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**SCHOOL OF SCIENCE & HUMANITIES**

**DEPARTMENT OF ENGLISH**

**UNIT 1 – History of English Literature – SHS1105**

## ELIZABETHAN PERIOD & SHAKESPEARE PERIOD

### Edmund Spenser:

Edmund Spenser (ca. 1552-1599) ranks as the foremost English poet of the 16th century. Famous as the author of the unfinished epic poem *The Faerie Queene*, he is the poet of an ordered yet passionate Elizabethan world. He was deeply affected by Irish faerie mythology, which he knew from his home at Kilcolman and possibly from his Irish wife Elizabeth Boyle. His genocidal tracts against Gaelic culture were war propaganda. His house (ruins remain) was burned to the ground during the war, causing him to flee Ireland.

Edmund Spenser was born in East Smithfield, London, around the year 1552, though there is some ambiguity as to the exact date of his birth. As a young boy, he was educated in London at the Merchant Taylors' School and matriculated as a sizar at Pembroke College, Cambridge.

Spenser's main poetical works are:

- *The Shepherds' Calendar* (1579)
- *Amoretti* (1595), a collection of eighty-eight Petrarchan sonnets
- *Epithalamion* (1599), a magnificent ode written on the occasion of his marriage with Elizabeth Boyle
- *Prothalamion* (1596), an ode on marriage
- *Astrophel* (1596), an elegy on the death of Sir Philip
- *Sidney Four Hymns* (1576) written to glorify love and honour
- *The Faerie Queen* (1589–90).

Spenser matriculated at the University of Cambridge on May 20, 1569. Ten years later he published his first publicly-released poetic work, *The Shepherds' Calendar*, to positive reviews. He then began work on his magnum opus, *The Faerie Queene*, publishing the first three of the projected twelve books in 1590.

Spenser was an English subject during the reign of Queen Elizabeth I, to whose court he aspired.

He offered Elizabeth *The Faerie Queene* in an attempt to gain her favor. Unfortunately, Spenser held to political views and associated with individuals that did not meet the approval of Elizabeth's principal secretary, Lord Burghley. Through Burghley's influence, Spenser was given only a small pension in recognition for his grand poetic work.

Sent to Ireland to hold English property on the oft-rebellious island, Spenser there met and wooed Elizabeth Boyle, a young woman from an important English family, who was probably half his age. His year-long suit to win her hand in marriage is recorded (with a deal of poetic license) in Spenser's *Amoretti*. Spenser also dedicated a marriage song, *Epithalamion*, to his young bride. As was the custom, both seemingly personal works of poetry were published for mass consumption in 1594 and helped Spenser's literary career to improve. In the meantime, Spenser completed the fourth through sixth books of *The Faerie Queene* and published them, along with revised versions of the first three books, in 1596.

Spenser's masterpiece is the epic poem *The Faerie Queene*. The first three books of *The Faerie Queene* were published in 1590, and a second set of three books were published in 1596. Spenser originally indicated that he intended the poem to consist of twelve books, so the version of the poem we have today is incomplete. Despite this, it remains one of the longest poems in the English language. It is an allegorical work, and can be read (as Spenser presumably intended) on several levels of allegory, including as praise of Queen Elizabeth I. In a completely allegorical context, the poem follows several knights in an examination of several virtues. In Spenser's "A Letter of the Authors," he states that the entire epic poem is "cloudily enwrapped in allegorical devises," and that the aim behind *The Faerie Queene* was to "fashion a gentleman or noble person in virtuous and gentle discipline."

Spenser published numerous relatively short poems in the last decade of the sixteenth century, almost all of which consider love or sorrow. In 1591, he published *Complaints*, a collection of poems that express complaints in mournful or mocking tones. Four years later, in 1595, Spenser published *Amoretti and Epithalamion*. This volume contains eighty-nine sonnets commemorating his courtship of Elizabeth Boyle. In "Amoretti," Spenser uses subtle humour and parody while praising his beloved, reworking Petrarchism in his treatment of longing for a woman.

"Epithalamion," similar to "Amoretti," deals in part with the unease in the development of a romantic and sexual relationship. It was written for his wedding to his young bride, Elizabeth Boyle. The poem consists of 365 long lines, corresponding to the days of the year; 68 short lines, claimed to represent the sum of the 52 weeks, 12 months, and 4 seasons of the annual cycle; and 24 stanzas, corresponding to the diurnal and sidereal hours.<sup>[citation needed]</sup> Some have speculated that the attention to disquiet in general reflects Spenser's personal anxieties at the time, as he was unable to complete his most significant work, *The Faerie Queene*. In the following year Spenser released *Prothalamion*, a wedding song written for the daughters of a duke, allegedly in hopes to gain favour in the court.<sup>[17]</sup>

Spenser used a distinctive verse form, called the Spenserian stanza, in several works, including *The Faerie Queene*. The stanza's main meter is iambic pentameter with a final line in iambic hexameter (having six feet or stresses, known as an Alexandrine), and the rhyme scheme is ababbcbcc. He also used his own rhyme scheme for the sonnet. In a Spenserian sonnet, the last line of every quatrain is linked with the first line of the next one, yielding the rhyme scheme ababbcbccdcdee.

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## JOHN DONNE:

John Donne (1572 -1631) was an English poet, satirist, lawyer and a cleric in the Church of England. He is considered the pre-eminent representative of the metaphysical poets. His works are noted for their strong, sensual style and include sonnets, love poetry, religious poems, Latin translations, epigrams, elegies, songs, satires and sermons. His poetry is noted for its vibrancy of language and inventiveness of metaphor, especially compared to that of his contemporaries. Donne's style is characterised by abrupt openings and various paradoxes, ironies and dislocations. These features, along with his frequent dramatic or everyday speech rhythms, his tense syntax and his tough eloquence, were both a reaction against the smoothness of conventional Elizabethan poetry and an adaptation into English of European baroque and mannerist techniques. His early career was marked by poetry that bore immense knowledge of British society and he met that knowledge with sharp criticism. Another important theme in Donne

's poetry is the idea of true religion, something that he spent much time considering and theorising

about. He wrote secular poems as well as erotic and love poems. He is particularly famous for his mastery of metaphysical conceits. Despite his great education and poetic talents, Donne lived in poverty for several years, relying heavily on wealthy friends. He spent much of the money he inherited during and after his education on womanising, literature, pastimes, and travel. In 1601, Donne secretly married Anne More, with whom he had twelve children. In 1615, he became an Anglican priest, although he did not want to take Anglican orders. He did so because King James I persistently ordered it. In 1621, he was appointed the Dean of St Paul's Cathedral in London. He also served as a member of parliament in 1601 and in 1614.

### **Writings**

Early poetry Donne's earliest poems showed a developed knowledge of English society coupled with sharp criticism of its problems. His satires dealt with common Elizabethan topics, such as corruption in the legal system, mediocre poets, and pompous courtiers. His images of sickness, vomit, manure, and plague reflected his strongly satiric view of a world populated by all the fools and knaves of England. His third satire, however, deals with the problem of true religion, a matter of great importance to Donne. He argued that it was better to examine carefully one's religious convictions than blindly to follow any established tradition, for none would be saved at the Final Judgment, by claiming "A Harry, or a Martin taught [them] this." Donne's early career was also notable for his erotic poetry, especially his elegies, in which he employed unconventional metaphors, such as a flea biting two lovers being compared to sex.

In Elegy XIX: To His Mistris Going to Bed , he poetically undressed his mistress and compared the act of fondling to the exploration of America. In Elegy XVIII , he compared the gap between his lover's breasts to the Hellespont. Some have speculated that Donne's numerous illnesses, financial strain, and the deaths of his friends all contributed to the development of a more somber and pious tone in his later poems. The change can be clearly seen in "An Anatomy of the World" (1611), a poem that Donne wrote in memory of Elizabeth Drury, daughter of his patron, Sir Robert Drury of Hawstead, Suffolk. This poem treats Elizabeth's demise with extreme gloominess, using it as a symbol for the Fall of Man and the destruction of the universe. The poem "A Nocturnal upon S. Lucy's Day, Being the Shortest Day", concerns the poet's despair at the death of a loved one. In it Donne expresses a feeling of utter negation and hopelessness, saying that "I am every

dead thing...re-begot / Of absence, darkness, death." This famous work was probably written in 1627 when both Donne's friend Lucy, Countess of Bedford, and his daughter Lucy Donne died. Three years later, in 1630, Donne wrote his will on Saint Lucy's day (13 December), the date the poem describes as "Both the year's, and the day's deep midnight."

The increasing gloominess of Donne's tone may also be observed in the religious works that he began writing during the same period. His early belief in the value of scepticism now gave way to a firm faith in the traditional teachings of the Bible. Having converted to the Anglican Church, Donne focused his literary career on religious literature. He quickly became noted for his sermons and religious poems. The lines of these sermons and devotional works would come to influence future works of English literature, such as Ernest Hemingway's *For Whom the Bell Tolls*, which took its title from a passage in Meditation XVII of *Devotions upon Emergent Occasions*, and Thomas Merton's *No Man is an Island*, which took its title from the same source. Towards the end of his life Donne wrote works that challenged death, and the fear that it inspired in many men, on the grounds of his belief that those who die are sent to Heaven to live eternally. One example of this challenge is his Holy Sonnet X, *Death Be Not Proud*, from which come the famous lines "Death, be not proud, though some have called thee / Mighty and dreadful, for thou art not so." Even as he lay dying during Lent in 1631, he rose from his sickbed and delivered the *Death's Duel* sermon, which was later described as his own funeral sermon. *Death's Duel* portrays life as a steady descent to suffering and death, yet sees hope in salvation and immortality through an embrace of God, Christ and the Resurrection.

### **STYLE:**

His work has received much criticism over the years, especially concerning his metaphysical form. Donne is generally considered the most prominent member of the Metaphysical poets, a phrase coined in 1781 by the critic Dr Johnson, following a comment on Donne by the poet John Dryden. Dryden had written of Donne in 1693: "He affects the metaphysics, not only in his satires, but in his amorous verses, where nature only should reign; and perplexes the minds of the fair sex with nice speculations of philosophy, when he should engage their hearts, and entertain them with the softnesses of love." In *Life of Cowley* (from Samuel Johnson's 1781 work of biography and criticism *Lives of the Most Eminent English Poets*), Johnson refers to the beginning of the

seventeenth century in which there "appeared a race of writers that may be termed the metaphysical poets". Donne's immediate successors in poetry therefore tended to regard his works with ambivalence, with the Neoclassical poets regarding his conceits as abuse of the metaphor. However he was revived by Romantic poets such as Coleridge and Browning, though his more recent revival in the early twentieth century by poets such as T. S. Eliot and critics like F R Leavis tended to portray him, with approval, as an anti-Romantic.

Donne is considered a master of the metaphysical conceit, an extended metaphor that combines two vastly different ideas into a single idea, often using imagery. An example of this is his equation of lovers with saints in "The Canonization". Unlike the conceits found in other Elizabethan poetry, most notably Petrarchan conceits, which formed clichéd comparisons between more closely related objects (such as a rose and love), metaphysical conceits go to a greater depth in comparing two completely unlike objects. One of the most famous of Donne's conceits is found in "A Valediction: Forbidding Mourning" where he compares two lovers who are separated to the two legs of a compass. Donne's works are also witty, employing paradoxes, puns, and subtle yet remarkable analogies. His pieces are often ironic and cynical, especially regarding love and human motives. Common subjects of Donne's poems are love (especially in his early life), death (especially after his wife's death), and religion. John Donne's poetry represented a shift from classical forms to more personal poetry. Donne is noted for his poetic metre, which was structured with changing and jagged rhythms that closely resemble casual speech (it was for this that the more classical-minded Ben Jonson commented that "Donne, for not keeping of accent, deserved hanging"). Some scholars believe that Donne's literary works reflect the changing trends of his life, with love poetry and satires from his youth and religious sermons during his later years. Other scholars, such as Helen Gardner, question the validity of this dating —most of his poems were published posthumously (1633). The exception to these is his Anniversaries which were published in 1612 and Devotions upon Emergent Occasions published in 1624. His sermons are also dated, sometimes specifically by date and year.

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## THOMAS WYATT

Sir Thomas Wyatt (1503-1542) was born to Henry and Anne Wyatt at Allington Castle, near Maidstone, Kent, in 1503. Little is known of his childhood education. His first court appearance was in 1516 as Sewer Extraordinary to Henry VIII. In 1516 he also entered St. John's College, University of Cambridge. Around 1520, when he was only seventeen years old, he married Lord Cobham's daughter Elizabeth Brooke. She bore him a son, Thomas Wyatt, the Younger, in 1521. He became popular at court, and carried out several foreign missions for King Henry VIII, and also served various offices at home.

Around 1525, Wyatt separated from his wife, charging her with adultery; it is also the year from which his interest in Anne Boleyn probably dates.<sup>1</sup> He accompanied Sir Thomas Cheney on a diplomatic mission to France in 1526 and Sir John Russell to Venice and the papal court in Rome in 1527. He was made High Marshal of Calais (1528-1530) and Commissioner of the Peace of Essex in 1532. Also in 1532, Wyatt accompanied King Henry and Anne Boleyn, who was by then the King's mistress, on their visit to Calais. Anne Boleyn married the King in January 1533, and Wyatt served in her coronation in June.

Wyatt was knighted in 1535, but in 1536 he was imprisoned in the Tower for quarreling with the Duke of Suffolk, and possibly also because he was suspected of being one of Anne Boleyn's lovers. During this imprisonment Wyatt witnessed the execution of Anne Boleyn on May 19, 1536 from the Bell Tower, and wrote *V. Innocentia Veritas Viat Fides Circumdederunt me inimici mei*.

Wyatt was returned to favor and made ambassador to the court of the Holy Roman Emperor, Charles V, in Spain. He returned to England in June 1539, and later that year was again ambassador to Charles until May 1540. Wyatt's praise of country life, and the cynical comments about foreign courts, in his verse epistle *Mine Own John Poins* derive from his own experience.

In 1541 Wyatt was charged with treason on a revival of charges originally levelled against him in 1538 by Edmund Bonner, now Bishop of London. Bonner claimed that while ambassador,

Wyatt had been rude about the King's person, and had dealings with Cardinal Pole, a papal legate and Henry's kinsman, with whom Henry was much angered over Pole's siding with papal authority in the matter of Henry's divorce proceedings from Katharine of Aragón. Wyatt was again confined to the Tower, where he wrote an impassioned 'Defence'. He received a royal pardon, perhaps at the request of then queen, Catharine Howard, and was fully restored to favor in 1542. Wyatt was given various royal offices after his pardon, but he became ill after welcoming Charles V's envoy at Falmouth and died at Sherborne on 11 October 1542.

None of Wyatt's poems had been published in his lifetime, with the exception of a few poems in a miscellany entitled *The Court of Venus*. His first published work was *Certain Psalms* (1549), metrical translations of the penitential psalms. It wasn't until 1557, 15 years after Wyatt's death, that a number of his poetry appeared alongside the poetry of Henry Howard, Earl of Surrey in printer Richard Tottel's *Songs and Sonnets written by the Right Honorable Lord Henry Howard late Earl of Surrey and other*. Until modern times it was called simply *Songs and Sonnets*, but now it is generally known as *Tottel's Miscellany*. The rest of Wyatt's poetry, lyrics, and satires remained in manuscript until the 19th and 20th centuries "rediscovered" them.

Wyatt, along with Surrey, was the first to introduce the sonnet into English, with its characteristic final rhyming couplet. He wrote extraordinarily accomplished imitations of Petrarch's sonnets, including 'I find no peace' ('*Pace non trovo*') and 'Whoso List to Hunt'—the latter, quite different in tone from Petrarch's '*Una candida cerva*', has often been seen to refer to Anne Boleyn as the deer with a jewelled collar. Wyatt was also adept at other new forms in English, such as the *terza rima* and the *rondau*. Wyatt and Surrey often share the title "father of the English sonnet."

## Major Works

All issues of scholarly debate depicted in Wyatt's work have been discussed for centuries. *The Court of Venus* (1955) includes three fragments of Wyatt's verse that were circulated among members of Henry's court from 1535-39, 1547-49, and 1561-64, the latter being subtitled *A Book of Ballets*. His most important work by far has been *Tottel's Miscellany* (1557), that features one-third of Wyatt's canon, focusing on his lyrics and translations of Italian masters, such as Petrarch

and Serafino. This miscellany has appeared in at least nine editions over thirty years. A great deal of latitude was exercised in the recent re-editing of Wyatt's poetry, and although it is uneven in quality, *Tottel's* represents one of the most important works of the sixteenth century. As such, Wyatt's canon has been revised and collected in several editions since his lifetime, his work currently experiencing a resurgence in popularity for its depictions of life and society at the time of Henry VIII.

Because Wyatt worked with English models, especially Chaucer, as well as with those from the Continent, his poems exhibit the conventions of *amour courtois* while at the same time subtly rejecting them. His courtly poetry includes love poems, the sonnets, epigrams and songs; and satiric poems. The context of this work encompasses depictions of love set within the traditional modes of the English court, and deals with social vying and competition between classes. For example, in his love lyrics, the king's bard becomes the lover who writes, sighs, and sings to win the favor of ladies who might help advance his career. Although his verse serves as commentary on the early Tudor court, Wyatt's three epistolary satires are humanist pieces taken from the Italian tradition that more effectively criticizes the court than does his poetry. His Penitential Psalms also established Wyatt as a writer of the Protestant Reformation as he based his translations on the repentance of King David, encouraging, according to one view, continual repentance among the Christians of the kingdom.

### **Wyatt's poetry and influence**

Wyatt's professed object was to experiment with the English tongue, to civilise it, to raise its powers to those of its neighbours. A significant amount of his literary output consists of translations and imitations of sonnets by the Italian poet Petrarch; he also wrote sonnets of his own. He took subject matter from Petrarch's sonnets, but his rhyme schemes make a significant departure. Petrarch's sonnets consist of an "octave", rhyming *abba abba*, followed, after a turn (*volta*) in the sense, by a "sestet" with various rhyme schemes. Wyatt employs the Petrarchan octave, but his most common sestet scheme is *cddc ee*. This marks the beginnings of an exclusively "English" contribution to sonnet structure, that is three quatrains and a closing couplet. 15 years after his death, the printer Richard Tottel included 97 poems attributed to Wyatt among the 271

poems in Tottel's Miscellany, *Songs and Sonnets*.

In addition to imitations of works by the classical writers Seneca and Horace, he experimented in stanza forms including the rondeau, epigrams, terza rima, ottava rima songs, satires and also with monorime, triplets with refrains, quatrains with different length of line and rhyme schemes, quatrains with codas, and the French forms of douzaine and treizaine. Wyatt introduced contemporaries to his *poulter's measure* form (Alexandrine couplets of twelve syllable iambic lines alternating with a fourteener, fourteen syllable line), and is acknowledged a master of the iambic tetrameter.

While Wyatt's poetry reflects classical and Italian models, he also admired the work of Chaucer and his vocabulary reflects Chaucer's (for example, his use of Chaucer's word *newfangleness*, meaning fickle, in *They flee from me that sometime did me seek*). Many of his poems deal with the trials of romantic love, and the devotion of the suitor to an unavailable or cruel mistress. Others of his poems are scathing, satirical indictments of the hypocrisies and flat-out pandering required of courtiers ambitious to advance at the Tudor court.

Wyatt was one of the earliest poets of the English Renaissance. He was responsible for many innovations in English poetry and, alongside Henry Howard, Earl of Surrey, introduced the sonnet from Italy into England. His lyrics show tenderness of feeling and purity of diction. He is one of the originators of the convention in love poetry according to which the mistress is painted as hard-hearted and cruel.

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## **JOHN LYLY**

**John Lyly**, (1554-1606), author considered to be the first English prose stylist to leave an enduring impression upon the language. As a playwright he also contributed to the development of prose dialogue in English comedy. Lyly was educated at Magdalen College, Oxford, and went to London about 1576. There he gained fame with the publication of two prose romances, *Euphues: The Anatomy of Wit* (1578) and *Euphues and His England* (1580), which together made

him the most fashionable English writer of the 1580s. *Euphues* is a romantic intrigue told in letters interspersed with general discussions on such topics as religion, love, and epistolary style. Lyly's preoccupation with the exact arrangement and selection of words, his frequent use of similes drawn from classical mythology, and his artificial and excessively elegant prose inspired a short-lived Elizabethan literary style called "euphuism." The *Euphues* novels introduced a new concern with form into English prose.

After 1580 Lyly devoted himself almost entirely to writing comedies. In 1583 he gained control of the first Blackfriars Theatre, in which his earliest plays, *Campaspe* and *Sapho and Phao*, were produced. All of Lyly's comedies except *The Woman in the Moon* were presented by the Children of Paul's, a children's company that was periodically favoured by Queen Elizabeth. The performance dates of his plays are as follows: *Campaspe* and *Sapho and Phao*, 1583–84; *Gallathea*, 1585–88; *Endimion*, 1588; *Midas*, 1589; *Love's Metamorphosis*, 1590; *Mother Bombie*, 1590; and *The Woman in the Moon*, 1595. All but one of these are in prose. The finest is considered to be *Endimion*, which some critics hold a masterpiece.

John Lyly was an English writer, poet, dramatist, playwright, and politician, best known for his books *Euphues: The Anatomy of Wit* (1578) and *Euphues and His England* (1580). Lyly's mannered literary style, originating in his first books, is known as *euphuism*. Lyly was educated at Magdalen College, Oxford, and went to London about 1576. There he gained fame with the publication of two prose romances, *Euphues: The Anatomy of Wit* (1578) and *Euphues and His England* (1580), which together made him the most fashionable English writer of the 1580s. *Euphues* is a romantic intrigue told in letters interspersed with general discussions on such topics as religion, love, and epistolary style. Lyly's preoccupation with the exact arrangement and selection of words, his frequent use of similes drawn from classical mythology, and his artificial and excessively elegant prose inspired a short-lived Elizabethan literary style called "euphuism." The *Euphues* novels introduced a new concern with form into English prose.

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Lyly's comedies mark an enormous advance upon those of his predecessors in English drama. Their plots are drawn from classical mythology and legend, and their characters engage in euphuistic speeches redolent of Renaissance pedantry; but the charm and wit of the dialogues and the light and skillful construction of the plots set standards that younger and more gifted dramatists could not ignore.

Lyly's popularity waned with the rise of Thomas Kyd, Christopher Marlowe, and William Shakespeare, and his appeals to Queen Elizabeth for financial relief went unheeded. He had hoped to succeed Edmund Tilney in the court post of Master of the Revels, but Tilney outlived him, and Lyly died a poor and bitter man.

## Comedies

In 1632 Blount published *Six Court Comedies*, the first printed collection of Lyly's plays. They appear in the text in the following order; the parenthetical date indicates the year they appeared separately in quarto form:

- *Endymion* (1591)
- *Campaspe* (1584)
- *Sapho and Phao* (1584)
- *Gallathea* (1592)
- *Midas* (1592)
- *Mother Bombie* (1594)

Lyly's other plays include *Love's Metamorphosis* (though printed in 1601, possibly Lyly's earliest play — the surviving version is likely a revision of the original), and *The Woman in the Moon*,

first printed in 1597. Of these, all but the last are in prose. *A Warning for Faire Women* (1599) and *The Maid's Metamorphosis* (1600) have been attributed to Lyly, but on altogether insufficient grounds.

The first editions of all these plays were issued between 1584 and 1601, and the majority of them between 1584 and 1592, in what were Lyly's most successful and popular years. His importance as a dramatist has been very differently estimated. Lyly's dialogue is still a long way removed from the dialogue of Shakespeare. But at the same time it is a great advance in rapidity and resource upon anything which had gone before it; it represents an important step in English dramatic art. His nimbleness, and the wit which struggles with his pedantry, found their full development in the dialogue of *Twelfth Night* and *Much Ado about Nothing*, just as "Marlowe's mighty line" led up to and was eclipsed by the majesty and music of Shakespearean passion.

One or two of the songs introduced into his plays are justly famous and show a real lyrical gift. Nor in estimating his dramatic position and his effect upon his time must it be forgotten that his classical and mythological plots, flavourless and dull as they would be to a modern audience, were charged with interest to those courtly hearers who saw in *Midas* Philip II, Elizabeth in Cynthia and perhaps Leicester's unwelcome marriage with Lady Sheffield in the love affair between Endymion and Tellus which brings the former under Cynthia's displeasure. As a matter of fact his reputation and popularity as a playwright were considerable. Harvey dreaded lest Lyly should make a play upon their quarrel; Francis Meres, as is well known, places him among "the best for comedy"; and Ben Jonson names him among those foremost rivals who were "outshone" and outsung by Shakespeare.

Lyly must also be considered and remembered as a primary influence on the plays of William Shakespeare, and in particular the romantic comedies. *Love's Metamorphosis* is a large influence on *Love's Labour's Lost*, and *Gallathea* is a major source for *A Midsummer Night's Dream*. In 2007, Primavera Productions in London staged a reading of *Gallathea*, directed by Tom Littler, consciously linking it to Shakespeare's plays. They also claim an influence on *Twelfth Night* and *As You Like It*.

In addition to the plays, Lyly also composed at least one "entertainment" (a show that combined elements of masque and drama) for Queen Elizabeth; *The Entertainment at Chiswick* was staged on 28 and 29 July 1602. Lyly has been suggested as the author of several other royal entertainments of the 1590s, most notably *The Entertainment at Mitcham* performed on 13 September 1598.<sup>[10]</sup>

See *Lyly's Complete Works*, ed. R. Warwick Bond (3 vols., 1902); *Euphues*, from early editions, by Edward Arber (1868); AW Ward, *English Dramatic Literature*, i. 151; JP Collier, *History of Dramatic Poetry*, iii. 172; "John Lilly and Shakespeare", by C. C. Hense in the *Jahrbuch der deutschen Shakesp. Gesellschaft*, vols. vii and viii (1872, 1873); F. W. Fairholt, *Dramatic Works of John Lilly* (2 vols.) More recently, all of the comedies have been edited in individual volumes as a part of the Revels Plays series.

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## GEORGE HERBERT

**George Herbert**, (born April 3, 1593, Montgomery Castle, Wales—died March 1, 1633, Bemerton, Wiltshire, Eng.), English religious poet, a major metaphysical poet, notable for the purity and effectiveness of his choice of words.

A younger brother of Edward Herbert, 1st Baron Herbert of Cherbury, a notable secular metaphysical poet, George in 1610 sent his mother for New Year's two sonnets on the theme that the love of God is a fitter subject for verse than the love of woman, a foreshadowing of his poetic and vocational bent.

Educated at home, at Westminster School, and at Trinity College, Cambridge, he was in 1620 elected orator of the university, a position that he described as "the finest place in the university." His two immediate predecessors in the office had risen to high positions in the state, and Herbert was much involved with the court. During Herbert's academic career, his only published verse was that written for special occasions in Greek and Latin. By 1625 Herbert's sponsors at court were dead or out of favour, and he turned to the church, being ordained deacon. He resigned as orator in 1627 and in 1630 was ordained priest and became rector at Bemerton. He became friends

with Nicholas Ferrar, who had founded a religious community at nearby Little Gidding, and devoted himself to his rural parish and the reconstruction of his church. Throughout his life he wrote poems, and from his deathbed he sent a manuscript volume to Ferrar, asking him to decide whether to publish or destroy them. Ferrar published them with the title *The Temple: Sacred Poems and Private Ejaculations* in 1633.

## Poetry

Herbert wrote poetry in English, Latin and Greek. In 1633 all of Herbert's English poems were published in *The Temple: Sacred Poems and Private Ejaculations*, with a preface by Nicholas Ferrar. The book went through eight editions by 1690. According to Isaac Walton, when Herbert sent the manuscript to Ferrar, he said that "he shall find in it a picture of the many spiritual conflicts that have passed between God and my soul, before I could subject mine to the will of Jesus, my Master".<sup>[14]</sup> In this Herbert used the format of the poems to reinforce the theme he was trying to portray. Beginning with "The Church Porch", they proceed via "The Altar" to "The Sacrifice", and so onwards through the collection.

All of Herbert's surviving English poems are on religious themes and are characterised by directness of expression enlivened by original but apt conceits in which, in the Metaphysical manner, the likeness is of function rather than visual. In "The Windows", for example, he compares a righteous preacher to glass through which God's light shines more effectively than in his words. Commenting on his religious poetry later in the 17th century, Richard Baxter said, "Herbert speaks to God like one that really believeth in God, and whose business in the world is most with God. Heart-work and heaven-work make up his books" Helen Gardner later added "head-work" to this characterisation in acknowledgement of his "intellectual vivacity". It has also been pointed out how Herbert uses puns and wordplay to "convey the relationships between the world of daily reality and the world of transcendent reality that gives it meaning. The kind of word that functions on two or more planes is his device for making his poem an expression of that relationship."

Visually too the poems are varied in such a way as to enhance their meaning, with intricate rhyme

schemes, stanzas combining different line lengths and other ingenious formal devices. The most obvious examples are pattern poems like "The Altar," in which the shorter and longer lines are arranged on the page in the shape of an altar. The visual appeal is reinforced by the conceit of its construction from a broken, stony heart, representing the personal offering of himself as a sacrifice upon it. Built into this is an allusion to Psalm 51:17: "The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit; a broken and a contrite heart." In the case of "Easter Wings" (illustrated here), the words were printed sideways on two facing pages so that the lines there suggest outspread wings. The words of the poem are paralleled between stanzas and mimic the opening and closing of the wings. In Herbert's poems formal ingenuity is not an end in itself but is employed only as an auxiliary to its meaning.

The formal devices employed to convey that meaning are wide in range. In his meditation on the passage "Our life is hid with Christ in God", the capitalised words 'My life is hid in him that is my treasure' move across successive lines and demonstrate what is spoken of in the text. Opposites are brought together in "Bitter-Sweet" for the same purpose. Echo and variation are also common. The exclamations at the head and foot of each stanza in "Sighs and Groans" are one example. The diminishing truncated rhymes in "Paradise" are another. There is also an echo-dialogue after each line in "Heaven", other examples of which are found in the poetry of his brother Lord Herbert of Cherbury. Alternative rhymes are offered at the end of the stanzas in "The Water-Course", while the "Mary/Army Anagram" is represented in its title.

