar		
-hood	-ing		
-er/or	-y		

Some important words can be changed into all the four forms.

e.g.

Verb	Noun	Adjective	Adverb
devote	devotee, devotion	devoted, devotional	devotedly, devotionally
construct	construction	constructive	constructively
harmonised	harmony	harmonious	harmoniously
sensed	sense	sensitive, sensible	sensitively, sensibly
possess	possessions	possessive	possessively

## NOTES

reflect	reflection, reflectiveness	reflective	reflectively
astonished	astonishment	astonishing	astonishingly
integrate	integration	integral	integrally
fancied	fancy	fanciful	fancifully
impose	imposition	imposing	imposingly
bonded	bond	bonded, bonding	bonding
stylized	style	stylish	stylishly
expertise	expertness, expert	expert	expertly
symbolise	symbol	symbolic, symbolical	symbolically
proportioned	proportion	proportionate	proportionately
marvelled	marvel	marvellous	marvellously
architected	architecture	architectural	architecturally
manage	management	manageable	manageably
restrict	restriction	restrictive, restricted	restrictively
directed	direction	direct	directly
excite	excitement	excited	excitedly
form	formation	formative	formatively
speeded, sped	speed	speedy	speedily
exceed	excess	excessive	excessively
confuse	confusion	confusing	confusingly
attract	attraction	attractive	attractively
endanger	danger	dangerous	dangerously
notice	notice	noticeable	noticeably
vary	variation, variety	various	variedly
stressed	stress	stressful	stressfully
economies	economy	economic, economical	economically
relate	relation, relativity	relative	relatively
systematize	system	systematic, systemic	systematically
initiate	initiation	initiative	initiatively
persist	persistence	persistent	persistently
brutalise	brutality	brutal	brutally
include	inclusion	inclusive	inclusively
dirtyed	dirt	dirty	dirtyly
triumphed	triumph	triumphant	triumphantly
reduce	reduction	reducible, reductive	reducibly, reductively
diminish	diminution	diminishable	diminutively
faced	face	facial	facially
functioned	function, functioning	functioning	functionally
tensed	tension	tensed	tensely
unsustained	unsustainability	unsustainable	unsustainably
tasted	taste, tastefulness	tasty, tasteful	tastefully
remedied	remedy	remedial	remedially
acquiesce	acquiescence	acquiescent	acquiescently



sophisticate	sophistication	sophisticate	sophistically
revere	reverence	reverential	reverentially
obey	obedience	obedient	obediently
regarded	regard	regardful	regardfully
forced	force	forcible	forcibly
depend	dependence	dependent	dependently
secure	security	secured	securely
devote	devotion	devotional	devotionally
suffice	sufficiency	sufficient	sufficiently
authorise	authority	authoritative	authoritatively
define	definition	definite	definitely
compare	comparison	comparative	comparatively
enrich	riches	rich, richer	richly
inform	information	informative	informatively
amazed	amazement	amazing	amazingly
pitied	pity	piteous	piteously
delighted	delight	delightful	delightfully
popularize	popularity	popular	popularly
wondered	wonder	wonderful	wonderfully
expect	expectation	expectant	expectantly
needed	need, needy	needful	needfully
amuse	amusement	amusing	amusingly
lavished	lavishness	lavish	lavishly
believe	belief, believer	believable	believably
particularize	particular, particularity	particular	particularly
sensed	sense	sensible	sensibly
respond	response	responsive	responsively
commune	community	communal	communally
act	action, act	active	actively
brief	brevity	brief	briefly
relate	relevance	relevant	relevantly
completed	completion	complete	completely
practise	practice	practical	practically
mean	meaning	meaningful	meaningfully
express	expression	expressive	expressively
commercialize	commerce	commercial	commercially
conclude	conclusion	conclusive	conclusively
necessitate	necessity	necessary	necessarily
spirited	spirit	spiritual	spiritually
focused	focus	focal	focally
create	creation, creator	creative	creatively
visualise	vision, visionary	visual	visually
tortured	torture	torturous	torturously

**NOTES**

**NOTES**

warmed	warmth	warm	warmly
energies	energy	energetic	energetically
famed	fame	famous	famously
specify	specification	specific, specifiable	specifically
sympathise	sympathy	sympathetic	sympathetically
compose	composer	composed	composedly
figured	figure	figurative	figuratively
observe	observance	observable	observably
relate	relationship	relative	relatively
fascinate	fascination	fascinating	fascinatingly
engage	engagement	engaging	engagingly
entertain	entertainment	entertaining	entertainingly
clear	clarity	clear	clearly
loved	love	lovable	lovingly
think	thought	thoughtful	thoughtfully
decide	decision	decisive	decisively
appreciate	appreciation	appreciative	appreciatively
feared	fear	fearful	fearfully

**5.4.2 Diminutives**

Diminutives refers to the words which are used to indicate the sound or describe that the object in question is in fact 'small'. A diminutive is created by the addition of a prefix or suffix to the word. The word 'diminutive' has latin origin where the literal meaning is 'to lessen'. The diminutives are used not only to indicate the smaller versions of things, but are also used to refer to young ones of animals and as subjectively as a term of endearment.

Some of the common prefixes that are used to make a word diminutive are:

- Micro
- Mini
- Nano

Examples with the above prefixes are microscope, microprocessor, microchip, miniskirt, minilab, nanometre, nanosecond etc.

Some of the common suffixes which are used to make a word diminutive are:

- -ette
- -ine
- -ish
- -let
- -ling
- -ock
- -y

Examples of the above suffixes to words are tambourine, cigarette, leaflet, duckling, buttock, yellowy, nestling, tallish, figurine, billy, tommy etc.