Once the taste for this display of Baroque wit had passed, the satirist John Dryden was to dismiss it as so many means to "torture one poor word ten thousand ways".<sup>[31]</sup> Though Herbert remained esteemed for his piety, the poetic skill with which he expressed his thought had to wait centuries to be admired again.

## Prose

Herbert's only prose work, *A Priest to the Temple* (usually known as *The Country Parson*), offers practical advice to rural clergy. In it, he advises that "things of ordinary use" such as ploughs, leaven, or dances, could be made to "serve for lights even of Heavenly Truths". It was first

published in 1652 as part of *Herbert's Remains, or Sundry Pieces of That Sweet Singer, Mr. George Herbert*, edited by Barnabas Oley. The first edition was prefixed with unsigned preface by Oley, which was used as one of the sources for Izaak Walton's biography of Herbert, first published in 1670. The second edition appeared in 1671 as *A Priest to the Temple or the Country Parson*, with a new preface, this time signed by Oley.

Like many of his literary contemporaries, Herbert was a collector of proverbs. His *Outlandish Proverbs* was published in 1640, listing over 1000 aphorisms in English, but gathered from many countries (in Herbert's day, 'outlandish' meant foreign). The collection included many sayings repeated to this day, for example, "His bark is worse than his bite" and "Who is so deaf, as he that will not hear?" These and an additional 150 proverbs were included in a later collection entitled *Jacula Prudentum* (sometimes seen as *Jacula Prudentium*), dated 1651 and published in 1652 as part of Oley's *Herbert's Remains*.

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## BEN JONSON

**Ben Jonson**, by name of Benjamin Jonson (born June 11?, 1572, London, England—died August 6, 1637, London), English Stuart dramatist, lyric poet, and literary critic. He is generally regarded as the second most important English dramatist, after William Shakespeare, during the reign of James I. Among his major plays are the comedies *Every Man in His Humour* (1598), *Volpone* (1605), *Epicoene; or, The Silent Woman* (1609), *The Alchemist* (1610), and *Bartholomew Fair* (1614).

In 1606 Jonson and his wife (whom he had married in 1594) were brought before the consistory court in London to explain their lack of participation in the Anglican church. He denied that his wife was guilty but admitted that his own religious opinions held him aloof from attendance. The matter was patched up through his agreement to confer with learned men, who might persuade him if they could. Apparently it took six years for him to decide to conform. For some time before this he and his wife had lived apart, Jonson taking refuge in turn with his patrons Sir Robert Townshend and Esmé Stuart, Lord Aubigny.

During this period, nevertheless, he made a mark second only to Shakespeare's in the public theatre. His comedies *Volpone; or, the Foxe* (1606) and *The Alchemist* (1610) were among the most popular and esteemed plays of the time. Each exhibited man's folly in the pursuit of gold. Set respectively in Italy and London, they demonstrate Jonson's enthusiasm both for the typical Renaissance setting and for his own town on Europe's fringe. Both plays are eloquent and compact, sharp-tongued and controlled. The comedies *Epicoene* (1609) and *Bartholomew Fair* (1614) were also successful.

Jonson embarked on a walking tour in 1618–19, which took him to Scotland. During the visit the city of Edinburgh made him an honorary burgess and guild brother. On his return to England he received an honorary Master of Arts degree from Oxford University, a most signal honour in his time. Jonson's life was a life of talk as well as of writing. He engaged in "wit-combats" with Shakespeare and reigned supreme. It was a young man's ultimate honour to be regarded as a "son of Ben."

In 1623 his personal library was destroyed by fire. By this time his services were seldom called on for the entertainment of Charles I's court, and his last plays failed to please. In 1628 he suffered what was apparently a stroke and, as a result, was confined to his room and chair, ultimately to his bed. That same year he was made city chronologer (thus theoretically responsible for the city's pageants), though in 1634 his salary for the post was made into a pension. Jonson died in 1637 and was buried in Westminster Abbey.

The first folio edition of his works had appeared in 1616; posthumously, in a second Jonson folio (1640), appeared *Timber: or, Discoveries*, a series of observations on life and letters. Here Jonson held forth on the nature of poetry and drama and paid his final tribute to Shakespeare: in spite of acknowledging a belief that his great contemporary was, on occasion, "full of wind"—*sufflaminandus erat*—he declared that "I loved the man, and do honour his memory, on this side idolatry, as much as any."

Ben Jonson occupies by common consent the second place among English dramatists of the reigns of Elizabeth I and James I. He was a man of contraries. For "twelve years a papist," he was also—

in fact though not in title—Protestant England’s first poet laureate. His major comedies express a strong distaste for the world in which he lived and a delight in exposing its follies and vices. A gifted lyric poet, he wrote two of his most successful plays entirely in prose, an unusual mode of composition in his time. Though often an angry and stubborn man, no one had more disciples than he. He was easily the most learned dramatist of his time, and he was also a master of theatrical plot, language, and characterization. It is a measure of his reputation that his dramatic works were the first to be published in folio (the term, in effect, means the “collected works”) and that his plays held their place on the stage until the period of the Restoration. Later they fell into neglect, though *The Alchemist* was revived during the 18th century, and in the mid-20th century several came back into favour: *Volpone*, *The Alchemist*, and *Bartholomew Fair* especially have been staged with striking success.

Jonson’s chief plays are still very good theatre. His insistence on putting classical theory into practice in them has reinforced rather than weakened the effect of his gift of lively dialogue, robust characterization, and intricate, controlled plotting. In each of them he maneuvers a large cast of vital personages, all consistently differentiated from one another. Jonson’s plots are skillfully put together; incident develops out of incident in a consistent chain of cause and effect, taking into account the respective natures of the personages involved and proceeding confidently through a twisting, turning action that is full of surprises without relying on coincidence or chance. Sometimes Jonson’s comedy derives from the dialogue, especially when it is based on his observation of contemporary tricks of speech. But there are also superbly ludicrous situations, often hardly removed from practical joke.

Jonson is renowned for his method of concentrating on a selected side, or on selected sides, of a character, showing how they dominate the personality. This is to some extent a natural outcome of his classical conception of art, but it also stems from his clear, shrewd observation of people. In Jonson’s plays both eccentricity and normal behaviour are derived from a dominating characteristic, so that the result is a live, truthfully conceived personage in whom the ruling passion traces itself plainly. The later plays, for example, have characters whose behaviour is dominated by one psychological idiosyncrasy. But Jonson did not deal exclusively in “humours.” In some of his plays (notably *Every Man in His Humour*), the stock types of Latin comedy

contributed as much as the humours theory did. What the theory provided for him and for his contemporaries was a convenient mode of distinguishing among human beings. The distinctions so made could be based on the “humours,” on Latin comic types, or, as in *Volpone*, in the assimilation of humans to different members of the animal kingdom. The characters Volpone, Mosca, Sir Epicure Mammon, Face, Subtle, Dol Common, Overdo, and Ursula are not simply “humours”; they are glorious type figures, so vitally rendered as to take on a being that transcends the type. This method was one of simplification, of typification, and yet also of vitalization.

The Restoration dramatists’ use of type names for their characters (Cockwood, Witwoud, Petulant, Pinchwife, and so on) was a harking back to Jonson, and similarly in the 18th century, with such characters as Peachum, Lumpkin, Candour, and Languish. And though, as the 18th century proceeded, comic dramatists increasingly used names quite arbitrarily, the idea of the Jonsonian “type” or “humour” was always at the root of their imagining. Jonson thus exerted a great influence on the playwrights who immediately followed him. In the late Jacobean and Caroline years, it was he, Shakespeare, and Francis Beaumont and John Fletcher who provided all the models. But it was he, and he alone, who gave the essential impulse to dramatic characterization in comedy of the Restoration and also in the 18th and 19th centuries.

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## JOHN WEBSTER

**John Webster** (c. 1580 – c. 1634) was an English Jacobean dramatist best known for his tragedies *The White Devil* and *The Duchess of Malfi*, which are often regarded as masterpieces of the early 17th-century English stage.<sup>[1]</sup> His life and career overlapped William Shakespeare's.

### The major tragedies

Despite his ability to write comedy, Webster is best known for his two brooding English tragedies based on Italian sources. *The White Devil*, a retelling of the intrigues involving Vittoria Accoramboni, an Italian woman assassinated at the age of 28, was a failure when staged at the Red Bull Theatre in 1612 (published the same year), being too unusual and intellectual for its audience. *The Duchess of Malfi*, first performed by the King's Men about 1614 and published nine years

later, was more successful. He also wrote a play called *Guise*, based on French history, of which little else is known as no text has survived.

*The White Devil* was performed in the Red Bull Theatre, an open-air theatre that is believed to have specialised in providing simple, escapist drama for a largely working class audience, a factor that might explain why Webster's highly intellectual and complex play was unpopular with its audience. In contrast, *The Duchess of Malfi* was probably performed by the King's Men in the smaller, indoor Blackfriars Theatre, where it would have played to a better educated audience that might have appreciated it better. The two plays would thus have been very different in their original performances. *The White Devil* would have been performed, probably in one continuous action, by adult actors, with elaborate stage effects a possibility. *The Duchess of Malfi* was performed in a controlled environment, with artificial lighting, and musical interludes between acts, which allowed time, perhaps, for the audience to accept the otherwise strange rapidity with which the Duchess is able to have babies.

### **Late plays**

Webster wrote one more play on his own: *The Devil's Law Case* (c. 1617–1619), a tragicomedy. His later plays were collaborative city comedies: *Anything for a Quiet Life* (c. 1621), co-written with Thomas Middleton, and *A Cure for a Cuckold* (c. 1624), co-written with William Rowley. In 1624, he also co-wrote a topical play about a recent scandal, *Keep the Widow Waking* (with John Ford, Rowley and Dekker).<sup>[5]</sup> The play itself is lost, although its plot is known from a court case. He is believed to have contributed to the tragicomedy *The Fair Maid of the Inn* with John Fletcher, Ford, and Phillip Massinger. His *Appius and Virginia*, probably written with Thomas Heywood, is of uncertain date.

### **Reputation**

Webster's major plays, *The White Devil* and *The Duchess of Malfi*, are macabre, disturbing works that seem to prefigure the Gothic literature of the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. Intricate, complex, subtle and learned, they are difficult but rewarding, and are still frequently staged today.

Webster has received a reputation for being the Elizabethan and Jacobean dramatist with the most unsparingly dark vision of human nature. Even more than John Ford, whose *'Tis Pity She's a Whore* is also very bleak, Webster's tragedies present a horrific vision of mankind. In his poem "Whispers of Immortality," T. S. Eliot memorably says that Webster always saw "the skull beneath the skin".

On the other hand, Webster's title character in *The Duchess of Malfi* is presented as a figure of virtue by comparison to her malevolent brothers, and in facing death she exemplifies classical Stoic courage. Her martyr-like death scene has been compared to that of the titular king in Christopher Marlowe's play *Edward II*. Webster's use of a strong, virtuous woman as his central character was rare for his time and represents a deliberate reworking of some of the original historical event on which his play was based. The character of the duchess recalls the Victorian poet and essayist Algernon Charles Swinburne's comment in *A Study of Shakespeare* that in tragedies such as *King Lear* Shakespeare had shown such a bleak world as a foil or backdrop for virtuous heroines such as Ophelia and Imogen, so that their characterization would not seem too incredible. Swinburne describes such heroines as shining in the darkness.

While Webster's drama was generally dismissed in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, many twentieth century critics and theatregoers found *The White Devil* and *The Duchess of Malfi* to be brilliant plays of great poetic quality and dark themes. One explanation for this change is that only after the horrors of war in the early twentieth century could their desperate protagonists be portrayed on stage again, and understood. W. A. Edwards wrote of Webster's plays in *Scrutiny* II (1933–4): "Events are not within control, nor are our human desires; let's snatch what comes and clutch it, fight our way out of tight corners, and meet the end without squealing." The violence and pessimism of Webster's tragedies have seemed to some analysts close to modern sensibilities.

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## THOMAS NASHE

Nashe also spelled Nash (born 1567, Lowestoft, Suffolk, Eng.—died c. 1601, Yarmouth, Norfolk?), pamphleteer, poet, dramatist, and author of *The Unfortunate Traveller; or, The Life of Jacke Wilton* (1594), the first picaresque novel in English.

Nashe was educated at the University of Cambridge, and about 1588 he went to London, where he became associated with Robert Greene and other professional writers. In 1589 he wrote *The Anatomie of Absurditie* and the preface to Greene's *Menaphon*. Both works are bold, opinionated surveys of the contemporary state of writing; occasionally obscure, they are euphuistic in style and range freely over a great variety of topics.

In 1589 and 1590 he evidently became a paid hack of the episcopacy in the Marprelate controversy and matched wits with the unidentified Puritan "Martin." Almost all the Anglican replies to Martin have variously been assigned to Nashe, but only *An Almond for a Parrat* (1590) has been convincingly attributed to him. He wrote the preface to Thomas Newman's unauthorized edition of Sir Philip Sidney's *Astrophel and Stella* (1591). Though Nashe penned an extravagant dedication to Sidney's sister, the countess of Pembroke, the book was withdrawn and reissued in the same year without Nashe's foreword.

*Pierce Penilesse His Supplication to the Divell* (1592), a satire focused on the seven deadly sins, was Nashe's first distinctive work. Using a free and extemporaneous prose style, full of colloquialisms, newly coined words, and fantastic idiosyncrasies, Nashe buttonholes the reader with a story in which a need for immediate entertainment seems to predominate over any narrative structure or controlling objective. Having become involved in his friend Greene's feud with the writer Gabriel Harvey, Nashe satirized Harvey and his brothers in *Pierce* and then joined the combat in an exchange of pamphlets with Harvey, *Strange Newes* (1592) and *Have with You to Saffron-Walden* (1596). If Harvey is to be credited, Nashe was a hack for the printer John Danter in 1593. The controversy was terminated in 1599, when the archbishop of Canterbury ordered that "all Nasshes bookes and Doctor Harveys bookes be taken wheresoever they maye be found and that none of theire bookes bee ever printed hereafter."

Apparently Nashe wrote *Strange Newes* while he was living at the home of Sir George Carey, who momentarily relieved his oppressive poverty. In *Christs Teares over Jerusalem* (1593), Nashe warned his countrymen during one of the country's worst outbreaks of bubonic plague that, unless they reformed, London would suffer the fate of Jerusalem. *The Terrors of the Night* (1594) is a discursive, sometimes bewildering, attack on demonology.

*Pierce Penilesse* excepted, Nashe's most successful works were his entertainment *Summers Last Will and Testament* (1592, published 1600); his picaresque novel *The Unfortunate Traveller; or, The Life of Jacke Wilton; Dido, Queen of Carthage* (1594; with Christopher Marlowe); and *Nashes Lenten Stuffe* (1599). *The Unfortunate Traveller* is a brutal and realistic tale of adventure narrated with speed and economy. The book describes the travels through Germany and Italy of its rogue hero, Jacke Wilton, who lives by his wits and witnesses all sorts of historic events before he is converted to a better way of life. *Lenten Stuffe*, in praise of herrings, contains a charming description of the town of Yarmouth, Norfolk, a herring fishery. Nashe retreated to Yarmouth when he and Ben Jonson were prosecuted as a result of their satirical play *The Isle of Dogs* (1597).

The details surrounding Nashe's death are uncertain. He died in 1601, aged 34, and various causes ranging from the plague to food poisoning to a stroke have been suggested. In Thomas Dekker's *A Knight's Conjuring* (2nd ed. revised of his *News from Hell*), he described Nashe in Elysium "still haunted with the sharp and satirical spirit that followed him here upon earth." <sup>2</sup> An anonymous contemporary tribute to Nashe said:

*Let all his faults sleep with his mournful chest, And  
there for ever with his ashes rest.  
His style was witty, though it had some gall, Some  
things he might have mended, so may all. Yet this I  
say, that for a mother wit,  
Few men have ever seen the like of it.*

## THOMAS KYD

**Thomas Kyd**, (baptized Nov. 6, 1558, London, Eng.—died c. December 1594, London), English dramatist who, with his *The Spanish Tragedy* (sometimes called *Hieronimo*, or *Jeronimo*, after its protagonist), initiated the revenge tragedy of his day. Kyd anticipated the structure of many later plays, including the development of middle and final climaxes. In addition, he revealed an instinctive sense of tragic situation, while his characterization of Hieronimo in *The Spanish Tragedy* prepared the way for Shakespeare's psychological study of Hamlet.

Kyd was not educated at university and came from a relatively humble background; nonetheless, he was well-acquainted with the classics and most likely was fluent in Latin and Greek. For centuries other writers—belonging to the community of so-called "university wits"—had attempted to translate the style of Latin drama for the English stage; Kyd was the first to do so successfully. Kyd was the first to revitalize the classical tragic form, with all its violence and tension, using English that was neither obscure nor melodramatic but penetratingly real. Perhaps because of his humble origins—a trait he shared with Shakespeare—Kyd was the first dramatist to not only interpret the masterworks of the past, but compose masterworks of his own for his own times.

### Later life

On or about 1587 Kyd entered the service of a noble, possibly Ferdinando Stanley, Lord Strange, who sponsored a company of actors. He may have worked as a secretary, if not also as a playwright. Around 1591 Christopher Marlowe also joined this patron's service, and for a while Marlowe and Kyd shared lodgings.

On May 11, 1593 the Privy Council ordered the arrest of the authors of "divers lewd and mutinous libels" which had been posted around London. The next day, Kyd was among those arrested; he would later believe that he had been the victim of an informer. His lodgings were searched, but instead of evidence of the "libels" the authorities found an Arianist tract, described by an investigator as "vile heretical conceits denying the deity of Jesus Christ our Saviour found

amongst the papers of Thos Kydd, prisoner ... which he affirmeth he had from Marlowe." It is believed that Kyd was tortured to obtain this information. Marlowe was summoned by the Privy Council and, while waiting for a decision on his case, was killed in an incident involving known government agents.

Kyd was eventually released but was not accepted back into his lord's service. Believing he was under suspicion of atheism himself, he wrote to the Lord Keeper, Sir John Puckering, protesting his innocence, but his efforts to clear his name were apparently fruitless. After his ordeal, Kyd did not have many days left. His final play, *Cornelia* was published in early 1594. In the dedication to the Countess of Sussex he alludes to the "bitter times and privy broken passions" he had endured. Kyd died later that year, and was buried on August 15 in London. In December 1594 his mother legally renounced the administration of his estate, probably because it was debt-ridden.

Evidence suggests that in the 1580s Kyd became an important playwright, but little is known about his activity. Francis Meres placed him among "our best for tragedy" and Heywood elsewhere called him "Famous Kyd". Ben Jonson mentions him in the same breath as Christopher Marlowe (with whom, in London, Kyd at one time shared a room) and John Lyly in the Shakespeare First Folio.

*The Spanish Tragedie* was probably written in the mid to late 1580s. The earliest surviving edition was printed in 1592; the full title being, *The Spanish Tragedie, Containing the lamentable end of Don Horatio, and Bel-imperia: with the pittifull death of olde Hieronimo*. However, the play was usually known simply as "Hieronimo", after the protagonist. It was arguably the most popular play of the "Age of Shakespeare" and set new standards in effective plot construction and character development. In 1602 a version of the play with "additions" was published. Philip Henslowe's diary records payment to Ben Jonson for additions that year, but it is disputed whether the published additions reflect Jonson's work or if they were actually composed for a 1597 revival of *The Spanish Tragedy* mentioned by Henslowe.

Other works by Kyd are his translations of Torquato Tasso's *Padre di Famiglia*, published as *The Householder's Philosophy* (1588); and Robert Garnier's *Cornelia* (1594). Plays attributed in

whole or in part to Kyd include *Soliman and Perseda*, *King Leir*, *Arden of Faversham* and *Edward III*. A play related to *The Spanish Tragedy* called *The First Part of Hieronimo* (surviving in a quarto of 1605) may be a bad quarto or memorial reconstruction of a play by Kyd, or it may be an inferior writer's burlesque of *The Spanish Tragedy* inspired by that play's popularity.<sup>[1]</sup> Kyd is more generally accepted to have been the author of a *Hamlet*, the precursor of the Shakespearean play (see: Ur-Hamlet). Some poems by Kyd exist, but it seems that most of his work is lost or unidentified.

The success of Kyd's plays extended to Europe. Versions of *The Spanish Tragedy* and his *Hamlet* were popular in Germany and the Netherlands for generations. The influence of these plays on European drama was largely the reason for the interest in Kyd among German scholars in the nineteenth century. He is also the presumed author of a pamphlet in prose entitled *The Murder of John Brewen* (1592), a grisly report on murder in a family, in which a goldsmith is murdered by his wife.

First printed around 1592, *The Spanish Tragedy* is one of the most important single plays in all of Elizabethan literature. Modeled after classical Latin tragedies—most notably those of Seneca—the play is largely responsible for the resurgence of tragic drama in sixteenth-century literature. Countless playwrights would imitate the play's themes of jealousy, revenge, and divine retribution, as well as its intricately-crafted plot. The play is a watershed for plot-development in English literature, having one of the most complex and most compelling storylines for any drama of its period, rivaling even those of Shakespeare. Almost all of Kyd's present-day fame rests on this single play, and records from his own time suggest that *The Spanish Tragedy* has always been his most popular and influential work.

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## WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE

**William Shakespeare** (Baptized April 26, 1564 – April 23, 1616) was an English poet and playwright, widely regarded as the greatest writer in the English language and the world's preeminent dramatist. His surviving works consist of 38 plays, 154 sonnets, two long narrative poems, and several shorter poems. His plays have been translated into every major living language and are performed more often than those of any other playwright.

Shakespeare was born and lived in Stratford-upon-Avon. From 1585 until 1592 he began a successful career in London as an actor, writer, and part owner of the acting company the Lord Chamberlain's Men. He appears to have retired to Stratford around 1613, where he died three years later. Few records of Shakespeare's private life survive, and there has been considerable speculation about his life and prodigious literary achievements.

Shakespeare's early plays were mainly comedies and histories, genres he raised to the peak of sophistication by the end of the sixteenth century. In his following phase he wrote mainly tragedies, including *Hamlet*, *King Lear*, and *Macbeth*, *Othello*. The plays are often regarded as the summit of Shakespeare's art and among the greatest tragedies ever written. In 1623, two of his former theatrical colleagues published the First Folio, a collected edition of his dramatic works that included all but two of the plays now recognized as Shakespeare's.

Shakespeare's canon has achieved a unique standing in Western literature, amounting to a humanistic scripture. His insight in human character and motivation and his luminous, boundary-defying diction have influenced writers for centuries. Some of the more notable authors and poets so influenced are Samuel Taylor Coleridge, John Keats, Charles Dickens, Johann Wolfgang von Goethe, Herman Melville, and William Faulkner. According to Harold Bloom, Shakespeare "has been universally judged to be a more adequate representer of the universe of fact than anyone else, before or since."<sup>[1]</sup>

Shakespeare lived during the so-called Elizabethan Settlement in which relatively moderate English Protestantism gained ascendancy. Throughout his works he explored themes of

conscience, mercy, guilt, temptation, forgiveness, and the afterlife. The poet's own religious leanings, however, are much debated. Shakespeare's universe is governed by a recognizably Christian moral order, yet threatened and often brought to grief by tragic flaws seemingly embedded in human nature much like the heroes of Greek tragedies.

He was a respected poet and playwright in his own day, but Shakespeare's reputation did not rise to its present heights until the nineteenth century. The Romantics, in particular, acclaimed his genius, and in the twentieth century, his work was repeatedly adopted and rediscovered by new movements in scholarship and performance. His plays remain highly popular today and are consistently performed and reinterpreted in diverse cultural and political contexts throughout the world

### **Works- Plays**

Scholars have often categorized Shakespeare's canon into four groupings: comedies, histories, tragedies, and romances; and his work is roughly broken into four periods. Until the mid-1590s, he wrote mainly comedies influenced by Roman and Italian models and history plays in the popular chronicle tradition. A second period began from about 1595 with the tragedy *Romeo and Juliet* and ended with the tragedy of *Julius Caesar* in 1599. During this time, he wrote what are considered his greatest comedies and histories. From about 1600 to about 1608, Shakespeare wrote most of his greatest tragedies, and from about 1608 to 1613, mainly tragicomedies or romances.

The first recorded works of Shakespeare are *Richard III* and the three parts of *Henry VI*, written in the early 1590s during a vogue for historical drama. Shakespeare's plays are difficult to date, however, and studies of the texts suggest that *Titus Andronicus*, *The Comedy of Errors*, *The Taming of the Shrew* and *Two Gentlemen of Verona* may also belong to Shakespeare's earliest period. His first histories, which draw heavily on the 1587 edition of Raphael Holinshed's *Chronicles of England, Scotland, and Ireland*, dramatize the destructive results of weak or corrupt rule and have been interpreted as a justification for the origins of the Tudor dynasty.<sup>[10]</sup> Their composition was influenced by the works of other Elizabethan dramatists, especially Thomas Kyd

and Christopher Marlowe, by the traditions of medieval drama, and by the plays of Seneca.<sup>[11]</sup> *The Comedy of Errors* was also based on classical models; but no source for the *The Taming of the Shrew* has been found, though it is related to a separate play of the same name and may have derived from a folk story.<sup>[12]</sup> Like *Two Gentlemen of Verona*, in which two friends appear to approve of rape, the *Shrew's* story of the taming of a woman's independent spirit by a man sometimes troubles modern critics and directors.

Shakespeare's early classical and Italianate comedies, containing tight double plots and precise comic sequences, give way in the mid-1590s to the romantic atmosphere of his greatest comedies. *A Midsummer Night's Dream* is a witty mixture of romance, fairy magic, and comic low-life scenes. Shakespeare's next comedy, the equally romantic *The Merchant of Venice*, contains a portrayal of the vengeful Jewish moneylender Shylock which reflected Elizabethan views but may appear racist to modern audiences. The wit and wordplay of *Much Ado About Nothing*, the charming rural setting of *As You Like It*, and the lively merrymaking of *Twelfth Night* complete Shakespeare's sequence of great comedies. After the lyrical *Richard II*, written almost entirely in verse, Shakespeare introduced prose comedy into the histories of the late 1590s, *Henry IV, parts I* and *2*, and *Henry V*. His characters become more complex and tender as he switches deftly between comic and serious scenes, prose and poetry, and achieves the narrative variety of his mature work.

This period begins and ends with two tragedies: *Romeo and Juliet*, the famous romantic tragedy of sexually charged adolescence, love, and death; and *Julius Caesar*—based on Sir Thomas North's 1579 translation of Plutarch's *Parallel Lives*—which introduced a new kind of drama.<sup>[13]</sup> According to Shakespearean scholar James Shapiro, in *Julius Caesar* "the various strands of politics, character, inwardness, contemporary events, even Shakespeare's own reflections on the act of writing, began to infuse each other".

Shakespeare's so-called "tragic period" lasted from about 1600 to 1608, though he also wrote the so-called "problem plays" *Measure for Measure*, *Troilus and Cressida*, and *All's Well That Ends Well* during this time and had written tragedies before. Many critics believe that Shakespeare's greatest tragedies represent the peak of his art. The hero of the first, Hamlet, has probably been

more discussed than any other Shakespearean character, especially for his famous soliloquy "To be or not to be; that is the question." Unlike the introverted Hamlet, whose fatal flaw is hesitation, the heroes of the tragedies that followed, Othello and King Lear, are undone by hasty errors of judgement. The plots of Shakespeare's tragedies often hinge on such fatal errors or flaws, which overturn order and destroy the hero and those he loves. In *Othello*, the villain Iago stokes Othello's sexual jealousy to the point where he murders the innocent wife who loves him. In *King Lear*, the old king commits the tragic error of giving up his powers, triggering scenes which lead to the murder of his daughter and the torture and blinding of the Duke of Gloucester. According to the critic Frank Kermode, "the play offers neither its good characters nor its audience any relief from its cruelty".<sup>[15]</sup> In *Macbeth*, the shortest and most compressed of Shakespeare's tragedies, uncontrollable ambition incites Macbeth and his wife, Lady Macbeth, to murder the rightful king and usurp the throne, until their own guilt destroys them in turn. In this play, Shakespeare adds a supernatural element to the tragic structure. His last major tragedies, *Antony and Cleopatra* and *Coriolanus*, contain some of Shakespeare's finest poetry and were considered his most successful tragedies by the poet and critic T. S. Eliot.<sup>[16]</sup>

In his final period, Shakespeare completed three more major plays: *Cymbeline*, *The Winter's Tale* and *The Tempest*, as well as the collaboration, *Pericles, Prince of Tyre*. Less bleak than the tragedies, these four plays are graver in tone than the comedies of the 1590s, but they end with reconciliation and the forgiveness of potentially tragic errors. Some commentators have seen this change in mood as evidence of a more serene view of life on Shakespeare's part, but it may merely reflect the theatrical fashion of the day. Shakespeare collaborated on two further surviving plays, *Henry VIII* and *The Two Noble Kinsmen*, probably with John Fletcher.<sup>[17]</sup>

As was normal in the period, Shakespeare based many of his plays on the work of other playwrights and recycled older stories and historical material. For example, *Hamlet* (c. 1601) is probably a reworking of an older, lost play (the so-called Ur-Hamlet), and *King Lear* is an adaptation of an older play, *King Leir*. For plays on historical subjects, Shakespeare relied heavily on two principal texts. Most of the Roman and Greek plays are based on Plutarch's *Parallel Lives* (from the 1579 English translation by Sir Thomas North)<sup>[18]</sup>, and the English history plays are indebted to Raphael Holinshed's 1587 *Chronicles*.

Some of Shakespeare's plays first appeared in print as a series of quartos, but most remained unpublished until 1623 when the posthumous *First Folio* was published. The traditional division of his plays into tragedies, comedies, and histories follows the logic of the *First Folio*. However, modern criticism has labeled some of these plays "problem plays" as they elude easy categorization and conventions, and has introduced the term "romances" for the later comedies.

There are many controversies about the exact chronology of Shakespeare's plays. In addition, the fact that Shakespeare did not produce an authoritative print version of his plays during his life accounts for part of Shakespeare's textual problem, often noted with his plays. This means that several of the plays have different textual versions. As a result, the problem of identifying what Shakespeare actually wrote became a major concern for most modern editions. Textual corruptions also stem from printers' errors, compositors' misreadings or wrongly scanned lines from the source material. Additionally, in an age before standardized spelling, Shakespeare often wrote a word several times in a different spelling, further adding to the transcribers' confusion. Modern scholars also believe Shakespeare revised his plays throughout the years, which could lead to two existing versions of one play.

## **Poetry**

Shakespeare's sonnets are a collection of 154 poems that deal with such themes as love, beauty, politics, and mortality. All but two first appeared in the 1609 publication entitled *Shakespeare's Sonnets*; numbers 138 ("When my love swears that she is made of truth") and 144 ("Two loves have I, of comfort and despair") had previously been published in a 1599 miscellany entitled *The Passionate Pilgrim*.

The conditions under which the sonnets were published are unclear. The 1609 text is dedicated to one "Mr. W. H.," who is described as "the only begetter" of the poems by the publisher Thomas Thorpe. It is not known who this man was although there are many theories. In addition, it is not known whether the publication of the sonnets was authorized by Shakespeare. The poems were probably written over a period of several years.

In addition to his sonnets, Shakespeare also wrote several longer narrative poems, "Venus and Adonis," "The Rape of Lucrece" and "A Lover's Complaint." These poems appear to have been written either in an attempt to win the patronage of a rich benefactor (as was common at the time) or as the result of such patronage. For example, "The Rape of Lucrece" and "Venus and Adonis" were both dedicated to Shakespeare's patron, Henry Wriothesley, 3rd Earl of Southampton.

In addition, Shakespeare wrote the short poem "The Phoenix and the Turtle." The anthology *The Passionate Pilgrim* was attributed to him upon its first publication in 1599, but in fact only five of its poems are by Shakespeare and the attribution was withdrawn in the second edition.

### **Dramatic Activity of Shakespeare**

William Shakespeare was not of an age but of all ages. He wrote 37 plays, which may be classified as tragedies, comedies, romances or tragic-comedies and historical plays. The period of Shakespeare's dramatic activity spans twenty four years (1588 –1612) which is divided into the following four sub-periods:

#### **i) The First Period (1588 –96):**

It is a period of early experimentation. During this period he wrote *Titus Andronicus*, *First Part of Henry VI*, *Love's Labour Lost*, *The Comedy of Errors*, *The Two Gentlemen of Verona*, *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, *Richard II* and *Richard III* and *King John*. His early poems *The Rape of Lucrece* and *Venus and Andonis* belong to this period.

#### **ii) The Second Period (1596 –1600):**

Shakespeare wrote his great comedies and chronicled plays during this period. The works of this period are *The Merchant of Venice*, *The Taming of the Shrew*, *The Merry Wives of Windsor*, *Much Ado About Nothing* *As You Like It*, *The Twelfth Night*, *Henry IV, Part I & II*, and *Henry V*.

#### **iii) The Third Period (1601-08):**

It is a period of great tragedies *Hamlet*, *Macbeth*, *King Lear*, *Othello*, *Julius Caesar*, and of somber

and better comedies All's Well That Ends Well, Measure For Measure and Troilus and Cressida

.

**iv) The Fourth Period (1608 –1613):**

Shakespeare's last period begins with Antony and Cleopatra, Coriolanus, Timon of Athens, Henry VII and Pericles. What distinguishes Shakespeare's last period is the reawakening of his first love romance in Cymbeline, The Tempest and The Winter's Tale.

**Shakespearean Comedy**

Shakespeare brought perfection to the writing of romantic comedy. His comedies are classified into the following three categories.

i) **The Early Comedies:** They are The Comedy of Errors, Love's Labour Lost and The Two Gentlemen of Verona. The plays show signs of immaturity. The plots are less original, the characters are less finished and the style is also vigorous. The humour lacks the wide human sympathy of his mature comedies.

ii) **The Mature Comedies:** Shakespeare's comic genius finds expression in Much Ado About Nothing, Twelfth Night, The Merchant of Venice and As You Like It. These plays are full of love and romance, vigour and vitality, versatility of humour, humanity and well-portrayed characters.

iii) **The Somber Comedies:** All's Well That Ends Well, Measure for Measure and Troilus and Cressida belong to the period of great tragedies. These comedies have a serious and somber time

**William Shakespeare** (1564-1616) is Called as, 'The Bard of Avon', English poet and playwright. While Shakespeare caused much controversy, he also earned lavish praise and has profoundly impacted the world over in areas of literature, culture, art, theatre, and film and is considered one of the best English language writers ever. From the Preface of the First Folio (1623) "To the memory of my beloved, The Author, Mr. William Shakespeare: and what he hath

left us"

--Ben Jonson;

Over the centuries there has been much speculation surrounding various aspects of Shakespeare's life including his religious affiliation, sexual orientation, sources for collaborations, authorship of and chronology of the plays and sonnets. Many of the dates of play performances, when they were written, adapted or revised and printed are imprecise. This biography attempts only to give an overview of his life, while leaving the more learned perspectives to the countless scholars and historians who have devoted their lives to the study and demystification of the man and his works.

### **Poetry**

It is generally agreed that most of the Shakespearean Sonnets were written in the 1590s, some printed at this time as well. Others were written or revised right before being printed. 154 sonnets and "A Lover's Complaint" were published by Thomas Thorpe as Shakespeares Sonnets in 1609. The order, dates, and authorship of the Sonnets have been much debated with no conclusive findings. Many have claimed autobiographical details from them, including sonnet number 145 in reference to Anne. The dedication to "Mr. W.H." is said to possibly represent the initials of the third earl of Pembroke William Herbert, or perhaps being a reversal of Henry Wriothesly's initials. Regardless, there have been some unfortunate projections and interpretations of modern concepts onto centuries old works that, while a grasp of contextual historical information can certainly lend to their depth and meaning, can also be enjoyed as valuable poetical works that have transcended time and been surpassed by no other.

Shakespeare's works were collected and printed in various editions in the century following his death, and by the early eighteenth century his reputation as the greatest poet ever to write in English was well established. The unprecedented admiration garnered by his works led to a fierce curiosity about Shakespeare's life; but the paucity of surviving biographical information has left many details of Shakespeare's personal history shrouded in mystery. Some people have concluded from this fact that Shakespeare's plays in reality were written by someone else— Francis Bacon and the Earl of Oxford are the two most popular candidates—but the evidence for this claim is overwhelmingly circumstantial, and the theory is not taken seriously by many scholars. In the

absence of definitive proof to the contrary, Shakespeare must be viewed as the author of the 37 plays and 154 sonnets that bear his name. The legacy of this body of work is immense. A number of Shakespeare's plays seem to have transcended even the category of brilliance, becoming so influential as to affect profoundly the course of Western literature and culture ever after.

### **The Sonnets**

Shakespeare's sonnets are very different from Shakespeare's plays, but they do contain dramatic elements and an overall sense of story. Each of the poems deals with a highly personal theme, and each can be taken on its own or in relation to the poems around it. The sonnets have the feel of autobiographical poems, but we don't know whether they deal with real events or not, because no one knows enough about Shakespeare's life to say whether or not they deal with real events and feelings, so we tend to refer to the voice of the sonnets as "the speaker"—as though he were a dramatic creation like Hamlet or King Lear. There are certainly a number of intriguing continuities throughout the poems. The first 126 of the sonnets seem to be addressed to an unnamed young nobleman, whom the speaker loves very much; the rest of the poems (except for the last two, which seem generally unconnected to the rest of the sequence) seem to be addressed to a mysterious woman, whom the speaker loves, hates, and lusts for simultaneously. The two addressees of the sonnets are usually referred to as the "young man" and the "dark lady"; in summaries of individual poems, I have also called the young man the "beloved" and the dark lady the "lover," especially in cases where their identity can only be surmised. Within the two mini-sequences, there are a number of other discernible elements of "plot": the speaker urges the young man to have children; he is forced to endure a separation from him; he competes with a rival poet for the young man's patronage and affection. At two points in the sequence, it seems that the young man and the dark lady are actually lovers themselves—a state of affairs with which the speaker is none too happy. But while these continuities give the poems a narrative flow and a helpful frame of reference, they have been frustratingly hard for scholars and biographers to pin down. In Shakespeare's life, who were the young man and the dark lady?

## **CHARACTERISTICS OF SHAKESPEAREAN PLAYS: COMEDY, TRAGEDY, HISTORY**

William Shakespeare (1564-1616) is considered to be the greatest writer in English Literature. He composed over 150 sonnets and wrote some of the most famous plays in the English language. His plays are generally categorised as Comedies, Tragedies and Histories. There is some debate about which category some of the plays should be included in as there are often crossovers between the genres. So, which plays did he write and what are the features of the different genre?

### **i. Shakespeare's Comedy**

Comedy is not necessarily what a modern audience would expect comedy to be. Whilst there may be some funny moments, a Shakespearean comedy may involve some very dramatic storylines. Usually what defines a Shakespearean play as a comedy is that it has a happy ending, often involving a marriage. The main characteristics in Shakespeare's Comedies are:

- A struggle of young lovers to overcome problems, often the result of the interference of their elders
- There is some element of separation and reunification
- Mistaken identities, often involving disguise
- A clever servant
- Family tensions that are usually resolved in the end
- Complex, interwoven plot-lines
- Frequent use of puns and other styles of comedy

The Shakespearean plays which are usually classed as Comedy are:

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

## **ii.     Shakespearean Tragedy**

Tragedies may involve comedic moments, but tend towards more serious, dramatic plots with an ending that involves the death of main characters. The main features of a Shakespearean Tragedy are that:

- Characters become isolated or there is social breakdown
- Ends in death
- There is a sense that events are inevitable or inescapable
- There is usually a central figure who is noble but with a character flaw which leads them towards their eventual downfall

The plays which are generally classed as Shakespearean Tragedy are: Macbeth, Hamlet, Romeo and Juliet, Titus Andronicus, Julius Caesar, Troilus and Cressida, Othello, Coriolanus, King Lear, Antony and Cleopatra, Timon of Athens and Cymbeline (this is debated, with some scholars classifying it as a Comedy)

## **iii.     Shakespeare's Histories**

Shakespeare's Histories focus on English monarchs. They usually play upon Elizabethan propaganda, showing the dangers of civil war and glorifying the queen's Tudor ancestors. The depictions of monarchs including Richard III (an enemy of the Tudors) and Henry V (one of the great Tudor monarchs) have been influential in creating a perception of these kings which has persisted throughout the centuries. Many historians point to inaccuracies in the depictions, but the plays have been very powerful in presenting a particular image which it is hard for many people to see past.

The Histories are: King John, Richard II, Henry IV (parts I and II), Henry V, Henry VI (parts I, II and III), Richard III and Henry VIII.

The plays, Coriolanus, Julius Caesar and Antony and Cleopatra are classified both as Tragedies and as Roman Histories.

## BEN JONSON

**Ben Jonson** (1572-1632), eighteen years Shakespeare's junior, knew him well; they acted in each others' plays. As playwright, poet, critic and man of letters, Jonson dominated his generation. He was a great poet and a great dramatist. Jonson and Marlowe belong with Shakespeare; other Jacobean appear in the next chapter.

Jonson wrote that Shakespeare was the greatest of writers, and that he 'loved the man, this side idolatry'; he also mentioned his 'small Latin and less Greek' and his carelessness. Ben Jonson was at Westminster School under the antiquarian William Camden (1551-1623), author of *Brittania* (1587). He then worked with his stepfather, a bricklayer, and served as a soldier in the Low Countries, killing an enemy champion in single combat. In 1598 he killed a fellow-player in self-defence. Converted in prison, he was 'twelve years a Papist'. He played Hieronimo in Kyd's *Spanish Tragedy* in 1601. Questioned about the Gunpowder Plot in 1605, in 1606 he (and his wife) were charged with recusancy. After the publication of his *Folio Works* in 1616, James I gave him a pension. We know Jonson through his moral satire, criticism, social verse and self-portraits. He tells us of 'my mountain belly and my rockie face'; and that he weighed nearly twenty stone (170 kilogrammes). In 1618-19 he walked to Scotland to win a bet; his table-talk there was recorded by his host, Drummond of Hawthornden. He wrote plays, verse and court masques, and died in 1637.

Jonson's education gave him a classical idea of literature, valuing sanity, concision and integrity. He took the old masters as 'guides, not commanders', which, as Oscar Wilde remarked, 'made the poets of Greece and Rome terribly modern'. But those poets are not known now as they were to Wilde; and terrible modernity is not obvious in Jonson's sombre *Sejanus* (1603) and *Catiline* (1611). These Roman tragedies are less alive than Shakespeare's; the toga hides the topicality of their political satire.

Satire is the motive of Jonson's comedy also: *Every Man in His Humour* (1598) is set in Florence (Shakespeare is listed in the cast), and *Volpone* (1605) in Venice; but London is the scene of *Epicoene, or the Silent Woman* (1609), *The Alchemist* (1610), *Bartholomew Fair* (1614) and other plays. Jonson's ridicule of the deformations of contemporary life is ferocious but farcical: although he held that comedy does not derive from laughter, we laugh more, and harder, at his

comedies than at Shakespeare's. Jonson has the Renaissance idea that comedy laughs us out of vices and follies. 'Comedy is an imitation of the common errors of our life, which he representeth in the most ridiculous and scornful sort that may be, so as it is impossible that any beholder can be content to be such a one.' - Sidney.

Jonson's comedy-of-humour characters are caricatures ruled by a single idea. In physiology a 'humour' was a bodily fluid, an excess of which unbalanced the temperament, making it phlegmatic, bilious, sanguine, melancholy, choleric, and so on. Jonson extended this purgative approach to ruling passions and monomaniac fixations. (This 'humour' tradition goes from Chaucer to Dickens *via* Henry Fielding and the caricaturist Hogarth in the 18th century. Dickens liked to act the part of Bobadil in *Every Man in his Humour*.) In Jonson's grotesque world, avarice is the chief vice, ahead of pride, lust and gluttony; folly is everywhere. Jonson's London bubbles most anarchically in *Bartholomew Fair*, the action centring on the tent of the pig-woman, Ursula, where pig and human flesh are on sale, and hypocrisy is unmasked. Although he later wrote more for the Court than for the public, Jonson does not mock the citizen more than the courtier. His ideal remained an integrity, artistic, intellectual and moral; he hated fraud, personal, moral or social.

Jonson gave his abundant spirits a classical focus. *Epicoene* has a brilliantly simple plot. *Volpone* and *The Alchemist* share a simple base in the confidence tricks played by two fraudsters on a series of greedy gulls. The deception-machine spins faster and faster until the tricksters overreach themselves and the bubble bursts. Jonson makes Marlowe's theme of aspiration comic rather than tragic.

In *The Alchemist* Sir Epicure Mammon plans the sexual conquests he will enjoy after taking the elixir of youth: 'I will have all my beds blown up, not stuffed;/Down is too hard. The alchemist's stone, supposed to turn base metal into gold, attracts the parasites of London: epicurean merchants, but also such brethren as Tribulation Wholesome. Tribulation's Deacon, Ananias, has a line— 'Thou look'st like Antichrist in that lewd hat!' - which strikes the note of crazed disproportion which delighted Jonson. He is the first critic of puritan capitalism, yet his critique of human nature, though 'terribly modern', is as old as the view of Rome taken by the first-century poet Martial. *Volpone* is darker than *The Alchemist*, but the rich Volpone (Italian for 'old Fox') is a cousin of Sir Epicure.

He begins with 'Good morrow to the day; and next, my gold!/Open the shrine, that I may see my saint.' He and his servant Mosca (Fly) trick a series of fortune-hunters, Voltore, Corbaccio and Corvino: each makes him a gift in the hope of becoming his heir. Corvino (Raven) is persuaded that the bedridden Volpone is so deaf that he must be at death's door: Mosca yells into Volpone's ear that his 'hanging cheeks ... look like frozen dish-clouts, set on end.' Corvino tries comically hard, but cannot match Mosca's Cockney insults. Mosca suggests Corvino invite Volpone to enjoy his young wife Celia. Before taking advantage of Corvino's generosity, Volpone sings a sprightly song, adapted from Catullus: 'Come, my Celia, let us prove/While we may, the sports of love./Cannot we delude the eyes/Of a few poor household spies?' His rape is foiled, but his fantastic tricks come to an end only when, in order to enjoy the discomfiture of the birds of carrion, he makes Mosca his heir and pretends to die. Mosca tries to double-cross Volpone, and so, in a court-room climax, Volpone has to prove he is alive. Put in irons until he is as ill as he pretends to be, he exits with: 'This is called mortifying of a Fox.' This savagely moral caricature on avarice is also wonderfully entertaining; Volpone is allowed to speak the witty Epilogue.

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## FRANCIS BACON

**Francis Bacon** (later Lord Verulam, the Viscount St. Albans, and Lord Chancellor of England) was born on 22 January 1561 at York House near the Strand in London. He was an English philosopher, statesman, scientist, jurist, orator, and author. He served both as Attorney General and as Lord Chancellor of England. Bacon has been called the father of empiricism.

However, Bacon's real interests lay in science. Much of the science of the period was based on the work of the ancient Greek philosopher Aristotle. While many Aristotelian ideas, such as the position of the earth at the centre of the universe, had been overturned, his methodology was still being used. This held that scientific truth could be reached by way of authoritative argument: if sufficiently clever men discussed a subject long enough, the truth would eventually be discovered. Bacon challenged this, arguing that truth required evidence from the real world. He published his ideas, initially in 'Novum Organum' (1620), an account of the correct method of acquiring natural knowledge.

Bacon's political ascent also continued. In 1618 he was appointed Lord Chancellor, the most powerful position in England, and in 1621 he was created viscount St Albans. Shortly afterwards, he was charged by parliament with accepting bribes, which he admitted. He was fined and imprisoned and then banished from court. Although the king later pardoned him, this was the end of Bacon's public life. He retired to his home at Gorhambury in Hertfordshire, where he continued to write. He died in London on 9 April 1626.

Bacon's style, though elegant, is by no means as simple as it seems or as it is often described. In fact it is actually a fairly complex affair that achieves its air of ease and clarity more through its balanced cadences, natural metaphors, and carefully arranged symmetries than through the use of plain words, commonplace ideas, and straightforward syntax.

Some of the more notable works by Bacon are:

- *Essays* (1597)
- *The Advancement and Proficiency of Learning Divine and Human* (1605)
- *Novum Organum Scientiarum* (1620)
- *Essays, or Counsels Civil and Moral* (1625)
- *New Atlantis* (1627)

Francis Bacon's philosophy is displayed in the vast and varied writings he left, which might be divided in three great branches:

- *Scientific works* – in which his ideas for an universal reform of knowledge into scientific methodology and the improvement of mankind's state using the Scientific method are presented.
- *Religious and literary works* – in which he presents his moral philosophy and theological meditations.
- *Juridical works* – in which his reforms in English Law are proposed

Indeed even if Bacon had produced nothing else but his masterful *Essays* (first published in 1597 and then revised and expanded in 1612 and 1625), he would still rate among the top echelon of 17th-century English authors. And so when we take into account his other writings, e.g., his histories,

letters, and especially his major philosophical and scientific works, we must surely place him in the first rank of English literature's great men of letters and among its finest masters (alongside names like Johnson, Mill, Carlyle, and Ruskin) of non-fiction prose.

Francis Bacon did not propose an actual philosophy, but rather a method of developing philosophy; he wrote that, whilst philosophy at the time used the deductive syllogism to interpret nature, the philosopher should instead proceed through inductive reasoning from fact to axiom to law. Before beginning this induction, the inquirer is to free his mind from certain false notions or tendencies which distort the truth. These are called "Idols" (*idola*), and are of four kinds: "Idols of the Tribe" (*idola tribus*), which are common to the race; "Idols of the Den" (*idola specus*), which are peculiar to the individual; "Idols of the Marketplace" (*idola fori*), coming from the misuse of language; and "Idols of the Theater" (*idola theatri*), which result from an abuse of authority. The end of induction is the discovery of forms, the ways in which natural phenomena occur, the causes from which they proceed.

Bacon's somewhat fragmentary ethical system, derived through use of his methods, is explicated in the seventh and eighth books of his *De augmentis scientiarum* (1623). He distinguishes between duty to the community, an ethical matter, and duty to God, a purely religious matter. Any moral action is the action of the human will, which is governed by reason and spurred on by the passions; habit is what aids men in directing their will toward the good. No universal rules can be made, as both situations and men's characters differ.

Bacon distinctly separates religion and philosophy, though the two can coexist. Where philosophy is based on reason, faith is based on revelation, and therefore irrational - in *De augmentis* he writes that "[t]he more discordant, therefore, and incredible, the divine mystery is, the more honor is shown to God in believing it, and the nobler is the victory of faith."

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## CHRISTOPHER MARLOWE

**Christopher Marlowe** also known as **Kit Marlowe** (baptised 26 February 1564 – 30 May 1593), was an English playwright, poet and translator of the Elizabethan era. Marlowe was the foremost Elizabethan tragedian of his day.<sup>[2]</sup> He greatly influenced William Shakespeare, who was born in the same year as Marlowe and who rose to become the pre-eminent Elizabethan playwright after Marlowe's mysterious early death. Marlowe's plays are known for the use of blank verse and their overreaching protagonists.

Marlowe's famous plays *Tamburlaine, the Great*, *Dr. Faustus*, *Edward II* and *The Jew of Malta* give him a place of preeminence among the University Wits. Swinburne calls him —the first great poet, the father of English tragedy and the creator of blank verse. He is, indeed, the protagonist of tragic drama in English and the forerunner of Shakespeare and his fellows. Marlowe provided big heroic subjects that appealed to human imagination. He for the first time imparted individuality and dignity to the tragic hero. He also presented the tragic conflict between the good and evil forces in *Dr. Faustus*. He is the first tragic dramatist who used the device of Nemesis in an artistic and psychological manner. Marlowe for the first time made blank verse a powerful vehicle for the expression of varied human emotions. His blank verse, which Ben Jonson calls, —Marlowe's Mighty Line is noticeable for its splendour of diction, picturesqueness, vigour and energy, variety in pace and its responsiveness to the demands of varying emotions. Marlowe has been termed the father of English tragedy. He was in fact the first to feel that romantic drama was the sole form in harmony with the temperament of the nation. He created authentic romantic tragedy in English and paved the way for the full blossoming of Shakespeare's dramatic genius.

With the work of Christopher Marlowe (1564–93), however, we reach a far higher level of theatrical skill and accomplishment. The grandeur is grandly heralded in the prologue to *Tamburlaine the Great*, which was performed in about 1587:

*From jiggling veins of rhyming mother-wits, And such conceits  
as clownage keeps in pay, We'll lead you to the stately tent of  
war...*

The play was such a success that a sequel was written, *Tamburlaine Part 2*. The two do not form a cunningly structured drama, but present a succession of adventures. *Tamburlaine* makes his grandiose progress

through a sequence of battles, achieving more and bigger victories, greater and greater power. There is no human retribution at the end: Tamburlaine does not lose a battle; he dies in the midst of another victory. Each battle is introduced by a poetic survey of the forces involved—long geographical catalogues in which Marlowe's rhetoric surges, wave upon wave. Between the battles Tamburlaine rages about his future conquests, and his arrogant lust for destruction leads to a hideous orgy of excess. The climax of indignities inflicted in *Part I* comes when Tamburlaine has the conquered Turkish emperor, Bajazet, dragged about in a cage. 'Bring out my footstool', Tamburlaine cries, and Bajazet is let out so that Tamburlaine can tread on him in mounting his throne. Eventually Bajazet ends his humiliation by beating his own brains out against the side of the cage. Thereupon his wife, Zabina, runs against the cage and brains herself too. In *Part 2* conquered kings are harnessed, bitted, reined and whipped: they draw Tamburlaine's chariot. But for all the excesses of action and rhetoric, Marlowe's 'mighty line' and his instinct for what tells on the stage made a powerful impact on the Elizabethans. Moreover a meaningful moral pattern emerges in the spectacle of the would-be world-conquerer's impotence to save either the beloved Zenocrate or himself from man's last enemy. Tamburlaine is undefeated by man, but the 'ugly monster Death', whom he has regarded as his slave, puts an end to his immoderate claim to exercise the 'power of Heaven's eternal majesty' as the 'scourge of God and terror of the world'.

*The Jew of Malta* was first performed in about 1592. Ferneze, governor of Malta, extracts money from the Jews in order to pay tribute due to Turkey. Barabas is deprived of all his wealth, and embarks on a complex career of revenge in which ultimately he kills even his own daughter, Abigail. Eventually he himself becomes governor of Malta and plots to kill the Turkish commander. He is foolish enough to involve Ferneze and is out-plotted. The drama is a series of episodes strung together and, as each one ends, there is a premature sense of completion. The play seems to be continually starting again. As for the moral drift of the work, we seem to enter a society of rogues seen through the eyes of a cynic. A significant prologue is spoken by Machiavel himself, summing up the philosophy of unprincipled opportunism (religion is a 'childish toy' and there is 'no sin but ignorance') which he came to represent for the Elizabethans. He has been the inspiration of the Duke of Guise (in Marlowe's *The Massacre at Paris*), he claims, and now the Jew is his disciple.

The tone of *Edward II* (1593) is graver and its commentary on life more profound. Reflection towards the end, especially by Edward, on the emptiness of earthly joys, the paradox of earthly power, and the transience

of earthly good fortune, add to the play's tragic dimensions. The construction is episodic, in that there is a series of conflicts between the king and his nobles (Young Mortimer is another 'machievellian'), with victory alternating between the two sides. Nevertheless the personality of Edward gives unity to the play. He is conceived as a weak yet not insensitive man goaded to desperation by his scheming opponents. Though he asserts that the 'griefs of private men are soon allayed/But not of kings', it is very much a personal tragedy, the tragedy of one who has worshipped a favourite as Tamburlaine worshipped physical power and Faustus spiritual power; and the pathos is acute at the end, when the king is imprisoned and murdered. Having stood ten days 'in mire and puddle', kept awake by a ceaseless drum-beat, he contemplates his dripping, tattered clothes and says:

*Tell Isabel the queen, I looked not thus, When for her sake I  
ran at tilt in France And there unhorsed the Duke of  
Cleremont.*

The sad picture of the deposed monarch effects a shift in the audience's feelings towards a victim whose weakness and stupidity as king alienated sympathy. In this respect, as in the abdication scene, the play anticipates Shakespeare's *Richard II*.

*Dr Faustus* contains Marlowe's finest work. The hero sells his soul to the Devil in exchange for twenty-four years of life in which the demon Mephistophilis will be at his disposal. Aristotle laid down that a play should have a beginning, a middle and an end. The proposition might seem superfluous until one has read *Dr Faustus*, whose middle is mostly so poor by comparison with the beginning and the end that the whole seems like a mutilated masterpiece, and Marlowe's collaborator is assumed to have been largely responsible for the central scenes. All that leads up to the making of the diabolical contract, together with the representation of Faustus's last agonies, represents dramatic poetry that matches Shakespeare's in intensity. But between these magnificent extremes the inner episodes, displaying Faustus's years of pleasure, are disfigured by crude slapstick and farcical conjuring tricks. A papal banquet is interrupted by invisible food-snatching, and Faustus enjoy the dubious privilege of giving the pontiff a box on the ears. But at the play's extremes, in mature Marlovian verse, now as flexible as it is powerful, the sense of cosmic conflict involving the powers of darkness is potent and pervasive. 'This is hell', says Mephistophilis, giving expression to the conception of unlocalized damnation:

*Thinkst thou that I, who saw the face of God, And tasted the  
eternal joys of heaven,  
Am not tormented with ten thousand hells In being depriv'd  
of everlasting bliss.*

When Marlowe's hand is recognizably at work we are in a world with heights above and depths beneath. In the closing soliloquy Faustus's final agony is voiced with tormenting acuteness in imagery of tumultuous power. Such poetry, coming from the pen of a man who was dead before he was thirty, compels one to speculate on what literature lost when Marlowe was stabbed to death in a tavern in Deptford.

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**SCHOOL OF SCIENCE & HUMANITIES**

**DEPARTMENT OF ENGLISH**

**UNIT 2 – History of English Literature – SHS1105**

## **University Wits**

The **University Wits** is a phrase used to name a group of late 16th-century English playwrights and pamphleteers who were educated at the universities (Oxford or Cambridge) and who became popular secular writers. Prominent members of this group were Christopher Marlowe, Robert Greene, and Thomas Nashe from Cambridge, and John Lyly, Thomas Lodge, and George Peele from Oxford. Thomas Kyd is also sometimes included in the group, though he is not believed to have studied at university.

This diverse and talented loose association of London writers and dramatists set the stage for the theatrical Renaissance of Elizabethan England. They are identified as among the earliest professional writers in English, and prepared the way for the writings of William Shakespeare, who was born just two months after Christopher Marlowe.

The term "University Wits" was not used in their lifetime, but was coined by George Saintsbury, a 19th-century journalist and author.<sup>[1]</sup> Saintsbury argues that the "rising sap" of dramatic creativity in the 1580s showed itself in two separate "branches of the national tree":

### ***Characteristics of University Wits:***

Edward Albert in his *History of English Literature* (1979) argues that the plays of the University Wits had several features in common:

- (a) There was a fondness for heroic themes, such as the lives of great figures like Mohammed and Tamburlaine.
- (b) Heroic themes needed heroic treatment: great fullness and variety; splendid descriptions, long swelling speeches, the handling of violent incidents and emotions. These qualities, excellent when held in restraint, only too often led to loudness and disorder.
- (c) The style was also 'heroic'. The chief aim was to achieve strong and sounding lines, magnificent epithets, and powerful declamation. This again led to abuse and to mere bombast, mouthing, and in the worst cases to nonsense. In the best examples, such as in Marlowe, the

result is quite impressive. In this connexion it is to be noted that the best medium for such expression was blank verse, which was sufficiently elastic to bear the strong pressure of these expansive methods.

(d) The themes were usually tragic in nature, for the dramatists were as a rule too much in earnest to give heed to what was considered to be the lower species of comedy. The general lack of real humour in the early drama is one of its most prominent features. Humour, when it is brought in at all, is coarse and immature. Almost the only representative of the writers of real comedies is Lyly.