### 5.4.3 Substitution of a Group of Words by a Single Word

There are many words that can be used to replace a phrase without changing its meaning. These words are called ‘one word substitutes’. These one word substitutes not only make the language sound beautiful but also helps the promotion of brevity in writing. Verbosity may seem convenient at times, but the effect of one word substitution allows the main thought to be conveyed with great clarity, keeping the focus on the important argument. The English language has a lot of one word substitution and for better communication, it is prudent that one improves the vocabulary.

The following are a few examples of a few one word substitutes:

Words or promises that are not true	Eyewash
A disease spreading over a large area	Epidemic
That which cannot be avoided	Inevitable
That which lasts forever	Eternal

## NOTES

## 5.5 SUMMARY

- Phrases can be defined as a group of words forming a single combined entity in a clause or a sentence. Phrases do not have a subject or a verb and this is what differentiates it from a clause.
- Phrases can be of different types noun phrase, verb phrase, adjective phrase, adverb phrase and prepositional phrase.
- There are hundreds of phrases in the English language. Some commonly used phrases are point-blank, dos and don'ts, bad eggs etc.
- Idioms can be defined as a group of words in set order which collectively convey a specific meaning. Individually, the words of the idiom have a different meaning of their own.
- There are hundreds of idioms in the English language. Some commonly used idiom are: on the back burner, go scot-free, a cut above, and lock horns etc.
- Synonyms are words that mean the same or nearly the same thing but their usage in sentences may sometimes vary depending on the context of the passage. Synonyms are also used to avoid repetition of the same word in a sentence, yet conserve the meaning of the sentence.
- Examples of a few synonyms are: Baby (noun) - infant, child, toddler, new-born; Petty crime - misdemeanour (noun), offence; Student (noun)- pupil, learner, beginner, trainee etc.
- The golden rule for good English is to use small and easy-to-understand words. Avoid using big and difficult words. However, it is important to know both easy and difficult words. There are instances when big words are appropriate to drive home the meaning compared to the small ones.
- Antonyms are more commonly known as opposites. An antonym is a word or a phrase that means the opposite of another word or phrase. Some examples include Rich-Poor, Friend-Enemy and Truth-Lie etc.

### Check Your Progress

5. Give examples of the prefixes which can be used to make a diminutive.
6. Name the verb, adjective and adverb forms of the word ‘architecture’.
7. Which word can substitute the phrase ‘that which lasts forever’?

## NOTES

- In the English language, the words can be distinguished from each other for their functionality as a part of speech on the basis of prefixes and suffixes. These when added to the begin or the end of a word makes it either a noun, a verb, an adjective or an adverb.
- Diminutives refers to the words which are used to indicate the sound or describe that the object in question is in fact 'small'. A diminutive is created by the addition of a prefix or suffix to the word. Examples include: microscope, microprocessor, microchip, miniskirt, nestling, tallish, figurine, billy, tommy etc.
- There are many words that can be used to replace a phrase without changing its meaning. These words are called 'one word substitutes'. For example, the phrase 'a disease spreading over a large area' can be replaced by one word substitute 'epidemic'.

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## 5.6 KEY TERMS

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- **Phrase:** It is a small group of words standing together as a conceptual unit, typically forming a component of a clause.
- **Idiom:** It refers to a group of words established by usage as having a meaning not deducible from those of the individual words (e.g. over the moon, see the light).
- **Antonym:** It is a word opposite in meaning to another (e.g. bad and good).
- **Synonym:** It is a word or phrase that means exactly or nearly the same as another word or phrase in the same language, for example shut is a synonym of close.
- **Diminutive:** It refers to a word, name, or suffix implying smallness, either actual or imputed to convey affection, scorn, etc. (e.g. teeny, -let, -kins).

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## 5.7 ANSWERS TO 'CHECK YOUR PROGRESS'

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1. Examples of phrases are:
  - (a) Chit-chat: Small talk or unimportant conversation. Example: The boss asked them to stop their chit-chat and get on with their work.
  - (b) Black-and-white: Something which is extremely clear.  
Example: The employees have been told in black-and-white that they have to deliver or quit.
2. Examples of idioms are:
  - (a) Now and then: Occasionally. Example: We manage to go for a movie now and then.
  - (b) A cut above: To be superior or better.  
Example: The actress who won the National Award is certainly a cut above the rest.
3. Three synonym of the word 'lonely' are: solitary, desolate and isolated while three antonym of the word 'lonely' are: escorted, attended and befriended.

4. The synonyms of the word 'definite' as an adjective are determinate, fixed, limited, certain, positive and sure; and as a noun are definiteness, definitude, finality, finitude, inevitability, precision and tangibility.
5. Some of the common prefixes that are used to make a word diminutive are:
  - Micro
  - Mini
  - Nano
6. The interchange of parts of speech of the word 'architecture' can be seen as per the following:  
Verb: Architected; Adverb: Architectural; and Adjective: Architecturally.
7. The word 'eternal' is the one-word substitute for the phrase 'that which lasts forever'.

## NOTES

## 5.8 QUESTIONS AND EXERCISES

### Short-Answer Questions

1. Define synonyms and antonyms.
2. What is the difference between the suffixes and prefixes used in the interchange of parts of speech and diminutives?
3. How is a phrase different from a clause?
4. What is the meaning of the idiom 'go scot-free'?
5. What are big words and small words? List some examples.

### Long-Answer Questions

1. Explain the meaning of phrases with the help of examples.
2. How are diminutives made? What is their purpose in the English language?
3. Discuss the concept of idioms.
4. Describe how synonyms change with the change in the parts of speech with examples.
5. Give examples of how different prefixes and suffixes are used for the interchange of a word into different parts of speech.

## 5.9 FURTHER READING

- Thorat, Ashok, *et al.* 2000. *English for Practical Purposes*. New Delhi: Macmillan Publishers.
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