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## **MILTON**

**John Milton**, (born December 9, 1608, London, died on November 1674, London) English poet, pamphleteer, and historian, considered the most significant English author after William Shakespeare.

He was educated at St. Paul's School, then at Christ's College, Cambridge, where he began to write poetry in Latin, Italian, and English, and prepared to enter the clergy. After university, however, he abandoned his plans to join the priesthood and spent the next six years in his father's country home in Buckinghamshire following a rigorous course of independent study to prepare for a career as a poet. His extensive reading included both classical and modern works of religion, science, philosophy, history, politics, and literature. In addition, Milton was proficient in Latin, Greek, Hebrew, French, Spanish, and Italian, and obtained a familiarity with Old English and Dutch as well.

Milton's poetry and prose reflect deep personal convictions, a passion for freedom and self-determination, and the urgent issues and political turbulence of his day. Writing in English, Latin, Greek, and Italian, he achieved international renown within his lifetime, and his celebrated *Areopagitica* (1644), written in condemnation of pre-publication censorship, is among history's most influential and impassioned defences of free speech and freedom of the

press.

William Hayley's 1796 biography called him the "greatest English author", and he remains generally regarded "as one of the preeminent writers in the English language", though critical reception has oscillated in the centuries since his death (often on account of his republicanism). Samuel Johnson praised *Paradise Lost* as "a poem which...with respect to design may claim the first place, and with respect to performance, the second, among the productions of the human mind", though he (a Tory and recipient of royal patronage) described Milton's politics as those of an "acrimonious and surly republican".

John Milton's major works are: "On the Morning of Christ's Nativity" (1629) "On Shakespeare" (1632) *Comus* (1634) *Lycidas* (1637) *Epitaphium Damonis* (1639) *Of Reformation* (1641) *nimadversions* (1641) *Of Prelatical Episcopacy* (1641) *The Reason for Church Government* (1642) *Doctrine and Discipline of Divorce* (1643) *The Judgement of Martin Bucer Concerning Divorce* (1643) *Areopagitica* (1644) "On His Blindness"/"When I Consider How My Life Is Spent" (date unknown) *Paradise Lost* (1667) *Paradise Regained* (1671) *Samson Agonistes* (1671)

Milton is best known for *Paradise Lost*, widely regarded as the greatest epic poem in English. Together with *Paradise Regained* and *Samson Agonistes*, it confirms Milton's reputation as one of the greatest English poets. In his prose works Milton advocated the abolition of the Church of England and the execution of Charles I. From the beginning of the English Civil Wars in 1642 to long after the restoration of Charles II as king in 1660, he espoused in all his works a political philosophy that opposed tyranny and state-sanctioned religion. His influence extended not only through the civil wars and interregnum but also to the American and French revolutions. In his works on theology, he valued liberty of conscience, the paramount importance of Scripture as a guide in matters of faith, and religious toleration toward dissidents. As a civil servant, Milton became the voice of the English Commonwealth after 1649 through his handling of its international correspondence and his defense of the government against polemical attacks from abroad.

Since Milton was famous for his unique style of blank verse and sonnets, he won the praise of the romantic poets for his skills. However, they did not accept his religious views. William Wordsworth opens his popular sonnet with “*Milton! thou should’st be living at this hour.*” John Keats was also a great admirer of Miltonic verse and advocated that, “*Miltonic verse cannot be written but in an artful or rather artist’s humor*”. Keats also felt that his epic poem “*Hyperion*” was filled with several Miltonic inversions. During that time, poetic blank verse was thought to be a unique form of poetry rather than in drama verse.

In addition to the induction of stylish innovation of Milton, he also influenced later poets. Specifically, Thomas Hardy and George Eliot of the Victorian Age were greatly inspired by his poetry. Similarly, Milton was a great influence to Ezra Pound and T.S Eliot – two of the most famous 20th century critics. Milton gave paramount importance to liberty of conscience and the Scriptures for guidance in faith- related matters.

**His Prose:** Most of Milton's prose was written during the middle period of his life (1640-60), when he was busy with public affairs. The prose works have an unusual interest, because as a rule they have a direct bearing on either his personal business or public interests. In all they amount to twenty-five pamphlets, of which twenty-one are in English and the remaining four in Latin. He began pamphleteering quite early (1641), when he engaged in a lively controversy with Bishop Hall over episcopacy. Then, while teaching, he wrote a rather poor tract, *Of Education* (1644). When his wife deserted him he composed two pamphlets on divorce (1643 and 1644), which scandalized the public by the freedom of their opinions and the slashing nature of their style. The critics of the pamphlets sought to confound Milton on a technical matter by pointing out that he had not licensed the books, as required by law. To this Milton retorted with the greatest of all his tracts, *Areopagitica* (1644), a noble and impassioned plea for the liberty of the Press. Later works include a defence (in Latin) of the execution of Charles I and of other actions of the Commonwealth Government. During the last years of his life Milton partly completed a *History of Britain* and other scholastic works. When we consider the style of Milton's prose we must keep in mind how it was occasioned. His pamphlets were cast off at white heat and precipitated into print while some topic was in urgent debate either in Milton's or the public mind. Hence in method they are tempestuous and disordered; voluble, violent, and lax in style. They reveal intense zeal and pugnacity, a mind at once spacious in ideals and

intolerant in application, a rich fancy, and a capacious scholarship. They lack humour, proportion, and restraint; but in spite of these defects they are among the greatest controversial compositions in the language.

**His Poetry.** The great bulk of Milton's poetry was written during two periods separated from each other by twenty years: (a) the period of his university career and his stay at Horton, from 1629 to 1640; and (b) the last years of his life, from about 1660 to 1674. The years between were filled by a few sonnets. (a) While still an undergraduate Milton began to compose poems of remarkable maturity and promise. They include the fine and stately *Ode on the Morning of Christ's Nativity* (1629), and the poems *On Shakespeare* (1630) and *On Arriving at the Age of Twenty-three* (1631). (These poems show Milton's command of impressive diction and his high ideals, both literary and religious). While at Horton (probably in 1632) he composed *L' Allegro* and *Il Penseroso*, two longish poems in octosyllabic couplets dealing with the respective experiences of the gay and thoughtful man. The pieces are decorative rather than descriptive, artificial rather than natural, but they are full of scholarly fancy and adroit poetical phrasing. *Comus* (1634) belongs to this period, and is a masque containing some stiff but beautiful blank verse and some quite charming lyrical measures. *Lycidas* (1637) is an elegy on his friend Edward King, who was drowned on a voyage to Ireland. The real subject of the poem, however, is the uncertainty and torment occasioned in Milton's mind by his realization that death might forestall the achievement of the fame which was his ambition. In its varying moods we see the interplay of doubt, fear, anger, and finally, a peaceful reliance on the belief that true fame rests on God and is only to be found in heaven. It is his underlying subject which gives the poem its passionate sincerity.

#### **Features of his Poetry:**

**(a) The Puritan Strain.** All through his life Milton's religious fervour was unshaken. Even his enemies did not deny his sincerity. It is seen even in one of his earliest sonnets:

*All is, if I have grace to use it so,*

*As ever in my great Taskmaster's eye*

It persists even to the end, when it runs deeper and darker and darker. In *Paradise Lost*, for example, his chief motive is to "justify the ways of God to men." This religious tendency is apparent in (1) the choice of religious subjects, especially in the later poems; (2) the sense of responsibility and moral exaltation; (3) the fondness for preaching and lecturing, which in *Paradise Lost* is a positive weakness; (4) the narrowness of outlook, strongly Puritanical, seen in his outbursts against his opponents (as in *Lycidas*), in his belief regarding the inferiority of women, and in his scorn for the "miscellaneous rabble."

**(b) The Classical Strain.** Curiously interwrought with the severity of his religious nature is a strong bent for the classics,' which is pagan and sensuous. His learning was wide and matured; he wrote Latin prose and verse as freely as he wrote English. His classical bent is apparent in (1) his choice of classical and semi-classical forms--such as the epic, the Greek tragedy, and the pastoral; (2) the elaborate descriptions and enormous similes *Paradise Lost*; (3) the fondness for classical allusion, which runs riot through all his poetry; (4) the dignity of his style, and its precision and care. His very egoism takes a high classical turn. In his blindness he compares himself with Blind Thamyris and blind Mseonides, And Tiresias and Phineus, prophets old. In his choice of diction we have the classical element abundantly apparent; and, lastly, the same element appears in the typical Miltonic grandeur and frigidity, the arrogant aloofness from men and mortals.

**(c) His Poetical Genius.** As a poet Milton is not a great innovator; his function is rather to refine and make perfect. Every form he touches acquires a finality of grace and dignity. The epic, the ode, the classical drama, the sonnet, the masque, and the elegy—his achievements in these have never been bettered and seldom approached. As a metrist he stands almost alone. In all his metres we observe the same ease, sureness, and success.

**(d) His Position in Literature.** In literature Milton occupies an important central or transitional position. He came immediately after the Elizabethan epoch, when the Elizabethan methods were crumbling into chaos. His hand and temper were firm enough to gather into one system the wavering tendencies of poetry, and to give them sureness, accuracy, and variety.

## **METAPHYSICAL POETRY**

The metaphysical poets is a term coined by the poet and critic Samuel Johnson to describe a loose group of British lyric poets of the 17<sup>th</sup> century, whose work was characterized by the inventive use of conceits, and by speculation about topics such as love or religion. These poets were not formally affiliated; most of them did not even know or read each other.

This term was first used by Dr. Johnson, who applied it to Cowley and Donne. It denotes the work of a group of poets who came directly or indirectly under Donne's influence (see p. 81). Usually lyrical in nature, their work shows a surprising blend of passion and thought; their poems are full of learned imagery and striking conceits, and, at their best, reveal great psychological insight and subtlety of thought development.

Metaphysical poetry is concerned with the whole experience of man, but the intelligence, learning and seriousness of the poets means that the poetry is about the profound areas of experience especially - about love, romantic and sensual; about man's relationship with God the eternal perspective, and, to a less extent, about pleasure, learning and art. Metaphysical means dealing with the relationship between spirit to matter or the ultimate nature of reality. Metaphysical poems are lyric poems. They are brief but intense meditations, characterized by striking use of wit, irony and wordplay.

### **Major poets**

- John Donne (1572–1631)
- George Herbert (1593–1633)
- Andrew Marvell (1621–1678)
- Abraham Cowley (1618–1667)
- Saint Robert Southwell (c. 1561–1595)
- Richard Crashaw (c. 1613–1649)
- Thomas Traherne (1637 – 1674)
- Henry Vaughan (1622–16)

## Characteristics of Metaphysical Poetry

### *1. Argumentative structure.*

The poem often engages in a debate or persuasive presentation; the poem is an intellectual exercise as well as or instead of an emotional effusion.

### *2. Dramatic and colloquial mode of utterance.*

The poem often describes a dramatic event rather than being a reverie, a thought, or contemplation. Diction is simple and usually direct; inversion is limited. The verse is occasionally rough, like speech, rather than written in perfect meter, resulting in a dominance of thought over form.

### *3. Acute realism.*

The poem often reveals a psychological analysis; images advance the argument rather than being ornamental. There is a learned style of thinking and writing; the poetry is often highly intellectual.

### *4. Metaphysical wit.*

The poem contains unexpected, even striking or shocking analogies, offering elaborate parallels between apparently dissimilar things. The analogies are drawn from widely varied fields of knowledge, not limited to traditional sources in nature or art. Analogies from science, mechanics, housekeeping, business, philosophy, astronomy, etc. are common. These "conceits" reveal a play of intellect, often resulting in puns, paradoxes, and humorous comparisons. Unlike other poetry where the metaphors usually remain in the background, here the metaphors sometimes take over the poem and control it.

**John Donne**, whose poetic reputation languished before he was rediscovered in the early part of the twentieth century, is remembered today as the leading exponent of a style of verse known as "metaphysical poetry," which flourished in the late sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries. (Other great metaphysical poets include Andrew Marvell, Robert Herrick, and George Herbert.) Metaphysical poetry typically employs unusual verse forms, complex figures of speech applied to elaborate and surprising metaphorical conceits, and learned themes discussed according to eccentric and unexpected chains of reasoning. Donne's poetry exhibits each of these characteristics. His jarring, unusual meters; his proclivity for abstract puns and double

entendres; his often bizarre metaphors (in one poem he compares love to a carnivorous fish; in another he pleads with God to make him pure by raping him); and his process of oblique reasoning are all characteristic traits of the metaphysicals, unified in Donne as in no other poet.

"He affects the metaphysics," said Dryden of Donne, and the term 'metaphysical' has come to be applied to Donne and the group of poets who followed him. Strictly the word means "based on abstract general reasoning," but the poetry of Donne shows more than this. It reveals a depth of philosophy, a subtlety of reasoning, a blend of thought and devotion, a mingling of the homely and the sublime, the light and the serious, which make it full of variety and surprise.

Donne is valuable not simply as a representative writer but also as a highly unique one. He was a man of contradictions: As a minister in the Anglican Church, Donne possessed a deep spirituality that informed his writing throughout his life; but as a man, Donne possessed a carnal lust for life, sensation, and experience. He is both a great religious poet and a great erotic poet, and perhaps no other writer (with the possible exception of Herbert) strove as hard to unify and express such incongruous, mutually discordant passions. In his best poems, Donne mixes the discourses of the physical and the spiritual; over the course of his career, Donne gave sublime expression to both realms.

His conflicting proclivities often cause Donne to contradict himself. (For example, in one poem he writes, "Death be not proud, though some have called thee / Mighty and dreadful, for thou art not so." Yet in another, he writes, "Death I recant, and say, unsaid by me / Whate'er hath slipped, that might diminish thee.") However, his contradictions are representative of the powerful contrary forces at work in his poetry and in his soul, rather than of sloppy thinking or inconsistency. Donne, who lived a generation after Shakespeare, took advantage of his divided nature to become the greatest metaphysical poet of the seventeenth century; among the poets of inner conflict, he is one of the greatest of all time.

**George Herbert:**

George Herbert was born in Montgomery, Wales, on April 3, 1593, the fifth son of Richard and Magdalene Newport Herbert. His poetry shows that to a large extent he followed the lead offered by Donne, but he also made contributions which were quite distinct. Herbert's poems are characterized by a precision of language, a metrical versatility, and an ingenious use of imagery or conceits that was favored by the metaphysical school of poets.

Herbert's distinguishing characteristic is his simplicity of diction and metaphor. He retains the colloquial manner, and, to an extent, the logical persuasive presentation of ideas, but he draws his metaphors from everyday domestic experience, employing a range of simple commonplace imagery in contrast to the sophisticated imagery of Donne. A technique Herbert introduced was the ending of a poem with two quiet lines which resolve the argument in the poem without answering the specific points raised by it. Herbert occasionally explores his doubts in intellectual terms, but answers them with emotion. Herbert's poetry is certainly about struggles of a religious kind. In these respects Herbert can be considered to have broken new ground, into which Henry Vaughan followed later.

**Henry Vaughan:**

Henry Vaughan was born in 1621 to Thomas Vaughan and Denise Morgan. He is considered one of the major Metaphysical Poets, whose works ponder one's personal relationship to God. He shares Herbert's preoccupation with the relationship between humanity and God. He saw mankind as restless and constantly seeking a sense of harmony and fulfillment through contact with God. Vaughan, in contrast, has the arrogance of a visionary. He feels humility before God and Jesus, but seems to despise humanity. In contrast, Vaughan's images are more universal, or cosmic, even to the point of judging man in relation to infinity. The term 'visionary' is appropriate to Vaughan, not only because of the grand scale of his images, but also because his metaphors frequently draw on the sense of vision.

**Andrew Marvell:**

Andrew Marvell was born at Winestead-in-Holderness, Yorkshire, on March 31, 1621. The life and work of Andrew Marvell are both marked by extraordinary variety and range. Gifted with a most subtle and introspective imagination. His technique of drawing upon philosophy to illustrate his argument gives the poem an intellectual appeal, not just a visual one. There is also complete devotion displayed in this first stage of the argument, namely:

"I would Love you ten years before the flood. And you should, if you please, refuse till the conversion of the Jews. "In Marvell we find the presence of passion (in *To His Coy Mistress*) used as a peg on which to hang serious reflections on the brevity of happiness. The Definition of Love is an ironic game - more a love of definition let loose; the poem is cool, lucid and dispassionate, if gently self-mocking Marvell considers whether the poetic skill which has formerly (and culpably) served to praise his "shepherdess" can "redress that Wrong", by weaving a "Chaplet" for Christ.

**Richard Crashaw:**

Richard Crashaw was born on 1613. He was the only son of William Crashaw, a puritan preacher in London who had officiated at the burning of Mary, Queen of Scots. He wrote many metaphysical poems following Donne. Though his verse is somewhat uneven in quality, at its best it is characterized by brilliant use of extravagant baroque imagery. Crashaw owed all the basis of his style, as has been already hinted, to Donne. His originality was one of treatment and technique; he forged a more rapid and brilliant short line than any of his predecessors had done, and for brief intervals and along sudden paths of his own he carried English prosody to a higher refinement, a more glittering felicity, than it had ever achieved. Thus, in spite of his conceits and his romantic coloring, he points the way for Pope, who did not disdain to borrow from him freely.

**Conclusion:**

Metaphysical poets created a new trend in history of English literature. These poems have been created in such a way that one must have enough knowledge to get the actual meaning. Metaphysical Poets made use of everyday speech, intellectual analysis, and unique imagery. The creator of metaphysical poetry John Donne along with his followers is successful not only in that Period but also in the modern age. Metaphysical poetry takes an important place in the history of English literature for its unique versatility and it is popular among thousands of peoples till now.

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## **DEVOTIONAL POETS**

Between the crises which began James's reign and ended his son's, **George Herbert** (1593-1633) wrote devotional verse. The accomplished Herbert, a younger son of a gifted family, not finding a career, became a village parson. The poems of this country priest have made him an unofficial saint of Anglicanism. His *Life* - told with piety and charm by Izaak Walton, author of *The Compleat Angler*- describes an ideal rather more gentlemanly than Chaucer's pilgrim Parson.

Herbert's poems are homely in imagery and simple in language, and often about the church; his volume is called *The Temple*. These prayer-poems differ from similar poems by Donne, Marvell, Crashaw, Vaughan or Traherne, being personally addressed to God in an intimate tone. Christ was for Herbert a human person to whom one speaks, and who may reply. This medieval intimacy became rare after Herbert; for Milton, God 'hath no need/Of man's works or his own gifts' ('On his Blindness'). This remoteness was increased for rational Anglicans by the Puritan enthusiasm of the 1640s. Herbert's simple faith was not simple-minded; Renaissance Christianity did not lack mind or drama. Herbert, formerly Public Orator of Cambridge University, spoke fluent Latin. His is the studied simplicity of the parables. Words danced for him: 'Lovely enchanting language, sugarcane,/Honey of roses, whither wilt thou fly?' (from 'The Forerunners'). He could, when he wished, astonish. 'Prayer' is an arc of metaphors, ending: 'The milky way, the bird of paradise,/Church bells beyond the stars heard, the soul's blood,/The land of spices, something understood.'

Herbert's usual note is given in the openings of 'Virtue' – 'Sweet day, so cool, so calm, so bright' - and of 'The Flower':

'How fresh, oh Lord, how sweet and clean/Are thy returns! even as the flowers in spring.' Later in 'The Flower', after a barren time:

*And now in age I bud again,*

*After so many deaths I  
live and write; I once  
more smell the dew and  
rain, And relish versing.*

The verses are often complaints - unresolved in 'Discipline', or distressed, as in 'Deniall':

'Come, come, my God, O come!'/But no hearing.' 'The Collar' ends,

*But as I raved and grew more  
fierce and wild At every word,*

*Methought*

*I heard one calling, Child! And I replied, My Lord.*

The title is both the clerical collar and *choler*, a fit of temper. *The Temple* leads up to 'Love (III)', a eucharistic prayer. Herbert likens taking Communion to a visit to a tavern. It begins, 'Love bade me welcome; yet my soul drew back' and ends, 'You shall sit down, says Love, and taste my meat:/So I did sit and eat.'

Donne, Herbert and Traherne had Welsh connections. Herbert's disciple **Henry Vaughan** (1621-95) was Welsh. His Christianity was Platonic: 'My soul, there is a country/Far beyond the stars' and 'I saw eternity the other night/Like a great ring of pure and endless night.' 'They are all gone into the world of light!' contains the verse:

*I see them walking in an  
air of glory, Whose light  
does trample on my days:*

*My days, which are at best but  
dull and hoary, Mere glimmering  
and decays.*

Mystical vision is stronger in the work of **Thomas Traherne** (1637-74), whose wonderful poems and *Centuries*, prose meditations, were printed only in 1908. Vaughan and Traherne, like Herbert, were devotional poets who wrote no secular verse. An earlier 'son' of Herbert was **Richard Crashaw** (1613-49). An Anglican priest turned out by Parliamentary Commissioners, Crashaw

wrote his baroque *Steps to the Temple* before exile and Catholicism. These Anglican pietists lack Herbert's stamina and syntax; Vaughan's second couplet (quoted above) falters.

From this date the educated wrote less about heaven. **Anne Finch**, Countess of Winchelsea (1661-1720), wrote that the soul 'Joys in the inferior world' of natural scenes. In the light of sense and reason, vision glimmered and decayed.

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## **CAVALIER POETS**

The **Cavalier poets**, members of the aristocracy, wrote in the 17th century and supported King Charles I, who was later executed as a result of a civil war. They were known as Royalists. **Cavalier poetry** is straightforward, yet refined. Many of the poems centered around sensual, romantic love and also the idea of *carpe diem*, which means to 'seize the day.' To the Cavalier poet, enjoying life was far more important than following moral codes. They lived for the moment.

Cavalier poetry mirrored the attitudes of courtiers. The meaning of cavalier is showing arrogant or offhand disregard; dismissive or carefree and nonchalant; jaunty. This describes the attitude of Cavalier poets.

### **Characteristics of Cavalier poetry:**

Some of the most prominent Cavalier poets were Thomas Carew, Richard Lovelace, Robert Herrick, and John Suckling. They emulated Ben Jonson, a contemporary of Shakespeare. These poets opposed metaphysical poetry, such as that of John Donne.

While poets like John Donne wrote with a spiritual, scientific, and moral focus, the Cavalier poets concentrated on the pleasures of the moment. Metaphysical poets also wrote in figurative, lofty language, while the Cavaliers were simple, being more apt to say what they meant in clear terms. The Cavalier poet wrote short, refined verses, and the tone of Cavalier poetry was generally easy-going.

A quietist reaction to religious and political revolution had begun in the 1640s. With the Civil War, high Anglican devotion became private. The gallant secular verse of ‘Cavalier poets’ such as **Sir John Suckling** (1609-42) and **Sir Richard Lovelace** (1618-58) came to an end or rusticated itself, as in Lovelace’s ‘The Grasshopper’, a delightful poem of friendship written to Charles Cotton. Abraham Cowley also wrote a ‘Grasshopper’; Izaak Walton’s Angler is an Anglican version of the retiring Roman poet Horace. Most cavaliers did not join Charles II in France but joined the clergy in the country, sending (like grasshoppers) chirpy signals to their short-lived fellows. The Civil War overwhelmed some good writers. Court and Church had been patrons of fine literature before the War; the alliance survived, but sacred and profane verse diverged.

The most astonishing poems from the country were by **Andrew Marvell** (1621-78), written 1650-1 but published posthumously. Opposing the execution of the king, Sir Thomas Fairfax, Lord General of the Parliamentary forces, had retired to his Yorkshire estate. Marvell tutored his daughter there, then taught at Eton. A moderate parliamentarian, he was later a Member of Parliament and a diplomat.

Marvell’s poems have Donne’s wit and Jonson’s neatness, with a lighter touch and a social, detached tone. ‘Society is all but rude/To this delicious solitude,’ he wrote in ‘The Garden’, not claiming a philosopher’s dignified calm but a poet’s pleasure in ‘the garlands of repose’: ‘Annihilating all that’s made/To a green thought in a green shade.’ Contemplation, scorned by Milton in 1644 as ‘fugitive and cloistered virtue’, is defended at length in ‘Upon Appleton House’.

*But at my back I always hear*

*Time’s winged chariot*

*hurrying near, And*

*yonder all before us lie*

*Deserts of vast eternity.*

These lines from 'To his Coy Mistress' condense the Renaissance apprehension of time to a metaphysical conception of eternity as infinite empty space. Like Herrick in 'Gather ye rosebuds while ye may', Marvell makes mortality an argument for sexual love: 'The grave's a fine and private place,/But none I think do there embrace.' In this casual epigram, 'fine' and 'private' keep their Latin senses, 'narrow' and 'deprived'. His poems play discreetly on words, a finesse boldly used in his 'Horatian Ode upon Cromwell's Return from Ireland', a remarkable analysis of the contemporary crisis. It praises Cromwell's strength, then his art - suggesting that he let the king escape so that he should be recaptured and tried:

*That thence the royal  
actor borne, The  
tragic scaffold might  
adorn; While round  
the arméd bands  
  
Did clap their bloody hands.*

*He nothing common  
did or mean Upon  
that memorable  
scene,*

*But with his  
keener eye  
The axe's  
edge did try.*

...

Praise for Charles - or for a good performance? Ambiguity is systematic: 'clap', applaud *or* drown his words; 'mean', base *or* intend; 'scene', stage *or* platform; 'edge' (Lat. *acies*), eyesight *or* edge; 'try', assess for sharpness *or* for justice.

After Cromwell's Irish victories, 'What may not others fear/If thus he crown each year?/A Caesar, he, ere long to Gaul,/To Italy a Hannibal.' Lofty comparisons! Yet Caesar was assassinated, Hannibal defeated. A final exhortation and warning:

*But thou, the war's and  
fortune's son, March  
indefatigably on,*

*And for the  
last effect Still  
keep thy  
sword erect:*

*Besides the force it  
has to fright The  
spirits of the shady  
night, The same  
arts that did gain*

*A power must it maintain.*

Marvell, a satirist on the Parliamentary side, wrote after the Civil War that 'the Cause was too good to have been fought for. Men ought to have trusted God; they ought and might have trusted the King with the whole matter.' The keenness of Marvell's mind recalls that of the French mathematician and theologian **Blaise Pascal** (1623-62). In 'The Mower to the Glowworms' and other poems, Marvell uses aesthetic appeal to express the unreason of mortal love:

Ye living lamps, by  
whose dear light The  
nightingale does sit so  
late,  
And studying all the  
summer night Her

matchless songs does  
meditate ...

Marvell's grave religious poem 'The Coronet' is in the **baroque** style, which always has a kind of displayfulness about it. 'Bermudas', on Puritan migrants to America – 'Thus sung they in the English boat,/An holy and a cheerful note' - has similarly marvellous imagery: 'He hangs in shades the orange bright,/Like golden lamps in a green night'. Marvell's poems are lucid, decorative, exquisite and penetrating, but also enigmatic.

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## **RICHARD CRASHAW**

**Richard Crashaw (1613 -49)**, the son of a Puritan clergyman, was born in London and educated at the Charterhouse and at Cambridge. His mother died while he was a child, and his father seems to have died before Richard became a student. His secondary education was at Charterhouse, which in those days was a school in the centre of London.

At Cambridge Crashaw was not only an excellent classicist but also became fluent in French, Spanish, and Italian. After graduating in 1634, he had a volume of Latin poems published. He decided to become a University scholar and teacher and in 1636 was made a fellow of Peterhouse college. Fellows were senior members of the college teaching staff. In those days, they had to belong to the Church of England, and remain unmarried.

Whilst at Cambridge, Crashaw made friends with Abraham Cowley, who became a well-known minor poet. He seems to have visited Little Gidding, the nearby Anglican community run by Nicholas Ferrar, whom Herbert had also known. Cambridge at this time was in reaction against Puritanism and had become quite influenced by High Church Anglicanism. Certainly, Crashaw had dropped his Puritan upbringing and was becoming High Church, as was his friend, Cowley.. He died at Loretto. His best work is in *Steps to the Temple* (1646) and much of it was reprinted with valuable additions in *Carmen Deo Nostra* (1652). In many ways Crashaw is not

metaphysical: his poems reveal no complexity of mind, no conflict or tension: the manner is not colloquial, and the images are pictorial rather than intellectual, lacking the homeliness of Donne and Herbert. At the same time he has the metaphysical fondness for the striking conceit, which, in him, often becomes fantastic. His poetry is notable for its fire and fervour, and the impetus which it derives from his religious excitement and exaltation. It is emotional rather than thoughtful, and his long, irregular odes are full of gaudy extravagances and sensuous decoration, often showing an undisciplined rapture, though he is capable of simple beauty.

## Works

- 1634: *Epigrammatum Sacrorum Liber*
- 1646: *Steps to the Temple. Sacred Poems, With other Delights of the Muses*
- 1648: *Steps to the Temple, Sacred Poems. With The Delights of the Muses*
- 1652: *Carmen Deo Nostro*
- 1653: *A Letter from Mr. Crashaw to the Countess of Denbigh Against Irresolution and Delay in matters of Religion*
- 1670: *Richardi Crashawi Poemata et Epigrammata*

Today, Crashaw's work is largely unknown and unread—generally regarded as neither the "most important" nor the "least distinguished" of the metaphysical poets. His work is described as being of uneven quality. However, Crashaw's poetry has inspired or directly influenced the work of many poets in his own day, and throughout the eighteenth, nineteenth, and twentieth centuries.

According to literary scholars Lorraine Roberts and John Roberts, "those critics who expressed appreciation for Crashaw's poetry were primarily impressed not with its thought, but with its music and what they called 'tenderness and sweetness of language'"—including a roster of writers such as *Samuel Taylor Coleridge*, *William Wordsworth*, *Elizabeth Barrett Browning*, *Ralph Waldo Emerson*, *Henry Wadsworth Longfellow*, *Amy Lowell*, and *A. Bronson Alcott*. During and after his life, friends and poets esteemed Crashaw as a saint—Abraham Cowley

called him such in his elegy "On the Death of Mr. Crashaw" (1656); and Sir John Beaumont's poem "Psyche" (1648) compares Crashaw with fourth-century poet and saint Gregory of Nazianzen. Others referred to him in comparison with George Herbert, as "the other Herbert" or "the second Herbert of our late times".

Much of the negative criticism of Crashaw's work stems from an anti-Catholic sentiment in English letters— especially among critics who claim that his verse suffered as a result of his religious conversion. Conversely, the Protestant poet Abraham Cowley memorialized Crashaw in an elegy expresses a conciliatory opinion of Crashaw's Catholic character"

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## **ROBERT HERRICK**

The English poet and Anglican parson Robert Herrick (1591-1634) invented a fanciful world compounded of pagan Rome and Christian England, of reality and fantasy, which he ruled as his poetic domain. Robert Herrick is, in the latter half of the twentieth century, finally becoming recognized as one of the most accomplished nondramatic poets of his age. Clergyman and poet, Robert Herrick was born in London, the seventh child of Nicholas Herrick, a wealthy goldsmith.

Robert had an excellent schooling in Latin, but when he was 16 his practical, bourgeois relatives apprenticed him to his uncle, Sir William Herrick, a leading goldsmith. At 22 Herrick was about 6 years older than most undergraduates when he entered St. John's College, Cambridge, as a fellow commoner, paying double fees. Ever eager to enjoy what was available, he participated in student pleasures, made lifelong friends of John Weekes and Clipseby Crew, and laid a foundation in experience for his poems about sack. In them he hailed that potent sherry as "the drink of Gods and Angels," urging the wine to come to him "as Cleopatra came to Anthonie."

Despite the gusto with which Herrick celebrated inebriation and imaginary mistresses in poetry, he had his family's common sense, and from Horace he had learned the value of moderation. So he suggested to his uncle that it might be wise for him to transfer to a less expensive college and study law. This he did, entering sober, intellectual Trinity Hall and

assuring his uncle that he would live economically as a recluse, with no company but upright thoughts. He earned his bachelor of arts and master of arts degrees in 1617-1620.

### **Clerical Career:**

In the next 3 years Herrick may have tried to practice law. Perhaps he studied divinity. At any rate, on April 24, 1623, he and his friend Weekes were ordained deacons and, on the next day, priests in the Church of England. This uncanonical haste suggests that he became some nobleman's chaplain. So does his presence as a chaplain to the Duke of Buckingham in 1627, when that royal favorite led a naval attack against the French at the Île de Ré. Two-thirds of the English forces were killed, but Herrick survived to be rewarded by Charles I with the vicarage of Dean Prior in Devonshire. While waiting for this benefice, Herrick wrote songs and carols which were set to music by the leading court musicians, Henry Lawes and Nicholas Lanier, and were sung before the King. He also celebrated the birth of Prince Charles in a pretty pastoral.

In September 1630 Herrick began his clerical duties at Dean Prior. Typically, he made the best of his environment, thanking God for his "little house" and writing poems about his spaniel Tracie, his pet sparrow, and his maid Prue, "by good luck sent." For 17 years he conducted services, baptisms, marriages, and funerals; interested himself in local folklore; flattered female parishioners in verse; exposed the vices of men named Scobble and Mudge, Groynes and Huncks, in biting epigrams; and "became much beloved by the gentry."

The peace of Devonshire was blasted by the civil war which broke out in 1642. The fact that the conquering Puritans were slow to oust Herrick from his vicarage suggests that he was popular with his parishioners and faithful in his duties. In religion he was moderate and reasonable; his sacred poems express a broad Protestantism based on Scripture and common sense. It was his outspoken royalism which caused his expulsion in 1647.

Presumably Herrick returned to London to see his book into print in 1648. Then he drops out of sight until 1660, when he was restored to his vicarage. If he wrote more poems, they have not survived. He was buried at Dean Prior on Oct. 15, 1674. His successor 30 years later reported

that he had been a "sober and learned man"; and after more than a century locals recalled "that he kept a pet pig, which he taught to drink out of a tankard."

### **Works:**

He was underestimated by scholars and critics, the achievement represented by his only book, the collection of poems entitled *Hesperides: Or, The Works Both Humane & Divine* (1648), is gradually coming to be more fully appreciated. While some of his individual poems—"To the Virgins to make much of Time," "Upon Julia's Clothes," and "Corinna's going a Maying," for example—are among the most popular of all time, recent examinations of his *Hesperides* as a whole have begun to reveal a Herrick whose artistry in the arrangement of his volume approximates the artistry of his individual works and whose sensibility is complex but coherent, subtle as well as substantive. In short, Robert Herrick, who was proud to be one of "the sons of Ben," has begun to be seen, along with his literary "father," Ben Jonson, as one of the most noteworthy figures of early-seventeenth-century British poetry.

*'A Country Life: To his Brother M. Tho. Herrick'* (1610) is Herrick's earliest known poem, and deals with the move from London to farm life in Leicestershire. *'To My Dearest Sister M. Merice Herrick'* was written before 1612. He entered St John's College, Cambridge in 1613, and became friends with Clipsby Crew to whom he addressed several poems such as *'Nuptial Song'*. He graduated a Bachelor of Arts in 1617, Master of Arts in 1620, and in 1623 he was ordained priest. By 1625 he was well known as a poet, mixing in literary circles in London such as that of Ben Jonson. In 1629 he was presented by Charles I to the living of Dean Prior, a remote parish of Devonshire. The best of his work was written in the peace and seclusion of country life.

However, having refused to subscribe to The Solemn League and Covenant, he was ejected from Devonshire in 1647. He then returned to London publishing his religious poems *Noble Numbers* (1647), and *Hesperides* (1648). He was distinguished as a lyric poet, and some of his love songs, for example, *'To Anthea'* and *'Gather Ye Rose-buds'* are considered exceptional. In 1660 he was reinstated at Dean Prior where he lived for the remainder of his life. He wrote no more poems after 1648, and is buried in an unmarked grave in the churchyard at Dean Prior.

## **PHILIP MASSINGER**

Philip Massinger was a prolific dramatist of the first tier, and perhaps the most important playwright in the last two decades of the Elizabethan era. Philip Massinger (1583-1640) was born at Salisbury, educated at Oxford, and became a literary man in London, writing plays for the King's Men, a company of actors. Besides the documentation of his baptism at St. Thomas's Church, Salisbury, it is known that Massinger attended St. Alban Hall, Oxford, in 1602, but nothing certain is known about his life from then until 1613, when he was in prison for debt. Bailed out by the theatrical impresario Philip Henslowe, he spent a period working as the junior partner in coauthored plays, collaborating with established dramatists such as Thomas Dekker and John Fletcher, and eventually graduated to his own independent productions. In 1625 he succeeded Fletcher, some of whose plays he revised, as the chief playwright of the King's Men (formerly Lord Chamberlain's Men). Though apparently not as successful as Fletcher, he remained with the King's Men until his death, producing plays marked by a high moral tone and elevated philosophic character.

If we may judge from his begging letters that survive, he found in dramatic work little financial encouragement. He died and was buried in London. Massinger began his career as a collaborator with older, better-known dramatists, and especially with Fletcher, whose influence over him was strong. English Jacobean and Caroline playwright noted for his gifts of comedy, plot construction, social realism, and satirical power.

Among his best-known plays are his comedies, *A New Way to Pay Old Debts* (published 1633) and *The City Madam* (published 1632), and his tragedies, *the Duke of Milaine* (published 1623), and *The Unnatural Combat* (published 1639). His finest qualities are the fluency and vitality of his blank verse, the clarity and strength of his plot construction, and his fine theatre sense. His characters (with one or two notable exceptions, like Sir Giles Overreach in *A New Way to Pay Old Debts*, and Luke Frugal in *The City Madam*) are usually types rather than individuals, and in situation, theatrical device, and characterization, he has a fondness for repetition which is a serious weakness. The shallow, boldly drawn characters often place too great a strain upon our credulity--his villains are villainous, and his women shameless, to an incredible

degree. Predominantly serious in temper, Massinger often deals with the political issues of his day. He seems to lack real humour, and the comic garb can sit rather uneasily upon him.

*The Annotated Plays of Philip Massinger:*

- The Virgin Martyr (1620)
- The Duke of Milan (1621)
- The Maid of Honour (1621)
- The Picture (1629)

Among the plays Massinger collaborated on with Fletcher is *The False One* (c. 1620), a treatment of the story of Caesar and Cleopatra. Two other important plays written in collaboration are *The Fatal Dowry* (1616–19, with Nathan Field), a domestic tragedy in a French setting, and *The Virgin Martyr* (1620?, with Thomas Dekker), a historical play about the persecution of Christians under the Roman emperor Diocletian. Fifteen plays written solely by Massinger have survived, but many of their dates can only be conjectured. The four tragedies are *The Duke of Milan* (1621–22) and *The Unnatural Combat* (1624?)—both skillfully told mystery stories of a melodramatic type—and *The Roman Actor* (1626) and *Believe As You List* (1631)—each a historical tragedy in a classical setting. *The Roman Actor* is considered his best serious play.

*The Bondman* (1623), about a slave revolt in the Greek city of Syracuse, is one of Massinger's seven tragicomedies and shows his concern for state affairs. *The Renegado* (1624), a tragicomedy with a heroic Jesuit character, gave rise to the still-disputed theory that he became a Roman Catholic. Another tragicomedy, *The Maid of Honour* (1621?), combines political realism with the courtly refinement of later Caroline drama. The tendency of his serious plays to conform to Caroline fashion, however, is contradicted by the mordant realism and satirical force of his two great comedies—*A New Way to Pay Old Debts*, his most popular and influential play, in which he expresses genuine indignation at economic oppression and social disorder, and *The City Madam* (1632?), dealing with similar evils but within a more starkly contrived plot that curiously combines naturalistic and symbolic modes. One of his last plays, *The King and the Subject* (1638), had politically objectionable lines cut from it by King Charles himself.

## **SIR THOMAS BROWNE**

Thomas Browne was born in London on 19 October, 1605. After graduating M.A. from Broadgates Hall, Oxford (1629), he studied medicine privately and worked as an assistant to an Oxford doctor. He then attended the Universities of Montpellier and Padua, and in 1633 he was graduated M.D. at Leiden. Browne's medical education in Europe also earned him incorporation as M.D. from Oxford, and in 1637 he moved to Norwich, where he lived and practiced medicine until his death in 1682. While Browne seems to have had a keen intellect and was interested in many subjects, his life was outwardly uneventful, although during the Civil War he declared his support for King Charles I and received a knighthood from King Charles II in 1671.

Browne first came to the attention of readers with his best known work, *Religio medici*, which he wrote around 1635. It was printed in 1642 without his consent, but the next year he approved a new printing, and the book became a best-seller, later being translated into several European languages. *Religio medici* is about Browne's personal Christian faith, and is distinguished by its elegant prose, its tolerant and widely-based version of Christianity, and its occasionally sceptical outlook. It is really an intellectual autobiography in which Browne writes about his personal views not just on religion but on a great variety of other subjects, too, although most of them may be related in some way to religion. For example, he believes in predestination, but likes some of the rituals of the Catholic Church; he fulminates against religious bigotry and persecution but is not a great admirer of martyrs. Browne has a mind that loves going a little beyond common sense and reason, venturing often into the realms of the fantastic, the mysterious and the unexplainable. He is one of those people who can find something of interest in just about anything, and the whole work breathes geniality, toleration, and an intelligent scepticism about the world he lives in. *Religio medici* is one of the great prose-works of the Early Modern period of English literature.

Browne's innate curiosity never failed him, and his other works reflect his multi-faceted personality, too. In 1646, he wrote *Pseudodoxia Epidemica, or Vulgar Errors*, which tackled the subject of superstition and popular misconceptions about various subjects, and also showed

Browne fighting his intellectual battles against the authors whose works perpetuated these errors. This work is more analytical than *Religio medici*, and perhaps comes closer to the style of Bacon than to the earlier book. Browne was also a keen antiquarian (as were so many others of his class and education), and his next book, *Hydriotaphia, or Urn-Burial* (1658) was the result. Working from some recent archaeological discoveries near Norwich of what were thought at the time to be Roman funeral urns, Browne produced a study of funeral customs, which expanded into his thoughts on death and the uselessness of such rituals and commemorations against death's inevitable power. It is this work where we find Browne's most elaborate rhetoric, prose which is lush and metaphorical, almost poetical in nature. Together with this book went a work entitled *The Garden of Cyrus*, in which Browne wrote about the history of horticulture. This book is also the source of his famous idea of the *quincunx*, a shape with five parts, one at each corner (rectangle), and one in the middle, which he thought was present everywhere in nature; the number five, of course, had mystical and Neoplatonic meanings which fascinated Browne's mind. It also figured in the design of Cyrus's garden as described by the Greek writer Xenophon.

The overall impression one gets from reading Browne is of an urbane, sophisticated and witty writer, who delights in collecting trivia and arcane information. His style is elegant and, for modern tastes, probably rather too learned, but his love of what he does is obvious, and he is a good example of the gentleman-antiquary, a man who revels in obscure knowledge of ancient rites and customs and wants readers to share his enthusiasm for these things. He also displays tolerance and good humour, something rare in a century of conflict and changing values.

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## EDWARD HYDE

Edward Hyde was the sixth of the nine children of Henry Hyde, a gentleman of Dinton, Wiltshire, and his wife Mary. Edward went to Magdalen Hall, Oxford, from 1622-6. He intended to enter the Church, but the death of his two elder brothers left him the heir to his father's estate. Encouraged by his uncle, chief justice Sir Nicholas Hyde, he began legal training at the Middle Temple. As well as pursuing his studies in law, Hyde cultivated an interest in literature and

history. He sought the society of wits and scholars and became a member of Ben Jonson's circle.

Hyde's first marriage, to Ann Ayliffe in 1632 lasted only a few months before she fell ill and died. However, the match brought lasting connections with the powerful St John and Villiers families. Hyde's first historical tract was a vindication of George Villiers, the late Duke of Buckingham, which was favourably received by King Charles I.

A man of excellent address, he was a successful lawyer, and became a member of the House of Commons. At first he was attached to the Parliamentary side, but he separated from the party on account of their attitude to the Church. He changed over to the Royalists, and thenceforward became one of the foremost advocates of the King's cause. After the downfall of the Royalists he accompanied the young Charles into exile; and at the Restoration he was appointed Lord Chancellor and raised to the peerage as Earl of Clarendon. He was too severe for the frivolous Restoration times, was exiled (1667), and died in France. His body was buried in Westminster Abbey. His Works are:

- *The history of Rebellion and Civil War in Ireland* (1720)
- *A Collection of several tracts of Edward, Earl of Clarendon*, (1727)
- *Religion and Policy, and the Countenance and Assistance each should give to the other, with a Survey of the Power and Jurisdiction of the Pope in the dominion of other Princes* (Oxford 1811, 2 volumes)
- *History of the Rebellion and Civil Wars in England: Begun in the Year 1641* by Edward Hyde, 1st Earl of Clarendon (3 volumes) (1702-1704)

*A Collection of several tracts of Edward, Earl of Clarendon*, (1727) This book may have occasional imperfections such as missing or blurred pages, poor pictures, errant marks, etc. that were either part of the original artifact, or were introduced by the scanning process. We believe this work is culturally important, and despite the imperfections, have elected to bring it back into print as part of our continuing commitment to the preservation of printed works worldwide.

His great work, *The History of the Rebellion and Civil Wars in England*, was begun as early as 1646 and finished during the years of his last exile. It was not published till 1704. To

some extent the work is based on his own knowledge of the struggle; it lacks proportion and complete accuracy; but the narrative is strong and attractive, and it contains masterly character-sketches of some of the chief figures in the struggle. It is composed in long, lumbering sentences, loaded with parentheses and digressions, but the style is readable. It is the most important English work of a historical nature up to the date of its issue.

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## JOHN DRYDEN

John Dryden was an English poet, literary critic, translator, and playwright who was made England's first Poet Laureate in 1668. He is seen as dominating the literary life of Restoration England to such a point that the period came to be known in literary circles as the Age of Dryden. Walter Scott called him "Glorious John."

**1. His Life.** Dryden was born near Oundle in Northampton shire, and may have begun his education at Oundle Grammar School. He later entered Westminster School and went on to Cambridge. In 1657 or 1658 he moved to London, where he remained for the rest of his life as a man of letters. His life was a long one. It was, in addition, an exceedingly fruitful one. For forty years he continued to produce an abundance of literary works of every kind--poems, plays, and prose works. The quality of it was almost unfailingly good, and at the end of his life his poetry was as fresh and vivacious as it had been in the prime of his manhood. Of Dryden it can be said without qualification that he is representative of his age. Indeed, it has been urged as a fault against his character that he adapted himself with too facile a conscience to the changing fortunes of the times. His earliest work of any importance is pre-Restoration (1659), and consists of a laudation of the recently dead Oliver Cromwell. At the Restoration he changed his views, attaching himself to the fortunes of Charles II and to the Church of England. This loyalty brought its rewards in honours and pensions, so that for many years Dryden was easily the most considerable literary figure in the land. Yet his career was not without its thorns, for smaller men were busy with their slanders. On the accession of James II in 1685 Dryden changed his faith and political persuasion, becoming a Roman Catholic. To his new beliefs he adhered steadfastly, even when in 1688 the Revolution brought certain disaster to such public men as adhered to Catholicism. Thus Dryden lost his posts of Poet Laureate and Historiographer Royal. The Laureateship was conferred on Shadwell, his most rancorous foe; and Dryden retired with dignity to sustain his last years with his literary labours. To this last period of his career we owe some of his finest translations and narrative poems. When he died in 1700 he was accorded a splendid funeral in Westminster Abbey, though it was many years before his grave was marked by a tombstone.

### John Dryden's chief writings:

- *Astraea Redux* (1660)
- *Annus Mirabilis* (1667)

- *Essay on Dramatic Poesy* (1668)
- *Absolom and Achitophel*, part I (1681)
- *The Medal, A Satire against Sedition* (1681)
- *Mac Flecknoe* (1682)
- *Religio Laici* (1682)
- *To the Memory of Mr Oldham* (1684)
- *The Hind and the Panther* (1687)
- *A Song for St Cecilia's Day* (1687)
- *Alexander's Feast* (1697)
- *Virgil: Works* (1697)
- *Fables, Ancient and Modern* (1700)

John Dryden's 'To the Memory of Mr Oldham' (1684) claims an affinitive sympathy between the two poets ('sure our Souls were near ally'd'). It also, somewhat unfairly, suggests that Oldham died before he had learned to purge his poetic style of 'harsh cadence', a ruggedness which Dryden held was not fully appropriate to satire. Dryden (1631- 1700) uses his elegy to display his own versatility; it is an exercise in modulation, a smooth play with couplets and triplets, written in a pentameter which is subtly extended into an occasional hexameter and in couplets varied by a single effective triplet. Oldham is mourned both as a reflection of Virgil's Nisus, who slipped and failed to win a race, and as a poetic equivalent to Marcellus, the prematurely dead heir of the Emperor Augustus of whom much had been hoped. In both cases Dryden seems to be modestly projecting himself as the poet who has achieved the eminence denied to Oldham. As much of his criticism suggests, Dryden also seems to have seen himself as the heir to Milton's laurels. Nevertheless, his vision of Britain under the restored Stuarts is conditioned not by the idea of a stern republic outbraving the Roman, but by the example of the Imperial Rome of Augustus. In both periods the rule of an enlightened monarch could be seen as eclipsing the divisions of a preceding civil war.

In the title of his elegy to Charles II, *Threnodia Augustalis* (1685), he glances at the parallel between the Emperor and the King while stressing the 'healing balm' of the Restoration and the maintenance of a distinctive brand of English liberty under the Stuart Crown ('Freedom

which in no other Land will thrive | Freedom an *English* Subject's sole Prerogative'). This singular modern kingdom, Dryden maintained in the dedication to his tragedy *All For Love* (1678), required a disciplined poetry worthy of its heroic destiny and of its exalted place amongst the nations of Europe. The proper models for this poetry could only be Augustan. If his translation of *The Works of Virgil* (1697) - appearing at a time when Dryden's hopes for the Stuart dynasty had been dashed by the defeat and exile of James II - no longer exhibits a confidence in parallels between a dubious then and a triumphant now, his dedicatory essay still infers that patriotism demands an appropriate modern prosody and that 'A Heroick Poem, truly such', was 'undoubtedly the greatest Work which the Soul of Man is capable to perform'. Though Dryden produced no heroic poem of his own, his quest for an English equivalent to Virgilian 'majesty in the midst of plainness' remained central to his patriotic mission as a poet. He continually strove for a Latinate precision, control, and clarity, but if his supreme poetic models were classical, his response to a select band of English writers suggests the degree to which he also saw himself as standing in a vernacular apostolic line.

The Preface to his volume of translations - *Fables, Ancient and Modern* (1700) - stresses, for example, that he saw Chaucer as the prime figure in this canon (though his attempts at 'translating' certain of *The Canterbury Tales* into English 'as it is now refined' are far from distinguished tributes). This same Preface also declares a larger affinity in its assertion that poets have 'lineal descents and clans as well as families'. Spenser, he believes, 'insinuates that the soul of Chaucer was transfus'd into his body', while Milton 'has acknowledg'd to me that Spenser was his original'. Much of Dryden's most strenuous criticism appeared as prefaces to his own work but his most shapely critical manifesto, *Of Dramatic Poesie, An Essay* (1668), is a set piece written at a time of enforced theatrical inactivity during the Plague of 1665. It takes the form of a conversation between four characters in which the assertion of one is answered by the response of another; each character is allotted a formal speech, one defending ancient drama, another the modern; one proclaiming the virtues of French practice, another (Dryden's patriotic mouthpiece) the English. There is no real dialogue in the Platonic sense though there is a good deal of name-dropping and, latterly, of weighing the respective merits of Jonson, Fletcher, and Shakespeare. Jonson ('the most learned and judicious Writer which any Theater ever had') stands throughout as a touchstone of theatrical 'regularity', while the more 'natural' Shakespeare

(‘the man who of all Modern and perhaps Ancient Poets, had the largest and most comprehensive soul’) is approvingly allowed the rank of an English Homer ‘or Father of our Dramatick Poets’. Three of the four disputants of *Of Dramatic Poesie* are typed as ‘persons whom their witt and Quality have made known to all the Town’. The fourth, who seems to stand for Dryden himself, is clearly their social and intellectual equal. All are members of a court which the essay’s dedication confidently proclaims to be ‘the best and surest judge of writing’. This was possibly the last point in English history at which such a flattering observation might be regarded as having a ring of authenticity.

Dryden was also amongst the last influential writers to have sought and won discriminating court patronage and advantageous royal promotion. On the death of his erstwhile dramatic collaborator, Sir William Davenant, in April 1668, he was appointed Poet Laureate and in 1670 he also obtained the post of Historiographer Royal. Throughout his career he seems to have projected himself as an official spokesman in poetry. His early public verse- the grotesque schoolboy elegy ‘Upon the death of Lord Hastings’ (1649), the mature tribute to the dead Cromwell (the *Heroique Stanzas Consecrated to the Glorious Memory of his Most Serene and Renowned Highness Oliver*) of 1659, and the two fulsome panegyrics addressed to Charles II (*Astraea Redux* of 1660 and *To His Sacred Majesty* of 1661 – testifies to a desire to be a representative voice. The nimble ‘historical’ poem, *Annus Mirabilis, The Year of Wonders*, (1667), is floridly dedicated ‘to the Metropolis of Great Britain’ both as a tribute to London’s ordeal during the Great Fire and as a patriotic and emphatically royalist statement in the face of metropolitan resentment of the restored monarchy. In the poem it is the King’s policies that serve to defeat the Dutch in war and the King’s prayers that persuade Heaven to quell the flames. Fourteen years elapsed between the composition of *Annus Mirabilis* and the publication in 1681 of the political satire *Absalom and Achitophel*. *Absalom and Achitophel* is a celebrated satirical poem written in heroic couplets by John Dryden and first published in 1681. The poem tells the Biblical tale of the rebellion of Absalom against King David, but that tale is an allegory used to represent a story contemporary to Dryden, a story of Charles II and the Exclusion Crisis (1679-1681). *Absalom and Achitophel* is "generally acknowledged as finest political satire in the English language" It is also described as an allegory regarding contemporary political events, and a mock heroic narrative. On the title page Dryden himself describes it simply as “a poem”.

Dryden's two philosophico-religious poems of the 1680s, *Religio Laici, or A Laymans Faith* (1682) and *The Hind and the Panther* (1687), are public defences of the authority of a Church rather than, as they might have been in the hands of earlier seventeenth-century poets, explorations of the springs of devotion or private faith. ***The Hind and the Panther***: Dryden converted to Catholicism more or less simultaneously with the accession of the Roman Catholic king James II in 1685, to the disgust of many Protestant writers. *The Hind and the Panther* is considered the major poetic result of Dryden's conversion, and presents some evidence for thinking that Dryden became a Catholic from genuine conviction rather than political time-serving, in so far as his call for an alliance of Anglicans, Catholics and King against the Nonconformists directly contradicted James II's policy of appealing to the Nonconformists as allies against the Church of England.

### **Poetic style of Dryden**

What Dryden achieved in his poetry was neither the emotional excitement of the early nineteenth-century romantics nor the intellectual complexities of the metaphysicals. His subject matter was often factual, and he aimed at expressing his thoughts in the most precise and concentrated manner. Although he uses formal structures such as heroic couplets, he tried to recreate the natural rhythm of speech, and he knew that different subjects need different kinds of verse. In his preface to *Religio Laici* he says that "the expressions of a poem designed purely for instruction ought to be plain and natural, yet majestic... The florid, elevated and figurative way is for the passions; for (these) are begotten in the soul by showing the objects out of their true proportion. A man is to be cheated into passion,  
but to be reasoned into truth."

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## **JOHN BUNYAN**

**John Bunyan** (born November 1628, Elstow, Bedfordshire, England—died August 31, 1688, London), celebrated English minister and preacher, author of *The Pilgrim's Progress* (1678), the book that was the most characteristic expression of the Puritan religious outlook. His other works include doctrinal and controversial writings; a spiritual autobiography, *Grace Abounding* (1666); and the allegory *The Holy War* (1682).

### **Early life**

Bunyan, the son of a brazier, or traveling tinker, was brought up “among a multitude of poor plowmen’s children” in the heart of England’s agricultural Midlands. He learned to read and write at a local grammar school, but he probably left school early to learn the family trade. Bunyan’s mind and imagination were formed in these early days by influences other than those of formal education. He absorbed the popular tales of adventure that appeared in chapbooks and were sold at fairs like the great one held at Stourbridge near Cambridge (it provided the inspiration for Vanity Fair in *The Pilgrim's Progress*). Though his family belonged to the Anglican church, he also became acquainted with the varied popular literature of the English Puritans: plain-speaking sermons, homely moral dialogues, books of melodramatic judgments and acts of divine guidance, and John Foxe’s *The Book of Martyrs*. Above all he steeped himself in the English Bible; the Authorized Version was but 30 years old when he was a boy of 12.

In 1644 a series of misfortunes separated the country boy from his family and drove him into the world. His mother died in June, his younger sister Margaret in July; in August his father married a third wife. The English Civil Wars had broken out, and in November he was mustered in a Parliamentary levy and sent to reinforce the garrison at Newport Pagnell. The governor was Sir Samuel Luke, immortalized as the Presbyterian knight of the title in Samuel Butler’s *Hudibras*. Bunyan remained in Newport until July 1647 and probably saw little fighting.

His military service, even if uneventful, brought him in touch with the seething religious life of the left-wing sects within Oliver Cromwell’s army, the preaching captains, and those

Quakers, Seekers, and Ranters who were beginning to question all religious authority except that of the individual conscience. In this atmosphere Bunyan became acquainted with the leading ideas of the Puritan sectaries, who believed that the striving for religious truth meant an obstinate personal search, relying on free grace revealed to the individual, and condemning all forms of public organization.

Sometime after his discharge from the army (in July 1647) and before 1649, Bunyan married. He says in his autobiography, *Grace Abounding*, that he and his first wife “came together as poor as poor might be, not having so much household-stuff as a dish or spoon betwixt us both.” His wife brought him two evangelical books as her only dowry. Their first child, a blind daughter, Mary, was baptized in July 1650. Three more children, Elizabeth, John, and Thomas, were born to Bunyan’s first wife before her death in 1658. Elizabeth, too, was baptized in the parish church there in 1654, though by that time her father had been baptized by immersion as a member of the Bedford Separatist church.

Bunyan continued to tend the needs of the Bedford church and the widening group of East Anglian churches associated with it. As his fame increased with his literary reputation, he also preached in Congregational churches in London. Bunyan followed up the success of *The Pilgrim’s Progress* with other works. His *The Life and Death of Mr. Badman* (1680) is more like a realistic novel than an allegory in its portrait of the unrelievedly evil and unrepentant tradesman Mr. Badman. The book gives an insight into the problems of money and marriage when the Puritans were settling down after the age of persecution and beginning to find their social role as an urban middle class.

*The Holy War* (1682), Bunyan’s second allegory, has a carefully wrought epic structure and is correspondingly lacking in the spontaneous inward note of *The Pilgrim’s Progress*. The town of Mansoul is besieged by the hosts of the devil, is relieved by the army of Emanuel, and is later undermined by further diabolic attacks and plots against his rule. The metaphor works on several levels; it represents the conversion and backslidings of the individual soul, as well as the story of mankind from the Fall through to the Redemption and the Last Judgment; there is even a more precise historical level of allegory relating to the persecution of Nonconformists under

Charles II. *The Pilgrim's Progress, Second Part* (1684), tells the story of the pilgrimage of Christian's wife, Christiana, and her children to the Celestial City. This book gives a more social and humorous picture of the Christian life than the First Part and shows Bunyan lapsing from high drama into comedy, but the great concluding passage on the summoning of the pilgrims to cross the River of Death is perhaps the finest single thing Bunyan ever wrote.

In spite of his ministerial responsibilities Bunyan found time to publish a large number of doctrinal and controversial works in the last 10 years of his life. He also composed rough but workmanlike verse of religious exhortation; one of his most interesting later volumes is the children's book *A Book for Boys and Girls* (1686), vigorous poems serving as comments on emblematic pictures.

Bunyan died in 1688, in London, after one of his preaching visits, and was buried in Bunhill Fields, the Nonconformists' traditional burying ground.

### **Literary style:**

Bunyan's literary achievement, in his finest works, is by no means that of a naively simple talent, as has been the view of many of his critics. His handling of language, colloquial or biblical, is that of an accomplished artist. He brings to his treatment of human behaviour both shrewd awareness and moral subtlety, and he demonstrates a gift for endowing the conceptions of evangelical theology with concrete life and acting out the theological drama in terms of flesh and blood.

Bunyan thus presents a paradox, since the impulse that originally drove him to write was purely to celebrate his faith and to convert others, and like other Puritans he was schooled to despise the adornments of style and to treat literature as a means to an end. Bunyan's effort to reach behind literary adornments so as to obtain an absolutely naked rendering of the truth about his own spiritual experience causes him in *Grace Abounding* to forge a highly original style. In this style, which is rich in powerful physical imagery, the inner life of the Christian is described; body and soul are so involved that it is impossible to separate bodily from mental suffering in the description of his temptations. He feels "a clogging and a heat at my breast-bone as if my

bowels would have burst out”; a preacher’s call to abandon the sin of idle pastimes “did benumb the sinews of my best delights”; and he can say of one of the texts of scripture that seemed to him to spell his damnation that it “stood like a mill-post at my back.” The attempt to communicate the existential crisis of the human person without style had created a style of its own.

The use of a highly subjective prose style to express personal states of mind is Bunyan’s first creative achievement, but he also had at his disposal the more traditional style he used in sermons, treatises, and scriptural exposition. In the allegories some of his greatest imaginative successes are due to his dreamlike, introspective style with its subtle personal music; but it is the workaday vigour and concreteness of the prose technique practiced in the sermons which provide a firm stylistic background to these imaginative flights.

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## **SAMUEL PEPYS**

English diarist, historian, and letter writer. Pepys is recognized as one of the greatest diarists in the English language. As a highly placed civil servant and tireless observer of Restoration society, he recorded the events and character of his age. His *Diary* is therefore valued as a historical document of incomparable import. Strikingly candid and replete with anecdote and incident, the *Diary* is also esteemed as an original and finely crafted literary work.

The best known of all the graduates of Magdalene is probably Samuel Pepys, who made his name immortal by his diary. He made a unique contribution to our national history by his work as a naval administrator, and he bequeathed to the College its greatest treasure - his library, a unique collection of 3,000 books and manuscripts, still preserved as he left it.

Samuel Pepys was born in Salisbury Court off Fleet Street in London, on 23 February 1633. His father, John, was a tailor who came from a family of good yeomen stock long-settled in Cambridgeshire. Pepys's Elizabethan great grandfather had married well and acquired the manor of Cottenham. Pepys was a boy of ability and, after a short spell during the Civil War at the grammar school in Huntingdon, he was sent to St Paul's School and thence, with a leaving Exhibition, to Magdalene in 1651. Here he was awarded a scholarship and took his degree in 1654. Possibly he meant to become a lawyer, but seeing the execution of King Charles I and the establishment of a republic, another career opened up for him.

Edward Montague, a distant relative, had become a Councillor of State under the Cromwellian Protectorate. He took Pepys into his service as a secretary. Shortly afterwards Pepys acquired a clerkship in the Exchequer. This job gave him a little money, and he married Elizabeth St Michel in 1655. In 1658 he moved to a house in Axe Yard, off King Street, near to the palace of Whitehall.

It was in this house that Pepys started to write his diary, at the age of 27. He was 36 when fear of losing his eyesight forced him to end it. In June 1660 he was appointed Clerk of the Acts to the Navy Board, a key post in what was probably the most important of all government departments

- the royal dockyards.

Pepys's diary is not so much a record of events as a re-creation of them. Not all the passages are as picturesque as the famous set pieces in which he describes Charles II's coronation or the Great Fire of London, but there is no entry which does not, in some degree, display the same power of summoning back to life the events it relates.

Pepys's skill lay in his close observation and total recall of detail. It is the small touches that achieve the effect. Another is the freshness and flexibility of the language. Pepys writes quickly in shorthand and for himself alone. The words, often piled on top of each other without much respect for formal grammar, exactly reflect the impressions of the moment. Yet the most important explanation is, perhaps, that throughout the diary Pepys writes mainly as an observer of people. It is this that makes him the most human and accessible of diarists, and that gives the diary its special quality as a historical record.

Instead of writing a considered narrative, such as would be presented by the historian or biographer or autobiographer, Pepys shows us hundreds of scenes from life - civil servants in committee, MP's in debate, concerts of music, friends on a river outing. Events are jumbled together, sermons with amorous assignations, domestic tiffs with national crises.

The diary's contents are shaped also by another factor - its geographical setting. It is a London diary, with only occasional glimpses of the countryside. Yet as a panorama of the seventeenth-century capital it is incomparable, more comprehensive than Boswell's account of the London a century later because Pepys moved in a wider world. As luck would have it, Pepys wrote in the decade when London suffered two of its great disasters - the Plague of 1665 and the Great Fire of the following year. His descriptions of both - agonisingly vivid - achieve their effect by being something more than superlative reporting; they are written with compassion. As always with Pepys it is people, not literary effects, that matter.

The rest of Pepys's life after the spring of 1669 - some 34 years - is not recorded in the diary. To some extent it is recorded in history. He was Secretary to the Admiralty in 1673, and in the

same year became a Member of Parliament. He commanded the naval organisation during the Dutch War of 1672-74, and was responsible for some important developments after it - a shipbuilding programme of unprecedented dimensions, and the introduction of half-pay for officers which, together with other reforms, laid the basis for a professional naval service for the first time in English history. He was President of the Royal Society from 1684-86.

Most of his leisure he now spent on his library. He intensified his search for books and prints, setting himself a target of 3000 volumes. Pepys and his library clerk devised a great three-volumed catalogue; collated Pepysian copies with those in other collections; adorned volume upon volume with exquisite title pages written calligraphically by assistants; pasted prints into their guard-books; and inserted indexes and lists of contents.

The work was in sight of completion by the time that his health began to deteriorate seriously in 1700, with renewed attacks of the stone. Only a handful of books remained to be bought to complete the scheme. In 1701 he moved to Clapham, where he died two years later, on 26 May 1703, his life's work done.

The library survives at Magdalene - to which it was bequeathed under stipulations that ensure that its contents remain intact and unaltered. It is still housed in the glazed bookcases that Pepys had had made for it by dockyard joiners over the years, and still arranged in the order in which he and his heir had left it. In the first of the bookcases, on the back row of the second shelf, are the volumes of the diary.

Pepys earned his place in history by his work for the navy, but perhaps these diary volumes, and the library containing them, are his most eloquent memorials. They speak, as no other relics can, of the man himself.

### **Major Works**

Although Pepys's writings include a history of Portugal and one of the English navy, correspondence, and many administrative papers, it is his *Diary* that distinguishes him as an

author. Covering the period January 1, 1660 to May 31, 1669 the *Diary* is, according to William Matthews, who coedited the most complete edition of the text, “one of the principal source-books for many aspects of the history of its period. It is also a repertory of the familiar language of its time, and therefore an important source for historians of the English language. Most importantly, it is one of the great classics of literature.” Pepys conceived the *Diary* as a personal journal, but it also served as a chronicle of public affairs and the men and women behind them. Among the varied subjects it treats are church matters, navy business, court intrigues, political gossip, diplomatic efforts, the activities of the Royal Society, the proceedings of the Privy Council, and the progress of the Second Dutch War. Pepys graphically chronicled the two great London catastrophes of the 1660s—the 1665 Great Plague and the 1666 Fire—and the greatest spectacle of the age, the splendid coronation of Charles II. He aimed at objectivity in his reporting, apparently concealing nothing for the sake of decorum. Telling details are everywhere: a piercing hangover the morning after Charles II's coronation: “Waked in the morning with my head in a sad taking through the last night's drink, which I am very sorry for” (April 24, 1661); penny loaves charged at twopence during the Great Fire and a chimney-bound cat “with the hair burnt off the body and yet alive” (September 5, 1666); and the King and the Duke of York winking at each other at the council board (February 14, 1668). The entries, generally written within days of the events they describe, are markedly immediate in tone: a quality not evident in, for instance, the diary of Pepys's friend and correspondent John Evelyn, which was extensively revised and contains numerous afterthoughts, distortions, and (it seems likely) suppressions. Pepys wrote primarily in a modified version of the shorthand invented by Thomas Shelton in 1635, and he frequently interspersed Spanish, French, Italian, Dutch, Latin, and Greek phrases in descriptions of overtly erotic or particularly sensitive events.

The *Diary* is particularly valued by students of drama and music. Pepys was an insatiable playgoer—he considered his fondness for the theater practically an addiction and even took steps to “cure” himself of it—and commented freely on what he liked and disliked. He paid special attention to the acting, believing that a good performance could improve even a mediocre play, and made notes on theater architecture, scenery, lighting, and the general state, mood, and appearance of the audience. He saw new plays and revivals alike, commenting on some of the first performances Shakespeare's works since the playwright's own time, as well as many of the

chief dramatists of the Restoration period. For some plays, in fact, Pepys's remarks are the only known contemporary criticism. Pepys also frequented musical performances. A musician himself—he sang, played the flageolet and was proficient with other woodwinds, practiced on strings, and even tried his hand at composition—he was a keen and knowledgeable music critic. His music criticism is therefore valued both for its insight and fullness and as a rare record of musical tastes not otherwise especially well documented.

The *Diary* was first published in 1825, in a severely abridged form entitled *Memoirs of Samuel Pepys, Esq. F. R. S.* A slightly abridged version was published in 1893-99. The full text of the *Diary* was not published until 1983, in eleven volumes.

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## **WILLIAM CONGREVE**

**William Congreve** (January 24, 1670 – January 19, 1729) was an English playwright and poet. He was born at Bardsey near Leeds and attended school through his elementary years in Ireland. His works include plays, opera, and other various works of literature. Two of his most popular and well-known plays are *Love for Love* in 1695, and *The Way of the World* in 1700, for which he is most famous. Congreve came at the end of the period of Restoration literature as the population appeared to rebel against the earlier strictures of the Puritan revolution. As tastes changed again, Congreve fell silent. For the majority of his life, he lived on his reputation and the royalties from his plays.

### **Early Life**

William Congreve was born in Bardsey, West Yorkshire, England (near Leeds) to William Congreve (1637–1708) and his wife, Mary (*née* Browning; 1636?–1715). Although the inscription on his monument over his grave lists his date of birth as 1672, he was actually born and baptized in 1670. His sister, of whom, little is known, was born in 1672 shortly after his birth. His father was a Cavalier soldier, had settled during the reign of Charles II, and was placed

in command of the garrison at Youghal soon after William was born. Due to his father's tour of duty, William spent his childhood in Ireland, where he attended school at Kilkenny. He was then educated at Trinity College in Dublin, where he met Jonathan Swift, forming a lifelong friendship with him. Upon graduation, he moved to London where he matriculated in the Middle Temple as a student of law. However, he felt himself pulled toward literature, drama, and the fashionable life. His literary apprenticeship was served under the tutelage of John Dryden, the leading playwright of the day, from whom he learned a great deal.

He originally used the pseudonym of "Cleophil" in his works, especially in a novel whose existence is now remembered only through the unabashed avowal of the austere moralist, Dr. Johnson, who waggishly claimed that he "would rather praise it than read it." In 1693, Congreve's real career began with the brilliant appearance and instant success of his first comedy, *The Old Bachelor*. This success was under the generous auspices of Dryden, then as ever a living and immortal witness to the falsehood of the vulgar charges which taxes the greater among poets with jealousy or envy, the natural badge and brand of the smallest that would claim a place among their kind. The dis-crowned laureate had never, he said, seen such a first play, and was in awe of Congreve and his work.

He went on to write three more plays, and lived a mundane routine in the latter part of his life, not publishing any major works. The one memorable incident of his later life was the visit of Voltaire. It is thought that Congreve astonished and repelled Voltaire with his rejection of proffered praise and the expression of his wish to be considered merely as any other gentleman of no literary fame. The great master of well-nigh every province in the empire of letters, except the only one in which his host reigned supreme, replied that in that sad case Congreve would not have received his visit.

## Works

- *The Old Bachelor* (1693), comedy
- *The Double Dealer* (1693), comedy
- *Love for Love* (1695), comedy

- *The Mourning Bride* (1697), tragedy
- *Amendments of Mr. Collier's False and Imperfect Citations*, critique, 1698
- *The Way of the World* (1700), comedy
- *Monsieur de Pourceaugnac*, translation, 1704
- *False Though She Be*, poem, date unknown.
- *A Hue and Cry after Fair Amoret*, poem, date unknown.

Congreve's first play, *The Old Bachelor* (1693) was an enormous success when it was produced at the Theatre Royal, Drury Lane. John Dryden, Congreve's mentor, wrote that he had never read so brilliant a first play, and was impressed with the level of sophistication that Congreve displayed through the play. Congreve's next effort, however, was not so successful. *The Double-Dealer* (1693) revolved around a socialite who deceives everyone with the simple device of telling the plain truth. Although most modern critics consider *The Double-Dealer* an improvement over Congreve's first play, it was snubbed by critics and audiences alike. Congreve was irritated by what he perceived as the obtuseness of the public in their reaction to the play, and took a two year absence before writing a play again.

In *Love for Love* (1695), Congreve temporarily returned to the public favor, and it still remains popular with audiences. His reputation improved still further with the production of his only tragedy, *The Mourning Bride*, in 1697. However, the masterpiece of Congreve was by far *The Way of the World*, which was released in 1700.

Unfortunately, through his plays, Congreve's wit and his characters' sexual freedom and experimentation was at odds with the thinking of certain moralists of the day. In a critique by Jeremy Collier, (*A Short View of the Immorality and Profaneness of the English Stage*) in 1698, Congreve was directly attacked, along with his predecessor, Dryden. Collier succeeded in garnering public support for his cause by beginning with the accepted neoclassical doctrine that the purpose of drama is to teach and please and then pointing out the disparity between theory and practice. Congreve responded to Collier's accusations in *Amendments of Mr. Collier's False and Imperfect Citations* that same year, defending his work and his honor. However, the

conservative middle class, determined to make its tastes felt, sided with Collier and the Society for the Reformation of Manners. It became increasingly difficult to get a play produced during this time, unless it conformed to Collier's doctrine. Realizing that his protests were in vain, Congreve gave up playwriting altogether, resolving to "commit his quiet and his fame no more to the caprices of an audience," when he was only thirty years of age.

Although, he would write no more plays, Congreve did not retire entirely from the theater. He wrote the libretto for two operas and collaborated, in 1704, in translating Molière's *Monsieur de Pourceaugnac* for Lincoln's Inn Fields. However, for the next twenty-nine years, he lived mostly on his reputation and the royalties from his plays, as he withdrew from the theater, living on residuals from his early work. His output from 1700 was restricted to the occasional poem and some translations.

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## AUGUSTAN AND THE ROMANTIC PERIOD

### ALEXANDER POPE

Next only to William Shakespeare, Samuel Johnson is perhaps the most quoted of English writers. The latter part of the eighteenth century is often (in English-speaking countries, of course) called, simply, the Age of Johnson. Alexander Pope (1688-1744) was born on May 21, 1688 in London. His father was a linen-draper of Plough Court, Lombard Street. Despite his family's Catholic faith, which barred him from attending university, Pope learned Greek and Latin under the guidance of a local priest and, later, at Catholic school. In 1700, Pope's family moved to Binfield in Winsor Forest, where Pope undertook a regime of rigorous self-education once his formal education was complete. He read, studied, and translated, sometimes teaching himself languages through the act of translation. It was at Binfield that the sixteen-year-old Pope composed his *Pastorals* (published 1709). Around this same time, Pope contracted some form of tuberculosis, probably Pott's Disease, which weakened his spine, stunted his growth, and permanently damaged his health.

After the onset of his illness, Pope resolved to go to London to learn French and Italian. In the circles of fashionable London society (not the trade districts of Hammersmith or City, where he lived as a child), Pope made a number of literary acquaintances including William Wycherley and William Congreve, both noted comic dramatists. It seems likely that Pope's manuscript of the *Pastorals* circulated among these powerful literary figures, shaping Pope's career.

- *An Essay on Criticism*
- *Messiah* (from the Book of Isaiah, and later translated into Latin by Samuel Johnson)
- *The Rape of the Lock*
- *Windsor Forest*
- *The Temple of Fame: A Vision*
- Translation of the *Iliad*
- *Eloisa to Abelard*

- *Three Hours After Marriage*
- *Elegy to the Memory of an Unfortunate Lady*<sup>[28]</sup>
- *The Works of Shakespear, in Six Volumes*
- Translation of the *Odyssey*
- *The Dunciad*
- *Essay on Man*

With the help of his literary acquaintances, Pope began to publish his works. As the title of the poem suggests, the *Pastorals* distilled the English pastoral into poetic form, echoing Virgil's *Eclogues*. Even at this early point in Pope's career, he did not limit his poetic subject matter. His second major poem, *An Essay on Criticism* (1711), took a more discursive tone, closer to Horace's *Ars poetica*. *An Essay on Criticism* gained the attentions of Joseph Addison, one of the founders of *The Spectator*, and he included some of Pope's works in the publication. The poem begins with a discussion of the standard rules that govern poetry by which a critic passes judgment. The final section of *An Essay on Criticism* discusses the moral qualities and virtues inherent in the ideal critic, who, Pope claims, is also the ideal man. During the first decade of the eighteenth century, Pope also composed a descriptive and historical poem on his native region of Windsor Forest, entitled *Windsor-Forest* (1713), which caught the attention of Jonathan Swift with whom he would later found the Scriblerus club. By the time *Windsor-Forest* was published, *The Rape of the Lock* (1714) had already been circulated anonymously, but Pope revised and lengthened the work for publication and claimed authorship. Pope's most famous poem is *The Rape of the Lock*, first published in 1712, with a revised version published in 1714. A mock-epic, it satirises a high- society quarrel between Arabella Fermor (the "Belinda" of the poem) and Lord Petre, who had snipped a lock of hair from her head without her permission. The publication of *The Rape of the Lock* marked the conclusion of Pope's literary apprenticeship, and he embarked on his own projects.

Now a famous poet, Pope began work on several projects. He commenced writing a translation of Homer's *The Iliad* (1720), which took him six years to complete. He then undertook a translation of *The Odyssey* (1726). The two works were immensely popular, establishing Pope's fortune and solidifying his fame. He also produced an edition of Shakespeare's works, which

was completed in 1725. At the same time, Pope was drawn to a friendship with a group of writers with Tory sympathies who styled themselves the Scriblerus club. Counting Jonathan Swift, John Gay, John Arbuthnot, and Thomas Parnell among its members, the group dedicated itself to the mockery of false learning and antiquarianism.

Following the Jacobite (Catholic) rebellion of 1715, which protested the accession of George I and during which many Tories lost their political standing, several of Pope's friends were imprisoned in the Tower of London. As a Catholic with Tory sympathies, whose literary friends and political allies were on the losing side, Pope had to be very careful. Because Catholics were no longer welcome in London's center, Pope moved to Twickenham. Pope emerged from the crisis unscathed and remained relatively quiet for a few years. A small poem published in 1728 marked Pope's return to the world of political writing. In continuation of his work for the Scriblerus club, Pope composed *The Dunciad* which daringly satirized contemporary authors he viewed as bad writers, Lewis Theobald in particular. Though the poem was ostensibly a satire on bad writers, it contained allusions that seemed to challenge the Hanoverian rule. There was a general outcry following the publication of *The Dunciad*, and it seemed that his reputation as a satiric poet was solidified.

After the first publication of *The Dunciad*, Pope turned to other subjects in his poetry. In *An Essay on Man* (1732-4), Pope abandoned satire to focus on philosophy and metaphysics. The poem attempts to outline man's place and purpose in the universe and his relation to God. During the 1730s, he also began work on his *Imitations of Horace* (1733-8), which had neither a political nor a moral agenda. Rather, the poems range from imitations of Horace's satires and epistles to reflections of Horace's mode and style. The works collected in *Imitations of Horace* had little precedent in English literature—in either style or subject matter—and indicated Pope's move away from poetic imitation of his English contemporaries. In the 1740s Pope returned to *The Dunciad* and revised his 1728 version. *The New Dunciad* (1742) replaced Lewis Theobald with Colley Cibber as the satiric subject. Cibber had been the poet laureate since 1730, and Pope believed his works demonstrated shallowness and complacency. He died shortly afterward in 1744, having suffered from ill health most of his life.

What distinguishes Pope from his many accomplished contemporaries is his breadth. Unlike many eighteenth-century writers of verse and prose—Swift, Addison, Gay, Daniel Defoe, Samuel Richardson, Henry Fielding, etc.—Pope seems to have reinvented his literary self every five to ten years. Despite his reputation as a satirist, he contributed to virtually every genre from pastoral to rural history to mock epic to translation to moral philosophy to the autobiographical poetry of the *Imitations of Horace*.

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### JOSEPH ADDISON

**Joseph Addison** (1 May 1672 – 17 June 1719) was an English essayist, poet, playwright, and politician. . He was the eldest son of The Reverend Lancelot Addison. His name is usually remembered alongside that of his long-standing friend, Richard Steele, with whom he founded *The Spectator* magazine. Along with Steele, Addison would contribute the majority of the content for three of the most influential periodicals of the eighteenth century: *Tatler*, *The Spectator*, and *The Freeholder*, all of which set standards for literary taste and literary criticism that would endure throughout the remainder of the century. Addison was also an accomplished poet and playwright, and his tragedy, *Cato*, would become one of the most popular plays of the eighteenth century English stage.

Addison is best remembered today, however, as having perfected the form of the periodical essay. His essays, reproduced in *Tatler*, *The Spectator*, and in a handful of independently published books, are considered timeless masterworks of English prosody; moreover, the Classicism and Libertarianism which Addison articulated so clearly in his essays would go on to influence a number of writers and politicians of the 1700s, including Samuel Johnson and the Founding Fathers of the United States. As an author of periodical pieces that are now nearly three-hundred years old, Addison has understandably become less popular than he once was; nevertheless, he is still one of the masterful and intelligent essayists in the English language, and a seminal figure in the history of eighteenth century English literature.

In 1712, Addison wrote his most famous work of fiction, a play entitled *Cato, a Tragedy*. Based on the last days of the stoic philosopher Marcus Porcius Cato Uticensis, it deals with such

themes as individual liberty vs. government tyranny, Republicanism vs. Monarchism, logic vs. emotion, and Cato's personal struggle to stay true to his beliefs in the face of death. The play, which revolves around the conflict between Cato, a noble renegade, and Caesar, the domineering tyrant, was seen as a political allegory dramatizing the turbulent conflict between the Whigs and Tories in the eighteenth century.

It is mostly as an essayist that Addison is remembered today. Addison began writing essays quite casually. In April 1709, his childhood friend, Richard Steele, started *The Tatler*. Addison inspired him to write this essay. Addison contributed 42 essays while Steele wrote 188. Of Addison's help, Steele remarked, "when I had once called him in, I could not subsist without dependence on him". On 2 January 1711, *The Tatler* was discontinued. On 1 March 1711, *The Spectator* was published, and it continued until 6 December 1712. *The Spectator* was issued daily and achieved great popularity. It exercised a great deal of influence over the reading public of the time. In *The Spectator*, Addison soon became the leading partner. He contributed 274 essays out a total of 555; Steele wrote 236 for this periodical. Addison also assisted Steele with the *Guardian* which Steele began in 1713.

Most of **Joseph Addison's** essays are the social documents of the eighteenth century English life of middle-class people. He wrote elaborately on religion, politics, death, woman and other contemporary issues. Addison used the language of the clubs and the coffee-houses. He too wished to refine the English language and to write with well-bred ease. But at the same time he saw a danger in common speech- '**The Drama-an allegory**' is an excellent essay of Addison's style. Though this essay Addison tried to organize his humour-"Her name was Fancy. She led up every mortal to the appointed place, after having very officiously assisted him in making up his pack, and laying it upon his shoulders. Clearness and lucidity of expression is the most striking feature of Addison's style. There is no complexity or obscurity or difficulty in his expression. Even, a very long sentence can express clear ideas at the very first sight or reading. Humour is one of the most notable qualities of Addison's style. Addison's humour is mainly ironical and satirical and sometimes funny. Addison uses many allusions, anecdotes, references. Additionally, most of his essays are headed by quotations from classical or modern authors and these quotations are very apt to the subjects of the essays.

Addison, regarded as one of the greatest prose stylists in English literary history, and the ‘founder of modern English essay and modern English prose, was the pioneer of a style that was very simple, lucid, natural, moderate, free from extravagant expression, and called ‘middle style’. It is a style of straightness, without any obscurities, ambiguities, complexities, or superfluities. “He perfected English prose as an instrument for the expression of social thought.” Moreover, Addison, as an essayist, is often seen as a moralist, a preacher, a philosopher and critic, and also a humorist.

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## JOHNSON SWIFT

**Jonathan Swift** (30 November 1667 – 19 October 1745) was an Anglo-Irish<sup>[1]</sup> satirist, essayist, political pamphleteer (first for the Whigs, then for the Tories), poet and cleric who became Dean of St Patrick's Cathedral, Dublin. Under the care of his uncle, he received a bachelor's degree from Trinity College and then worked as a statesman's assistant. Eventually, he became dean of St. Patrick's Cathedral in Dublin. Most of his writings were published under pseudonyms.

Swift is remembered for works such as *A Tale of a Tub* (1704), *An Argument Against Abolishing Christianity* (1712), *Gulliver's Travels* (1726), and *A Modest Proposal* (1729). He is regarded by the *Encyclopædia Britannica* as the foremost prose satirist in the English language,<sup>[1]</sup> and is less well known for his poetry.

Between the years 1696-99, Swift wrote two major works: *Tale of a Tub*, defending the middle position of the Anglican and Lutheran churches, and *Battle of the Books*, taking the part of the Ancients (those who believed in the superiority of the classics and the humanities) against the Moderns (those who upheld the superiority of modern science, modern scholarship, modern politics, and modern literature). In *The Mechanical Operation of the Spirit* (1704), Swift continues his satiric attack on both questionable religious views and questionable knowledge acquisition, particularly scientific knowledge. In *Argument Against Abolishing Christianity*, Swift shares his reactions to the Test Act, a law enacted by Charles II, requiring office holders

to declare their allegiance to the king over the church. *The Journal to Stella* (1710-1713), a series of letters written by Swift to Esther Johnson and Rebecca Dingley, includes the poem "The Windsor Prophecy," a satirical attack on the person and personality of the Duchess of Somerset, Queen Anne's red-haired attendant who did not care for Swift because of disparaging remarks Swift had written about her family.

Swift is also recognized as a defender of Ireland. In *A Modest Proposal* (1729). *A Modest Proposal For preventing the Children of Poor People From being a Burthen to Their Parents or Country, and For making them Beneficial to the Publick*, commonly referred to as *A Modest Proposal*, is a Juvenalian satirical essay written and published anonymously by Jonathan Swift in 1729. Swift suggests that the impoverished Irish might ease their economic troubles by selling their children as food for rich gentlemen and ladies. This satirical hyperbole mocked heartless attitudes towards the poor, as well as British policy toward the Irish in general. It is a reaction to English commercial practices that negatively impacted Ireland, Swift wrote one of the greatest works of sustained irony in English or any other language. Instead of maintaining that English laws prevent the Irish from manufacturing anything to sell, he argues that the only items of commerce that the English don't restrict are Irish babies and reasons that the Irish would be better off as cattle to be butchered than as a colony to be starved by the English. *The Drapier's Letters* (1724) is Swift's response to the continued subjugation of all aspects of the lives of those living in Ireland by England. The *Letters* aroused so much opposition that the English offered a reward of £300 for the name of the author. Although the Irish knew that he had written the letters, they did not betray him. They made him a national hero instead.

In his most recognized novel, *Gulliver's Travels* (1726), *Gulliver's Travels*, whose full title is *Travels into Several Remote Nations of the World. In Four Parts. By Lemuel Gulliver, First a Surgeon, and then a Captain of Several Ships*, (1726, amended 1735), is a prose satire by Irish writer and clergyman Jonathan Swift, that is both a satire on human nature and the "travellers' tales" literary subgenre. It is Swift's best known full-length work, and a classic of English literature. He himself claimed that he wrote *Gulliver's Travels* "to vex the world rather than divert it".

In 1727, Swift visited England for the last time. He was declared mentally incompetent in 1742 and died in October 1745, leaving his estate to charity.

### **Major Prose works**

*A Tale of a Tub* was the first major work written by Jonathan Swift, arguably his most difficult satire and perhaps his most masterly. The *Tale* is a prose parody divided into sections each delving into the morals and ethics of English. Composed between 1694 and 1697, it was eventually published in 1704. It was long regarded as a satire on religion, and has famously been attacked for that, starting with William Wotton . It demonstrates many of the themes and stylistic techniques he would employ in his later work. It is at once wildly playful and funny while being pointed and harshly critical of its targets. In its main thread, the *Tale* recounts the exploits of three sons, representing the main threads of Christianity, who receive a bequest from their father of a coat each, with the added instructions to make no alterations whatsoever. However, the sons soon find that their coats have fallen out of current fashion, and begin to look for loopholes in their father's will that will let them make the needed alterations

*Gulliver's Travels*, a large portion of which Swift wrote at Woodbrook House in County Laois, was published in 1726. It is regarded as his masterpiece. As with his other writings, the *Travels* was published under a pseudonym, the fictional Lemuel Gulliver, a ship's surgeon and later a sea captain. Some of the correspondence between printer Benj. Motte and Gulliver's also-fictional cousin negotiating the book's publication has survived. It is a great and sophisticated satire of human nature based on Swift's experience of his times

In 1729, Swift published *A Modest Proposal for Preventing the Children of Poor People in Ireland Being a Burden on Their Parents or Country, and for Making Them Beneficial to the Publick*, a satire in which the narrator, with intentionally grotesque arguments, recommends that Ireland's poor escape their poverty by selling their children as food to the rich: "

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## DANIEL DEFOE

**Daniel Defoe** (1660 – 24 April 1731) . Till date, Daniel Defoe is considered to be the founder of British journalism. In his life, he served as a trader, writer, journalist, pamphleteer, and spy. Starting off to train himself at the ministry, he opted to become a merchant and started several businesses. He is most famous for his novel *Robinson Crusoe*, which is second only to the Bible in its number of translations.<sup>[2]</sup> Defoe is noted for being one of the earliest proponents of the novel, as he helped to popularise the form in Britain with others such as Aphra Behn and Samuel Richardson, and is among the founders of the English novel.

Defoe was a prolific and versatile writer, producing more than three hundred works – books, pamphlets, and journals – on diverse topics, including politics, crime, religion, marriage, psychology, and the supernatural. He was also a pioneer of business journalism. Defoe's life is charged with the spirit of adventure. He was "ever a fighter;" and, although he was the most prolific English writer of his time, he was no scholarly recluse, but first and last a practical man, who took an active and not unimportant part in the daily work of the world. James Foe wished his son to enter the ministry, but the boy's tastes lay in other directions. When he was about eighteen, he left school, and, after some years of preparations, set up for himself in the hosiery business. We need not attempt to follow his changing fortunes during these early years. He took a keen interest in politics and in social and public questions, and held decided views; he is supposed to have taken part in the rebellion of the unfortunate Duke of Monmouth; and he became known as an effective pamphleteer. He cannot be called a poet, in any strict, or high sense; but he showed himself master of verse of a certain order, plain, vigorous, sensible and convincing. On the accession of William and Mary (1689), he became a strenuous supporter of the government. He was honestly in accord with the Government, and an enthusiastic admirer of the King, to whom he had become personally known. He did the King good service by a pamphlet in defence of a standing army (1697), and by some vigorous verses, *The True-born Englishman*, which greatly increased his reputation.

## Selected Works

### ☐ Fiction

- The Consolidator (1705)
- Atlantis Major (1711)
- Robinson Crusoe (1719)
- Captain Singleton (1720)
- Memoirs of a Cavalier (1720)
- A Journal of the Plague Year (1722)
- Moll Flanders (1722)
- Colonel Jack (1722)
- Roxana: The Fortunate Mistress (1724)

### ☐ Nonfiction

- The Shortest Way with Dissenters (1702)
- The Storm (1704)
- The Family Instructor (1715)
- Tour through the Whole Island of Great Britain (1724–1726)
- The Political History of the Devil (1726)

The first notable publication of Defoe's was called *An Essay upon Projects*, and it was published in 1697. This was a collection of essays on improving education, roads and other social issues through taxes. It was apparently over 50,000 words long. That is a serious pamphlet.

In 1719, Defoe finished and published *Robinson Crusoe*, a long, imaginative literary masterpiece. The book tells the fictional story of a castaway who lived for nearly 30 years on a remote island. It was popular with the public and has never lost its appeal to adventure and romance. “Crusoe” is widely regarded as the first real novel in the English language. Defoe is also arguably the first travel writer in English. I recently finished his “From London to Land’s End,” a small piece of a much longer piece of travel writing that described most of England at that time, “A Journey Thro’ the Whole Island of Great Britain.” This work is so comprehensive and detailed, with descriptions of local towns and their pre-Industrial-Revolution manner of life,

that the modern reader views it as a fascinating blend of travelogue and time-travel. "From London to Land's End" has distinct similarities to Tolkien's description of hobbits crossing the Shire, as the narrator takes to the Great Western Road, rides across a green and pleasant land, traverses the Downs and encounters mysterious standing stones erected by unknown ancient peoples. A fascinating digression is provided by his pause in one port to describe the Great Storm of 1703, which raged with hurricane-force winds for an entire week, destroying fleets of ships and flattening forests. A storm like this has not been seen in modern times and if a similar one were to occur today it would wreak havoc beyond imagining.

During the remaining years, Defoe concentrated on books rather than pamphlets. At the age of 62 he published *Moll Flanders*, *A Journal of the Plague Year* and *Colonel Jack*. His last great work of fiction, *Roxana*, came out in 1724. Defoe's choice of the protagonist in *Moll Flanders* reflected his interest in the female experience. Moll is born in Newgate, where her mother is under sentence of death for theft. Her sentence is commuted to transportation to Virginia. The abandoned child is educated by a gentlewoman. Moll suffers romantic disillusionment, when she is ruined at the hands of a cynical male seducer. She becomes a whore and a thief, but finally she gains the status of a gentlewoman through the spoils of a successful colonial plantation.

Defoe began writing fiction late in life, around the age of sixty. He published his first novel, *Robinson Crusoe*, in 1719. He followed in 1722 with *Moll Flanders*, the story of a tough, streetwise heroine whose fortunes rise and fall dramatically. Both works straddle the border between journalism and fiction. *Robinson Crusoe* was based on the true story of a shipwrecked seaman named Alexander Selkirk and was passed off as history, while *Moll Flanders* included dark prison scenes drawn from Defoe's own experiences in Newgate and interviews with prisoners. The full title of *Moll Flanders* gives an apt summary of the plot: "The Fortunes and Misfortunes of the Famous Moll Flanders, Etc. Who was born in Newgate, and during a life of continu'd Variety for Threescore Years, besides her Childhood, was Twelve Year a Whore, five times a Wife (whereof once to her own brother), Twelve Year a Thief, Eight Year a Transported Felon in Virginia, at last grew Rich, liv'd Honest and died a Penitent. His focus on the actual conditions of everyday life and avoidance of the courtly and the heroic made Defoe a revolutionary in English literature and helped define the new genre of the novel. Stylistically,

Defoe was a great innovator. Dispensing with the ornate style associated with the upper classes, Defoe used the simple, direct, fact-based style of the middle classes, which became the new standard for the English novel. With *Robinson Crusoe*'s theme of solitary human existence, Defoe paved the way for the central modern theme of alienation and isolation. Defoe died in London on April 24, 1731, of a fatal "lethargy"—an unclear diagnosis that may refer to a stroke.

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## SAMUEL RICHARDSON

It's hard to imagine a more unlikely novelist than Samuel Richardson. The son of a carpenter, he attended school only intermittently until he was seventeen, when his formal education ended and he was apprenticed to a printer. He didn't publish his first novel until after he turned fifty. The undertaking was almost accidental. He had become the proprietor of a printing press when, in 1739, two London booksellers asked him to put together a "letter-writer," an etiquette manual consisting of letters that "country readers" might use as models for their own correspondence.

In the fall of 1739, Richardson began to absent himself from his wife in the evenings, after work at the printing press. Instead of proceeding as planned on the letter-writer, he was quietly adding to the stock of letters by the servant girl, bringing her story to a happy conclusion. It took him just two months to produce "Pamela," a book many consider the first modern English novel. In **1748** He published his second novel: "*Clarissa: Or the History of a Young Lady*". But the three volumes were published later so people began to imagine the end of the story and they asked for a happy ending. Obviously the writer refused this request and also Fielding, who was the strongest antagonist of Richardson, was agreed with him because a happy ending would not do the novel justice.

Not that Richardson made this claim. He associated novels with improbable romances, or mere entertainments; "Pamela" was intended to be instructive. But a novel it was. More than the adventure stories of Daniel Defoe or Jonathan Swift, "Pamela" was concerned with the representation of interior life. It is also organized around a single, unified plot, which distinguished it from Defoe's more episodic "Moll Flanders" (1722), a pseudo-memoir that

recounts its protagonist's varied and largely illicit pursuits, from her inauspicious beginnings through her late years in the colonies. Flanders's story is told from the complacent perspective of a woman who has achieved wealth and security, and generally adopts the matter-of-fact tone of a case history. Pamela's letters, in contrast, are lively and conversational, their language a reflection of both her native cleverness and her inexperience. Richardson was fond of saying that his characters' letters are written "to the moment"; that is, as the characters experience the events they describe.

The **epistolary** novel is an interesting literary technique, because it allows a writer to include multiple narrators in his or her story. This means the story can be told and interpreted from numerous viewpoints. The first true **epistolary** novel was the 17<sup>th</sup> century work, *Love-Letters Between a Nobleman and his Sister* penned by Aphra Behn but the first great international success in this genre is *Lettres persanes*, a philosophical novel by the French writer and philosopher Montesquieu. Many critics consider the first truly modern English novel *Pamela* of Samuel Richardson.

#### **Samuel Richardson's works:**

- Pamela
- Clarissa
- Sir Charles Gradinson
- Letters

In his first novel, "***Pamela***", he explored the various complexities of the title character's life, and the letters allow the reader to witness her development and progress over time. This novel was an experiment, but it allowed Richardson to create a complex heroine through a series of her letters.

When Richardson wrote his second novel "***Clarissa, or story of a Young lady***" he had more experience in the form and expanded the letter writing to four different correspondents, which created a complex system of characters encouraging each other to grow and develop over time. It was published in 1748 and tells the tragic story of a heroine whose quest for virtue is continually thwarted by her family: *Clarissa* Harlowe is a beautiful eighteen-year-old woman

considered an exemplary woman by everyone around her, but the members of the family are avaricious and eager to improve their standing in the world, and Clarissa becomes the victim of their avidity. The trouble starts when Richard Lovelace, a charming man, comes to pay court to Clarissa's sister, Arabella, but is attracted by Clarissa instead.

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## THOMAS GRAY

**Thomas Gray** (26 December 1716 – 30 July 1771) was an English poet, letter-writer, classical scholar and professor at Pembroke College, Cambridge. He is widely known for his *Elegy Written in a Country Churchyard*, published in 1751.

Gray was an extremely self-critical writer who published only 13 poems in his lifetime, despite being extremely popular. He was even offered the position of Poet Laureate in 1757, though he declined the offer.

**Thomas Gray** was an English poet who lived from 1716-1771 and is best known for poems like *Elegy Written in a Country Churchyard*. That poem, along with many others written by Gray, is an **English lyric poem**, or an emotional, song-like poem.

Thomas Gray was the only surviving child out of twelve. His father was a scrivener or clerk, but he was abusive to his wife. Gray's mother ran a millinery business. Gray attended Eton College, where he befriended other boys who preferred poetry to sports. This quieter lifestyle fit Gray, and he kept it as an adult, enjoying time to study and keeping up with only a few friends.

In 1734, Gray began attending Peterhouse College at Cambridge University. However, when he left in 1738, he had not earned a degree. The following year, he embarked on a European adventure, traveling through France, Switzerland and Italy with one of his childhood friends. Much of the trip was paid for by his friend, and in 1741, they had a falling out. Gray returned to England. In 1745, the two estranged friends finally settled their dispute.

In 1742, a childhood friend who Gray met at Eton College died of tuberculosis at the age of 24 and it deeply affected him. But Gray continued to write poetry, most notably *Ode on the Spring*, *Hymn to Adversity* and *Ode on a Distant Prospect of Eton College*. These poems were expressive and sometimes melancholy. In the autumn of 1742, Gray returned to Peterhouse College and in 1743, Gray earned a Bachelor of Civil Law degree, though he never practiced law. He stayed at Cambridge to study Greek. He was never satisfied with his writing, often rewriting poems multiple times and rarely feeling happy with the results. Consequently, he left much of his work unfinished.

### Thomas Gray Poems

- Elegy Written In A Country Churchyard
- Ode On The Death of a Favourite Cat
- Hymn To Adversity
- The Bard
- The Fatal Sisters
- Ode On The Spring
- Ode On a Distant Prospect Of Eton College

In 1747, *Ode on a Distant Prospect of Eton College* was published, and the following year, *Ode on the Spring* was also published, but neither poem received much attention.

Literary historians usually identify Gray with a literary movement called **sensibility**. Where earlier neoclassical poets like Swift and Pope emphasized the rational powers of human beings, poets of sensibility turned their attention to the individual's capacity for sympathetic and empathetic emotional response. (Consider, for instance, Jane Austen's *Sense and Sensibility*, where rational and emotional approaches to life are so well contrasted.) The ability of the individual to respond with intense feeling to a scene or a subject is the primary interest of poems of sensibility. They want to evoke an emotional response from the reader: whereas neoclassical poets try to teach their readers how to think, poets of sensibility try to teach their readers how to

feel. Again there is that need for moral instruction through literature, but the means of reaching the reader are different.

Many elements of Gray's *Elegy Written in a Country Churchyard* and *Ode on a Distant Prospect of Eton College* indicate their place in the tradition of sensibility. Gray writes these poems in first person, but unlike Pope, he does not speak to a specific listener. Instead, he writes **dramatic monologues**—in other words, extended soliloquies, in poetry rather than in drama. The poems ask us to imagine that we, as readers, overhear the speaker talking to himself and reflecting on the scene before him: they ask us to believe that we listen in on the speaker's private thoughts. As you read these poems, think about the relationship between form and content: how do they comment, fairly explicitly, on political or generic issues while claiming to represent the speaker's stream-of-consciousness?

Gray is regarded by many as a "pre-Romantic" because his poetry signals a shift from the characteristics of the Augustan age with its public focus, heroic couplets, and satire to the Romantic age with its focus on private thoughts, lyrical poems with alternating rhyme schemes, and exploration of the self. In the 18th century, art was regarded as artifice, thus the popularity of ornate, flowery language. The Romantics wanted art not to be so artificial. Gray's poems reveal the characteristics of both literary periods. For example, in "Eton College," Gray describes the young boys swimming in the Thames river with the line: "And cleave with pliant arm, Thy glassy wave," a style very much in keeping with the 18th century. Gray uses this poetic diction to establish his credibility because the language sets a certain decorum and appropriateness which his audience and critics would expect. Yet, these elite gestures are contradicted by a respect for the poor. He can fashion a poem that focuses uncharacteristically for his age on the poor and on the internal thoughts of the poet. It has been said that the Romantics discovered the poor; Gray comes pretty close. He further separates himself from Neoclassical poetry with his metrical innovation—he abandons the **heroic couplet** for metrically irregular and inventive stanza forms.

One of the most profound assumptions that Gray contributes to the study of literature is the notion that poets are not simply those who produce poems. For Gray, it involved having a certain

sensitivity, whether the poet ever wrote or not. In other words, a poet was simply a certain kind of person. It has been said that for the 18<sup>th</sup> century, "heard melodies" are sweet; whereas for the Romantics, it is the "unheard melodies" that are best. Gray is best understood as a transitional figure between the two periods. *Elegy Written in a Country Churchyard* Gray worked on this poem from 1742 to 1750. Like *Lycidas*, it is a memorial to actual people, but a reflection on much more. In the poem, Gray makes the point that there is inherent nobility in all people, but that difficult circumstances prevent those talents from being manifested. He speculates about the potential leaders, poets, and musicians who may have died in obscurity and been buried there.

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## SAMUEL JOHNSON

The ever witty Samuel Johnson was an essayist and literary historian who was a prominent figure in 18th century England.

### **Difficult Childhood**

Born on September 18, 1709, in Lichfield, Staffordshire, England, Samuel Johnson is remembered as a leading critic, writer and lexicographer of his day. He had to overcome tremendous obstacles to achieve such acclaim, however. Johnson was born into straitened circumstances, and was plagued by health problems from the start of his life. As recounted in the biography written by his friend James Boswell, Johnson once stated, "I was born almost dead and could not cry for some time."

As a baby, Johnson suffered from scrofula, a form of tuberculosis that he had contracted in his lymph nodes. His hearing and vision were impaired, and Johnson displayed an array of physical and verbal tics throughout his life (modern-day physicians believe that he may have had Tourette's syndrome, but the disorder was unknown during Johnson's day). Johnson also suffered from fits of depression.

## **Studies and Early Career**

The son of a bookseller, Johnson was an excellent student who was particularly good at Latin. He attended Pembroke College at Oxford in 1728. However, money problems forced him to leave school the next year. Johnson then tried to find work as a teacher, but had no luck finding a suitable long-term position.

## **Important Literary Figure**

In 1737, Johnson moved to London. There, he would continue to work as a hack writer for years, churning out articles—in varying degrees of quality—in an effort to earn money. He began contributing to *The Gentleman's Magazine* in 1738. That same year, he anonymously published the poem "London," a well-received political satire.

In 1746, Johnson agreed to tackle one of the major projects of his career: *A Dictionary of the English Language*. The book took nearly a decade to complete. was published in 1755. It had a far-reaching effect on Modern English and has been acclaimed as "one of the greatest single achievements of scholarship".<sup>[3]</sup> This work brought Johnson popularity and success. Until the completion of the *Oxford English Dictionary* 150 years later, Johnson's was the pre-eminent British dictionary.

His later works included essays, an influential annotated edition of *The Plays of William Shakespeare*, and the widely read tale *The History of Rasselas, Prince of Abissinia*.

***The Plays of William Shakespeare*** was an 18th-century edition of the dramatic works of William Shakespeare, edited by Samuel Johnson and George Steevens. Johnson announced his intention to edit Shakespeare's plays in his *Miscellaneous Observations on Macbeth* (1745), and a full *Proposal* for the edition was published in 1756. The edition was finally published in 1765.

In the "Preface" to his edition, Johnson justifies trying to determine the original language of the Shakespearean plays. To benefit the reading audience, he added explanatory notes to various passages. Later editors followed Johnson's lead and sought to determine an authoritative text of

Shakespeare.

*The History of Rasselas, Prince of Abissinia*, originally titled *The Prince of Abissinia: A Tale*, though often abbreviated to *Rasselas*, is an apologue about happiness by Samuel Johnson. The book's original working title was "The Choice of Life".

In 1763, he befriended James Boswell, with whom he later travelled to Scotland; Johnson described their travels in *A Journey to the Western Islands of Scotland*. Towards the end of his life, he produced the massive and influential *Lives of the Most Eminent English Poets*, a collection of biographies and evaluations of 17th- and 18th-century poets.

Johnson fulfilled an overdue contract and published his own collection of William Shakespeare's plays in 1765. Beginning in the late 1770s, Johnson began work on a series of critical examinations of poets. These analytical and biographical sketches were published in several volumes and are usually known as *The Lives of the Poets*. At the age of 75, Johnson died on December 13, 1784, in London, England. He was buried in Westminster Abbey. Boswell's famous biography, published in 1791, provided a lasting tribute to Johnson's life and work.

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## JAMES BOSWELL

**James Boswell, 9th Laird of Auchinleck** (October 1740 – 19 May 1795), was a Scottish biographer and diarist, born in Edinburgh. He is best known for the biography he wrote of one of his contemporaries, the English literary figure Samuel Johnson, which is commonly said to be the greatest biography written in the English language. He was ranked as the greatest biographer in the history of Western literature.

Boswell's surname has passed into the English language as a term (*Boswell*, *Boswellian*, *Boswellism*) for a constant companion and observer, especially one who records those observations in print. In "A Scandal in Bohemia", Sir Arthur Conan Doyle's character Sherlock Holmes affectionately says of Dr. Watson, who narrates the tales, "I am lost without my

Boswell."<sup>[3]</sup>

## Major works

- *The Cub at Newmarket*
- *Letters Between the Honourable Andrew Erskine, and James Boswell* (1763)
- *Dorando, a Spanish Tale*
- *An Account of Corsica* (1768)
- "The Rampager"
- *The Life of Samuel Johnson*,
- *No Abolition of Slavery* (1791) (poem)

*The Life of Samuel Johnson, LL.D.* (1791) is a biography of Dr. Samuel Johnson written by James Boswell. The work was a popular and critical success when first published. It is regarded as an important stage in the development of the modern genre of biography; many have claimed it as the greatest biography written in English, but some modern critics object that the work cannot be considered a proper biography.

Boswell was a writer of genius, particularly in his finest type of writing—the record of what he had observed. His three main works—the "Journal" section of his *Account of Corsica*, the *Tour to the Hebrides*, and the *Life of Johnson*—were all based on notes or journals written shortly after the events they describe. Long practice, however, enabled Boswell years later to take condensed notes and to expand them into a detailed scene.

*An Account of Corsica* is an account of Boswell's travels in Corsica during a period of military and social upheaval and his subsequent befriending of the Corsican independence movement leader, General Pasquale Paoli.

The main characteristics of Boswell's works are accuracy, a sense of the dramatic, and an eye for significant details. In his *Life* Boswell skillfully dramatized many scenes, building up his effects gradually. The structure of the biography, although ostensibly that of year-by-year arrangement, actually achieves unity through its recurrent topics— religion, government, and

death—and through the adept playing off of subordinate figures—Edmund Burke, Oliver Goldsmith, and Boswell himself—against Johnson. This latter technique projects Johnson into the spotlight as though he were the main character in a novel, one made up of a series of interconnected dramas in which Boswell has arranged all figures for maximum effect.

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## THOMAS CARLYLE

**Thomas Carlyle** (December 4, 1795 – February 5, 1881) was a Scottish essayist, satirist, and historian, whose writings were highly influential during the Victorian era. Coming from a strictly Calvinist family, Carlyle was expected by his parents to enter the ministry. However, while at the University of Edinburgh he lost his Christian faith. Nevertheless Calvinist values remained with him throughout his life.

His work was extremely attracting to most Victorians who were clashing with changes in science and politics, which actually endangered the traditional social order. Controversies circled around him when he called economics as “The Dismal Science” and wrote several articles for the Edinburgh Encyclopedia. Carlyle's collected works (1974) comprises of 30 volumes. One of his most famous works is “*On Heroes And Hero Worship*”. He also wrote the biography of '*Frederick the Great*' who ruled Prussia from 1740 to 1786.

In 1937, Carlyle wrote “*The French Revolution: A History*”. This work was divided into three volumes. However, accidentally, the first manuscript of the first volume got burned by philosopher John Stuart Mill's maid. Instead of re-writing the first volume, Carlyle continued to write second and third volume. This work highly contained a passionate intensity which was previously unknown in the historical writings. Carlyle's work to develop motivation and urges influenced many events in France. Carlyle was appointed as a rector of the University of Edinburgh. In 1875, he came out with the essay “The Early Kings of Norway: Also an Essay on the Portraits of John Knox”.

In *Heroes and Hero Worship*, Carlyle intently believed that heroic leadership is crucial.

This belief of his founded form in the book “On Heroes, Hero-Worship, and the Heroic in History”. In this book, he compared several different kinds of heroes such as Odin, Oliver Cromwell, Napoleon, William Shakespeare, Dante, Samuel Johnson, Jean-Jacques Rousseau, Robert Burns, John Knox, Martin Luther and the Prophet Muhammad.

Carlyle’s later writings usually included short essays, generally based on the hardening of his own political positions. Carlyle also carried out some notorious racist essays like “Occasional Discourse on the Negro Question” suggesting that slavery must never be completely eradicated or else compensated with some work. He continued to emphasize that slavery forced work out of people who would otherwise have been lazy and futile. The same views and his support for the repressive measures of Governor Edward Eyre in Jamaica resulted in making distance with Carlyle’s old generous partners. Eyre was blamed of brutal lynchings during his efforts to suppress a rebellion and Carlyle in his defense established a committee. After the demise of Jane, Carlyle almost became absent from social activities. He also wrote “*Reminiscences of Jane Welsh Carlyle*”. The Scottish philosopher David George Ritchie, a friend of the Carlyle family, published a volume of her letters in 1889 under the title *The Early Letters of Jane Welsh Carlyle*.

With much of his later years spent mourning Welsh, Carlyle died on February 5, 1881, in London, England, and was buried back in Scotland with his parents' remains. The University of California Press has reissued much of Carlyle's writings, with the multi-volume *The Collected Letters of Thomas and Jane Welsh Carlyle* made available by Duke University Press as well. Rosemary Ashton also wrote *Thomas and Jane Carlyle: Portrait of a Marriage* (2002).

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## THOMAS GRAY

**Thomas Gray** (26 December 1716 – 30 July 1771) was an English poet, letter-writer, classical scholar and professor at Pembroke College, Cambridge. He is widely known for his *Elegy Written in a Country Churchyard*, published in 1751. Gray was an extremely self-critical writer who published only 13 poems in his lifetime, despite being extremely popular. He was even offered the position of Poet Laureate in 1757, though he declined the offer.

Gray, however, owed his education largely to the self-denial of his mother; he was educated at Eton and Cambridge, at the former of which places he met Horace Walpole. With Walpole he toured Italy and France; then, returning to the university, he took his degree, finally settling down to a life that was little more than an elegant futility. He was offered the Laureateship, but refused it (1757); he obtained a professorship at Cambridge, but he never lectured. He wrote a little, travelled a little; but he was a man of shrinking and fastidious tastes, unapt for the rough shocks of the world, and, fortunately for himself, able to withdraw beyond them.

### His famous poems are:

- *Ode on the Spring*
- *Ode on the Death of a Favourite Cat*
- *Ode on a Distant Prospect of Eton College*
- *A Long Story*
- *Hymn to Adversity*
- *Elegy written in a Country Church-yard*

His first poem was the *Ode on a Distant Prospect of Eton College* (1747), which contained gloomy moralizings on the approaching fate of those "little victims," the schoolboys. The major theme is the inevitability of suffering, death, and unhappiness for humankind. As Gray watches the boys at Eton, he notes their health, hope, and joy. However, he reveals neither a desire to return to youth nor a disgust with adulthood. Gray's concern with children, rural description, reflective imagination, and melancholy are tendencies that made him a forerunner

of the English Romantic movement.

Then, after years of revision and excision, appeared the famous *Elegy written in a Country Churchyard* (1751). The poem argues that the remembrance can be good and bad, and the narrator finds comfort in pondering the lives of the obscure rustics buried in the churchyard. *Elegy Written in a Country Churchyard* is a poem that takes place in a cemetery, and it's about how people are remembered after they're dead.

- *Essay on Norman Architecture*
- *Essay on the Philosophy of Lord Bolingbroke*
- *History*
- Journal of A Visit to the Lake District in 1769 □
- *Literae*
- Notes on A Tour through France and Italy (1739-41)
- *Notes on India*
- *Notes on Persia*
- Notes on Plato
- *Samuel Daniel*

Although Gray was one of the least productive poets (his collected works published during his lifetime amount to less than 1,000 lines), he is regarded as the predominant poetic figure of the middle decades of the eighteenth century in English literature. In 1757, following the resounding success of his "Elegy," he was offered the post of Poet Laureate, which he refused. Gray's influence would extend to a number of other poets; most notably the Romantics Coleridge and Wordsworth would cite him as a major inspiration. Gray's poetry to be read and loved by thousands of readers to this day for its clarity, beauty, and melancholy grace. While many other English poets of the eighteenth century have fallen further and further into obscurity, Gray's popularity continues to endure. His style in fact is still greatly influenced by the classical models of the 18<sup>th</sup> century (especially in the form and language), but the subjects of his poem are definitely romantic.

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## WILLIAM BLAKE

William Blake was a 19th century writer and artist who is regarded as a seminal figure of the Romantic Age. His writings have influenced countless writers and artists through the ages, and he has been deemed both a major poet and an original thinker. Born in 1757 in London, England, William Blake began writing at an early age and claimed to have had his first vision, of a tree full of angels, at age 10. He studied engraving and grew to love Gothic art, which he incorporated into his own unique works. A misunderstood poet, artist and visionary throughout much of his life, Blake found admirers late in life and has been vastly influential since his death in 1827.

William Blake may have been the greatest poet/artist of all time. Blake was the first great Modernist poet, because (1) he broke with many traditions of the past, including orthodox Christianity and the ideas that "god" and nature are "good" and to be praised; (2) he innovated, writing free verse while also employing slant rhymes and metrical variations in his more formal poems; (3) he greatly expanded the themes and subjects of poetry to include free love, equality of the races and sexes, etc.

William Blake is one of the key figures of English Romanticism, and a handful of his poems are universally known thanks to their memorable phrases and opening lines. 'Jerusalem' is one of the most famous hymns around, a sort of alternative national anthem for England. Yet the poem on which Hubert Parry based his hymn, although commonly referred to as 'William Blake's "Jerusalem"', is actually from a much larger poetic work titled *Milton a Poem* and was largely ignored when it was published in 1804. 'A *Poison Tree*'. Blake originally gave 'A Poison Tree' the title 'Christian Forbearance'. The speaker of the poem tells us that when he was angry with his friend he simply told his friend that he was annoyed, and that put an end to his bad feeling.

'*The Tyger*'. The opening line of this poem, 'Tyger! Tyger! burning bright', is among the most famous lines in all of William Blake's poetry. Accompanied by a painting of an altogether cuddlier tiger than the 'Tyger' depicted by the poem itself, 'The Tyger' first appeared in *Songs of Experience* in 1794. 'The *Clod and the Pebble*'. This poem is about two contrasting ideas of love the 'clod' of clay representing a selfless and innocent kind of love and the 'pebble' in a brook symbolising love's more pragmatic, selfish side. 'The *Garden of Love*'. In this poem,

Blake's speaker goes into the Garden of Love and finds a chapel built on the spot where he used to play as a child. The gates of the chapel are shut, and commandments and prohibitions are written over the door. The garden has become a graveyard, its flowers replaced by tombstones. This idea of love starting out as a land of liberty and promise but ending up a world of death and restriction is expressed very powerfully through the image of the garden.

Blake published *Songs of Innocence and of Experience: Shewing the Two Contrary States of the Human Soul* in 1794, and this collection of forty-six poems has a unique position in English literature. Some of them—*The Tyger*, for example—are among the best-known poems in the English language.

The book combines two sets of poems: *Songs of Innocence* and *Songs of Experience*. These two sets of poems have generated much critical discussion as to how Blake intended them to be understood. But there is general agreement that the two sets of poems are related by the principle of contrast; a contrast between the state of Innocence—to be understood as childhood, idealism, hope—and that of Experience—to be understood as adulthood, disillusionment, social criticism, and despair.

The poems were also meant to be interpreted on another level; that of the world before and after the Fall of Man, and of the struggle within the soul itself. Blake came to see these two states as "contraries in the human soul!". At first, *Innocence* is the world of the Lamb, the world of the true God of Love and Understanding, or Jesus, while *Experience* is the work of the false God, or the great negative influence. But if we can see this, then Experience can also be a means of achieving true insight.

Blake does not tell the reader how these poems should be read, nor is he trying to say that one state is better than the other, but rather leaves it up to the readers to draw their own conclusions.

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## WILLIAM WORDSWORTH

William Wordsworth was at once the oldest, the greatest, and the most long-lived among the romantic poets. William Wordsworth was born on 7 April 1770 at Cockermouth in Cumbria. His father was a lawyer. Both Wordsworth's parents died before he was 15, and he and his four siblings were left in the care of different relatives. As a young man, Wordsworth developed a love of nature, a theme reflected in many of his poems.

While studying at Cambridge University, Wordsworth spent a summer holiday on a walking tour in Switzerland and France. He became an enthusiast for the ideals of the French Revolution. He began to write poetry while he was at school, but none was published until 1793. In 1795, Wordsworth received a legacy from a close relative and he and his sister Dorothy went to live in Dorset. Two years later they moved again, this time to Somerset, to live near the poet Samuel Taylor Coleridge, who was an admirer of Wordsworth's work. They collaborated on '*Lyrical Ballads*', published in 1798. This collection of poems, mostly by Wordsworth but with Coleridge contributing '*The Rime of the Ancient Mariner*', is generally taken to mark the beginning of the Romantic movement in English poetry. The poems were greeted with hostility by most critics.

The theme of his great poem *The Prelude* is the apotheosis of the Self which lies at the root of Romanticism. The basic traits of romanticism such as the love of nature, the belief in humanity, mysticism, revolutionary spirit etc were early developed in his poetry. As a young man he had high hopes for humanity and he had been nurtured in the Lake District which helped him to think well on man. He also read Rousseau's view on the innocence of man. Thus, the teaching of Rousseau and his own experience convinced him that man was naturally good. He greatly supported the dawn of a new era for the humanity. But later he changed his mind when the French Revolutionists started to commit all kinds of atrocities.

The whole of his early life had been a dedication to poetry, and from his childhood he had

stored his mind with the experience in nature which later he was recall in is verse.

## **Poetry**

- *An Evening Walk* (1793)
- *Lines Written Above Tintern Abbey* (1798)\
- *Lyrical Ballads*
- *Upon Westminster Bridge* (1801)
- *Intimations of Immortality* (1806)
- *The Excursion* (1814)
- *Peter Bell* (1819)
- *The River Duddon* (1820)
- *The Prelude Or Growth of a Poet's Mind*
- *The Seven Sisters*
- *The Solitary Reaper*
- *The Tables Turned To A Butterfly*
- *To A Skylark*
- *To The Cuckoo*

## **Prose**

- *Prose Works* (1896)
- *Literary Criticism* (1966)
- *Letters of Dorothy and William Wordsworth* (1967)
- *Letters of the Wordsworth Family* (1969)
- *Prose Works* (1974)
- *The Love Letters of William and Mary Wordsworth* (1981)

His best-known works are *The Prelude*, *The Lyrical Ballads*, *Tintern Abbey* and a number of sonnets. The work which made him popular was the *Lyrical Ballads*. He wrote it in collaboration with his intimate friend S.T. Coleridge. In *Lyrical Ballads* he attempted to make verse out of the incidents of simple rustic life. He took incidents and situations from common life and threw over them a coloring of the imagination by which ordinary things would be made to assume an unusual aspect. In it, he used a language that was a selection from the ordinary speech. Thus, the poems of the *Lyrical Ballads* showed originality both in subject matter and in language and were a departure from all previous practice.

*The Prelude*, an autobiographical poem is the spiritual record of his mind, honestly recording its own intimate experiences, and endowed with a rare capacity for making the record intelligible. It is an idealized version of his spiritual growth in which he escapes into the higher reality of his imagination. It emphasized particularly his surrender of the charm of logic to the claims of the emotion which became a cardinal principle of all the later Romantic poets. No poems in English offers a parallel. It was composed in blank verse and had an epical scale.

Wordsworth also wrote some of the finest sonnets in which he wanted to awaken England from lathargy, to condemn Napoleon and to record many of his own moods Wordsworth also wrote some famous sonnets. He wrote the sonnets to arouse England to a sense of her responsibility in international affairs, and to express memorable moment in his own experience. His other works included *Immortality ode*, *Ode to Duty* and '*Laodamia*'. In the *Immortality Ode*, he recorded a mystical intuition of a life before birth which can be recovered in a few fortunate moments in the presence of nature.

*Shakespeare's Sonnets*: From the Italian *sonetto*, which means "a little sound or song," the sonnet is a fourteen-line poem written in iambic pentameter. While Italian poet and scholar Petrarch popularized the form in the 1300s, 300 years later, Shakespeare introduced a different type of sonnet, now called the "Shakespearean" or "English" sonnet. The Shakespearean sonnet

has three quatrains and a couplet, with the rhyme scheme abab, cdcd, efef, gg, and the couplet provides the volta in the poem. Here is a roundup of Shakespeare's most popular sonnets.

Wordsworth had a belief that poetic style should be as simple and sincere as the language of everyday life, and that the more the poet draws on elemental feelings and primal simplicities the better for his art. He advocated the use of simple language in poetry. He said that poetry should be written in a "language really used by men in humble and rustic". He set himself to the task of freeing poetry from all its "conceits" and its "inane phraseology". He made certain very effective and striking experiments in the use of simple language.

According to Lytton Strachey, Wordsworth was the first poet who fully recognised and deliberately practised the beauties of extreme simplicity; and this achievement constitutes his most obvious claim to fame. Hardly any interested reader misses the beauty of his simplicity.

Thus, Wordsworth stands apart as the pioneer of Romantic movement by his great contribution in English literature.

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## **SAMUEL TAYLOR COLERIDGE**

**Samuel Taylor Coleridge** was an English poet, literary critic, philosopher and theologian. A friend to poet William Wordsworth, Coleridge was a founder of the English Romantic Movement. Coleridge is one of the greatest of literary critics, and his greatness has been almost universally recognized. His father was a local vicar who was already 53 when Samuel was born; his father later died when Coleridge was just six years old. As a child, he was withdrawn, but loved reading. He later recounted how much he enjoyed reading books such as *Robinson Crusoe*, and *Arabian Nights*.

In the late 1790s, Coleridge developed a close and important friendship with William

Wordsworth – a fellow romantic poet. This was not just a close friendship, but also an important literary collaboration. Together they published the influential volume of poetry – *Lyrical Ballads* (1798). This included classics by Wordsworth, such as ‘*Tintern Abbey*’ and Coleridge’s ‘*Rime of the Ancient Mariner*’. These poems were a key development in Romantic poetry; using everyday words to evoke poetic ideals such as the beauty of nature. Coleridge definitely had a significant influence on Wordsworth; Wordsworth’s great work ‘*The Prelude*’ was originally entitled ‘*Poem To Coleridge.*’

***The Rime of the Ancient Mariner.*** is the longest major poem by the English poet Samuel Taylor Coleridge. *The Rime of the Ancient Mariner* relates the experiences of a sailor who has returned from a long sea voyage. The mariner stops a man who is on the way to a wedding ceremony and begins to narrate a story. Coleridge uses narrative techniques such as personification and repetition to create a sense of danger, the supernatural, or serenity, depending on the mood in different parts of the poem. ***Lyrical Ballads, with a Few Other Poems*** is a collection of poems by William Wordsworth and Samuel Taylor Coleridge, first published in 1798 and generally considered to have marked the beginning of the English Romantic movement in literature.<sup>[1]</sup> The immediate effect on critics was modest, but it became and remains a landmark, changing the course of English literature and poetry.

***Frost at Midnight*** is a poem by Samuel Taylor Coleridge, written in February 1798. Part of the conversation poems, the poem discusses Coleridge's childhood experience in a negative manner and emphasizes the need to be raised in the countryside. The poem expresses hope that Coleridge's son, Hartley, would be able to experience a childhood that his father could not and become a true "child of nature"

***Dejection: An Ode*** is a poem written to Sara Hutchinson, a woman who was not his wife, and discusses his feelings of love for her. The various versions of the poem describe Coleridge's inability to write poetry and living in a state of paralysis, but published editions remove his personal feelings and mention of Hutchinson. *Kubla Khan* theme is the interaction between man and nature is a major theme for Coleridge. It's painted all over "Kubla Khan," as we go from the

dome to the river, and then from the gardens to the sea.

*Christabel* is a long narrative poem. It is the story of *Christabel* concerns a central female character of the same name and her encounter with a stranger called Geraldine, who claims to have been abducted from her home by a band of rough men.

*Biographia Literaria*, or in full *Biographia Literaria; or Biographical Sketches of My Literary Life and Opinions*, is an autobiography in discourse by Samuel Taylor Coleridge, which he published in 1817, in two volumes. The work is long and seemingly loosely structured, and although there are autobiographical elements, it is not a straightforward or linear autobiography. Instead, it is meditative.

Coleridge's legacy has been tainted with accusations of plagiarism, both in his poetry and critical essays; he had a propensity for leaving projects unfinished and suffered from large debts. But, such was the originality of his early work, that his place and influence within the Romantic period is clear.

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## GEORGE GORDON BYRON

**George Gordon Byron, 6th Baron Byron**, FRS (22 January 1788 – 19 April 1824), commonly known simply as **Lord Byron**, was an English poet, peer, politician, and a leading figure in the Romantic movement. He is regarded as one of the greatest British poets<sup>[1]</sup> and remains widely read and influential. Among his best-known works are the lengthy narrative poems, *Don Juan* and *Childe Harold's Pilgrimage*, and the short lyric poem, "She Walks in Beauty". Many of his poems are *autobiographic* in nature and much of his work is pervaded by the *Byronic hero*, an *idealised but flawed character* capable of great passion and talent but rebellious, arrogant and self-destructive. He travelled extensively across Europe, especially in Italy, where he lived for seven years in Venice, Ravenna and Pisa, where he had a chance to frequent his friend the poet

Percy Bysshe Shelley.

Often described as the most flamboyant and notorious of the major Romantics, Byron was both celebrated and castigated in life for his aristocratic excesses, including huge debts, numerous love affairs – with men as well as women, as well as rumours of a scandalous liaison with his half- sister – and self-imposed exile. In his later works, he was deeply inspired by the poetry of P.B Shelly, another Romantic poet. Byron lived a short life, yet, a life filled with adventures and passions.

*Mazeppa* , the poem relates a legend from his early life according to which he had a love affair with Countess Theresa while serving as a page at the court of King John II Casimir Vasa. The Count, on discovering the affair, punishes Mazeppa by tying him naked to a wild horse and setting the horse loose. Byron mostly describes the traumatic journey of Mazeppa while being tied to the horse.

*Giaour* is an offensive Turkish word for infidel or non-believer. Byron's narrative poem tells a fragment of a Turkish tale through three narrators with different points of view. The so-called character, the giaour, loved a woman named Leila. However, her master Hassan has her drowned after learning that she has been unfaithful to him with his enemy. The giaour is filled with anger and kills Hassan in an act of vengeance. He is then remorseful and enters a monastery. The poem is known for contrasting Christian and Muslim perceptions of love, sex, death and the afterlife through its use of three narrators.

*So We'll Go No More A-Roving* is one of the shortest compositions of Lord Byron, this poem consists of *three stanzas, each of four lines*. It was written by Byron at the age of 29 and included in a letter to his friend *Thomas Moore*. The poem was published in 1830, *six years after the death of Byron*. Lord Byron was notorious for living his life indulgently with numerous love affairs and aristocratic excesses. *So We'll Go No More A-Roving* is interpreted as a poem in which he describes *his tiredness from his indulgent lifestyle* despite its attraction and his nature.

*Childe Harold's Pilgrimage* is the long narrative poem in four cantos. *Childe* is a title from medieval times, designating a young noble who is not yet knighted. The poem describes the travels and reflections of a world-weary young man and is renowned for depicting, with unprecedented frankness, the disparity between romantic ideals and the realities of the world. *Childe Harold's Pilgrimage* is also noted for being the first work to depict the Byronic hero, one of the most potent and relevant character archetypes in western literature. *Childe Harold's Pilgrimage* is one of the most famous works of Lord Byron and it was on publication of its first two cantos that Byron first gained public attention and acclaim.

The most famous short poem of Lord Byron, *She Walks in Beauty* consists of three stanzas of six lines. The poem celebrates the external appearance as well as inner beauty of a woman by whom the poet is captivated. The speaker starts by admiring the harmony of the woman's external appearance before he suggests that her perfect looks are a reflection of her inner goodness.

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## P.B. SHELLEY

**Percy Bysshe Shelley** (1792 - 1822) was one of the major English Romantic poets, and is regarded by some as among the finest lyric poets in the English language, and one of the most influential. A radical in his poetry as well as in his political and social views, Shelley did not see fame during his lifetime, but recognition for his poetry grew steadily following his death. Shelley was a key member of a close circle of visionary poets and writers that included Lord Byron, Leigh Hunt, Thomas Love Peacock, and his own second wife, Mary Shelley, the author of *Frankenstein*.

Shelley is perhaps best known for classic poems such as *Ozymandias*, *Ode to the West Wind*, *To a Skylark*, *Music*, *When Soft Voices Die*, *The Cloud* and *The Masque of Anarchy*. His other major works include a groundbreaking verse drama *The Cenci* (1819) and long, visionary poems such as *Queen Mab*, *The Revolt of Islam*, *Adonais*, *Prometheus Unbound* (1820)—widely considered to be

his masterpiece—*Hellas: A Lyrical Drama* (1821), and his final, unfinished work, *The Triumph of Life* (1822).

Shelley became a lodestone to the subsequent three or four generations of poets, including important Victorian and Pre-Raphaelite poets such as Robert Browning and Dante Gabriel Rossetti. He was admired by Oscar Wilde, Thomas Hardy, George Bernard Shaw, Leo Tolstoy, Bertrand Russell, W. B. Yeats, and Isadora Duncan. Henry David Thoreau's *Civil Disobedience* was apparently influenced by Shelley's writings and theories on non-violence in protest and political action. Shelley's popularity and influence has continued to grow in contemporary poetry circles.

Shelley (1792-1822) wrote a considerable amount of poetry in his short life, as well as penning pamphlets such as *The Necessity of Atheism* (which got him expelled from Oxford) and 'A Defence of Poetry' (which contains his famous declaration that 'poets are the unacknowledged legislators of the world'). But which are Shelley's very best poems.

*Ozymandias*- *The speaker recalls having met a traveler "from an antique land," who told him a story about the ruins of a statue in the desert of his native country. Ozymandias" is a sonnet, a fourteen-line poem metered in iambic pentameter. 'Adonais'*. Shelley wrote this poem in 1821 as an elegy on the death of his friend and fellow Romantic poet, John Keats, who had died in Rome of tuberculosis, aged just 25. The poem is a pastoral elegy in the vein of John Milton's *Lycidas*, and uses the nine-line stanza form known as the Spenserian stanza, borrowed from Edmund Spenser's *The Faerie Queene*. Just over a year later, Shelley himself would be dead – when he drowned, he had a volume of Keats's poems with him.

Love for Nature is one of the prerequisites of all the Romantics and Shelley is no exception. Love for Nature is one of the key-notes of his poetry. His poetry abounds in Nature imagery. 'On Love' reflects colourful Nature imagery and glorification of Nature. He shows fruition and fulfillment in his poems. Other poems e.g. 'A Dream of the Unknown', 'Ode to the Westwind', 'The Cloud', 'To Skylark', 'To the Moon', etc. are remarkable poems of Nature in which we find a profusion of Nature. Time and again, Shelley's Nature description has a touch of optimism having

all the sufferings, tortures, miseries of the world. Shelley loved the indefinite and the changeful in Nature. He presents the changing and indefinite moods of Nature e.g. clouds, wind, lightening etc. 'Ode to the Westwind' reflects this particular trend of Shelley, wherein, he shows the West Wind driving the dead leaves, scattering the living seeds, awakening the Mediterranean and making the sea-plants feel its force. In "*Ode to the Westwind*", he hopes for the best and is confident that "If Winter comes, can spring be far behind?" His nature treatment is multidimensional; scientific, philosophic, intellectual, mythical and of course human. He is a marvelous poet of Nature.

Like Wordsworth, Shelley believes that Nature exercises a healing influence on man's personality. He finds solace and comfort in Nature and feels its soothing influence on his heart.

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## JOHN KEATS

Wordsworth was the founder of the Romantic Movement. Romantic poets can be divided into two groups – Old Romantics and Young Romantics. In old Romantics there are Wordsworth, Coleridge and Scott. Wordsworth, Coleridge and Scott belong to Early Romantics, whereas Keats, Shelley, and Byron constitute the Later Romantics. Among all the Romantics, Keats was the last to born and first to die. But quite surprisingly he achieved in 26 years what other could not get ever the whole of their life. Keats is also said to be the most romantic of all the romantics. He was greatly inspired by Greek art, culture and mythology. He was also inspired by Elizabethan poets especially Spenser. Keats was a pure poet as he does not project any theory in his poetry. Keats believes in Negative Capability – the capability of being impersonal. Keats does not involve his personal feelings in his poetry. He writes poetry only for pleasure but Shelley lacks Negative Capability. Shelley lends his personal sorrow and feeling in his poetry. He could not be impersonal and writes about his feelings and sorrows.

- A Thing Of Beauty (Endymion)

- Bright Star
- When I Have Fears
- Ode To A Nightingale
- Ode To Autumn
- Ode On A Grecian Urn
- His Last Sonnet
- La Belle Dame sans Merci: A Ballad

Keats was a nature poet and also Romantic poet. Nature was one of the greatest sources of inspiration for Keats. Keats believed that ‘heard melodies are sweet, □ but those unheard are sweeter’, I.e.: beauty imagined is superior beauty perceived, since the senses are more limited than the imagination and its creative power. Nature was a major theme among the □ Romantics, but Keats turned natural objects in to poetic image.

*Ode to a Nightingale* describes the experiences a type of death but does not actually die. Instead, the songbird is capable of living through its song, which is a fate that humans cannot expect. The poem ends with an acceptance that pleasure cannot last and that death is an inevitable part of life. "*To Autumn*" describes, in its three stanzas, three different aspects of the season: its fruitfulness, its labour and its ultimate decline. Through the stanzas there is a progression from early autumn to mid autumn and then to the heralding of winter. Parallel to this, the poem depicts the day turning from morning to afternoon and into dusk.

Keats writes about nature in two ways: 1.He tells us about the beauty in nature. 2. He tells us about the joy and relief nature can bring. In his poetry Keats's love for nature is purely sensuous and he loves the beautiful sights and scenes of nature for their own sake. He does not try to find any hidden meaning in nature and he describes it as he sees it. Keats found in nature endless sources of poetic inspiration, and he described the natural world with precision and care. In the "*Ode to nightingale*", Nightingale and he becomes one, his soul sings in the bird which is the symbols of joy. *The Autumn* It is the final work in the group of poems of Keats 1819 odes. It is a transitional poem that celebrates not only the richness and poignancy of the season but

also the beauty of Decay. He was inspired to write the poem following a walk near Winchester one autumnal evening. The work marks the end of his poetic career as he needed to earn money and could no longer devote himself to the lifestyle of a poet.

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## CHARLES LAMB

**Charles Lamb** (February 10, 1775 — December 27, 1834) was an English poet, fiction writer, literary critic, and essayist of the English Romantic period. A close contemporary and personal friend of Samuel Taylor Coleridge and William Wordsworth, Charles Lamb was considered a critical member of the Lake Poets, but unlike Wordsworth and Coleridge his poetry never achieved lasting fame. Eventually, Lamb redirected his energies away from verse to prose, and in the process he became one of the most valuable and enduring essayists of the Romantic period. He is best known for his *Essays of Elia* and for the children's book *Tales from Shakespeare*, co-authored with his sister, Mary Lamb.

As an essayist, Lamb is best known for two collections: The first, *Essays of Elia* consists of a series of deeply autobiographical memoirs and essays written from the pseudonymous perspective of "Elia" and originally published as a serial for *London Magazine*. *Essays of Elia* are acclaimed as some of the finest early examples of the essay form in English, as well as exemplary masterpieces of English prose. The second work, *Tales from Shakespeare*, is perhaps more unusual: commissioned as a retelling of Shakespeare's plays for children, Lamb retold Shakespeare's works while interspersing his own critical commentary on the plays. Some of Lamb's criticisms would go on to influence the later development of nineteenth-century Shakespearian criticism.

On the whole, Lamb, while a minor poet of the Romantic period, is one of its most invaluable authors. His essays read like the finest journalism, and provide readers with a panoramic view

of the life and literary currents of one of the most dramatic periods in English literary history

### **Selected works**

- *Blank Verse*, poetry, 1798
- *Pride's Cure*, poetry, 1802
- *Tales from Shakespeare*, 1807
- *The Adventures Of Ulysses*, 1808
- *Specimens of English Dramatic poets who lived about the time of Shakespeare*, 1808
- *On The Tragedies Of Shakespeare*, 1811
- *Essays Of Elia*, 1823
- *The Last Essays Of Elia*, 1833

The style of Charles Lamb's essays is gently, old-fashioned and irresistibly attractive specially found of old writers. He borrowed unconsciously from the early English dramatists. Burton's 'Anatomy of Melancholy' and Browne's 'Religio Medici' helped him too much to form this style. Montague's writings impressed him the most. Moreover, Lamb liked to read Greek art and literature. The Essays of Elia are of various kinds. They include literary appreciation, character- sketches, fantasies, personal experiences, reminiscences etc. But they all had the similarity regarding the author's personal reaction. Lamb loved to mystify his readers. This mystification made his language subtle and complicated. Lamb's style consists of many styles- it is a chemical, not a mechanical mixture. It is his own style. He frequently imitates the Elizabethan writers. He uses Latin words in his essays regularly He use words which are now old-fashioned. Humour is very nearly related to pathos which is beautifully expressed in 'Dream children'.

## JANE AUSTEN

**Jane Austen**, (born December 16, 1775, Steventon, Hampshire, England—died July 18, 1817, Winchester, Hampshire), English writer who first gave the novel its distinctly modern character through her treatment of ordinary people in everyday life. She was the second daughter and seventh child in a family of eight—six boys and two girls. Her closest companion throughout her life was her elder sister, Cassandra; neither Jane nor Cassandra married. Their father was a scholar who encouraged the love of learning in his children. She published four novels during her lifetime: *Sense and Sensibility* (1811), *Pride and Prejudice* (1813), *Mansfield Park* (1814), and *Emma* (1815). In these and in *Persuasion* and *Northanger Abbey* (published together posthumously, 1817), she vividly depicted English middle-class life during the early 19th century. Her novels defined the era's novel of manners, but they also became timeless classics that remained critical and popular successes two centuries after her death.

### ***Sense and Sensibility* (1811)**

Austen's first published novel, *Sense and Sensibility* is a wonderfully entertaining tale of flirtation and folly that revolves around two starkly different sisters, Elinor and Marianne Dashwood. While Elinor is thoughtful, considerate, and calm, her younger sister is emotional and wildly romantic. Both are looking for a husband, but neither Elinor's reason nor Marianne's passion can lead them to perfect happiness—as Marianne falls for an unscrupulous rascal and Elinor becomes attached to a man who's already engaged.

### ***Pride and Prejudice* (1813)**

'It is a truth universally acknowledged, that a single man in possession of a good fortune must be in want of a wife.' Thus memorably begins Jane Austen's *Pride and Prejudice*, one of the world's most popular novels. *Pride and Prejudice* – Austen's own 'darling child' – tells the story of fiercely independent Elizabeth Bennet, one of five sisters who must marry rich, as she confounds the arrogant, wealthy Mr. Darcy. What ensues is one of the most delightful and engrossingly readable

courtships known to literature, written by a precocious Austen when she was just twenty-one years old.

### ***Mansfield Park* (1814)**

From its sharply satiric opening sentence, *Mansfield Park* deals with money and marriage, and how strongly they affect each other. The novel tells the story of Fanny Price starting when her overburdened family sends her at age 10 to live in the household of her wealthy aunt and uncle, through to her marriage.

### ***Emma* (1816)**

Austen explores the concerns and difficulties of genteel women living in England. Before she began the novel, Austen wrote, "I am going to take a heroine whom no one but myself will much like." <sup>1</sup>In the first sentence, she introduces the title character as "Emma Woodhouse, handsome, clever, and rich." Emma is spoiled, headstrong, and self-satisfied; she greatly overestimates her own matchmaking abilities; she is blind to the dangers of meddling in other people's lives; and her imagination and perceptions often lead her astray.

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**SCHOOL OF SCIENCE & HUMANITIES**

**DEPARTMENT OF ENGLISH**

**UNIT 4 – History of English Literature – SHS1105**

# THE VICTORIAN AGE

## ALFRED TENNYSON

Alfred Lord Tennyson was the Poet Laureate for much of the last half of the 19th century. Today, he is one of the most well known poets of all time, and one of the most quoted of writers. Alfred, Lord Tennyson was born on August 6, 1809, in the village of Somersby, Lincolnshire, England. His father was an educated man, but was relatively poor. As Tennyson's father grew older, he became more passionate and melancholy (sad). Tennyson began writing poetry as a child. At twelve he wrote a six- thousand-line epic.

- *Break, Break, Break*
- *The Brook*
- *The Charge of the Light Brigade Come Down, O Maid*
- *Crossing the Bar*
- *In Memoriam*
- *The Miller's Daughter Milton*
- *Song from Maud St. Agnes' Eve Summer Night*

Tennyson attended Trinity College, Cambridge where he became friends with a historian, Henry Hallam. He also joined a club of intellectuals, called 'The Apostles'. In 1827, Tennyson and his brother published a book of poems. He received a gold medal at university for one of his poems and published his first solo collection of poems in 1830. In 1833, he published a second volume of poetry, which included a well known work, *The Lady of Shalott*. However, Tennyson did not publish again for a decade, because of the book's criticism. Tennyson's poetry covered such diverse subjects as Medieval legends, historical events, everyday life and nature. He has been described as being the saddest of English poets.

*In Memoriam* is a series of 129 lyrics (short poems) of varying length, all composed in the same

form. The lyrics may be read individually, rather like the entries in a journal, but the poem has an overall organization. It moves from grief through acceptance to joy. The poem combines private feeling with a confusion over the future of Christianity, which was a feeling many of Tennyson's age group shared.

Arthur Hallam's was the most important of these friendships. Hallam, another precociously brilliant Victorian young man like Robert Browning, John Stuart Mill, and Matthew Arnold, was uniformly recognized by his contemporaries (including William Gladstone, his best friend at Eton) as having unusual promise. He and Tennyson knew each other only four years, but their intense friendship had major influence on the poet. On a visit to Somersby, Hallam met and later became engaged to Emily Tennyson, and the two friends looked forward to a life-long companionship. Hallam's death from illness in 1833 (he was only 22) shocked Tennyson profoundly, and his grief led to most of his best poetry, including *In Memoriam*, "The Passing of Arthur," "Ulysses," and "Tithonus."

*The Idylls of the King* - is a cycle of twelve narrative poems which retells the legend of King Arthur, his knights, his love for Guinevere and her tragic betrayal of him, and the rise and fall of Arthur's kingdom.

Although Tennyson was now settled and prosperous, his next book, *Maud and Other Poems* (1855), is notable for another study in sadness. Tennyson described the poem as a "little Hamlet," a reference to the play written by William Shakespeare (1564–1616). It almost certainly expresses some of the author's youthful anxieties as recollected in his middle age. Of the other poems in the 1855 volume, the best-known are "*The Charge of the Light Brigade*" and "*The Ode on the Death of the Duke of Wellington*," perhaps the greatest of the poems written by Tennyson in his capacity as poet laureate.

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## ROBERT BROWNING

Robert Browning (7 May 1812 – 12 December 1889) was an English poet and playwright whose mastery of the dramatic monologue made him one of the foremost Victorian poets. His father was a well-paid clerk for the Bank of England, earning about £150 per year. Given Browning's literary upbringing, it was natural for him not to feel satisfied by the private schools where he was sent to study. By twelve, Browning had written a book of poetry which he later destroyed when no publisher could be found. After being at one or two private schools, and showing an insuperable dislike of school life, he was educated at home by a tutor via the resources of his father's extensive library. By the age of fourteen he was fluent in French, Greek, Italian and Latin. He became a great admirer of the Romantic poets, especially Shelley. Following the precedent of Shelley, Browning became an atheist and vegetarian. At the age of sixteen, he studied Greek at University College London but left after his first year. His parents' staunch evangelical faith prevented his studying at either Oxford or Cambridge University, both then open only to members of the Church of England. He had inherited substantial musical ability through his mother, and composed arrangements of various songs. He refused a formal career and ignored his parents' remonstrations, dedicating himself to poetry. He stayed at home until the age of 34, financially dependent on his family until his marriage. His father sponsored the publication of his son's poems.

He is widely recognized as a master of dramatic monologue and psychological portraiture. Browning is perhaps best-known for a poem he didn't value highly, *The Pied Piper of Hamelin*, a children's poem that is quite different from his other work. He is also known for his long form blank poem *The Ring and the Book*, the story of a Roman murder trial in 12 books. Browning was married to the poet Elizabeth Barrett Browning.

Browning's early career began promisingly, but was not a success. The long poem *Pauline* brought him to the attention of Dante Gabriel Rossetti, and was followed by *Paracelsus*, which was praised by William Wordsworth and Charles Dickens. *Dramatic monologue*: He experimented with and perfected this form in the long poem *Pippa Passes* (1841) and two

collections of shorter poems, *Dramatic Lyrics* (1842) and *Dramatic Romances and Lyrics* (1845). Usually written in blank verse (unrhymed verse), the dramatic monologue is the speech of a single character in a moment of some dramatic significance. In the course of his monologue, the speaker reveals what this situation is, as well as the setting of the situation and to whom he is speaking. Of greatest interest, however, is what he reveals about his own motives and personality. Often the speaker, while trying to justify himself to his listeners, actually reveals the faults of his character to the reader. Such works as "*My Last Duchess*," "*Soliloquy of the Spanish Cloister*," and "*The Bishop Orders His Tomb*" are poems in which the reader is given the pleasure of discovering more about the speaker than he understands about himself.

The collection *Dramatis Personae* and the book-length epic poem *The Ring and the Book* followed, and made him a leading British poet. *The Ring and the Book* was his most ambitious project and is arguably his greatest work; it has been called a *tour de force* of dramatic poetry. The book tells the story of a murder trial in Rome in 1698, whereby an poor nobleman, Count Guido Franceschini, is found guilty of the murders of his young wife Pompilia and her parents, having suspected his wife was having an affair with a young cleric, Giuseppe Caponsacchi. Having been found guilty despite his protests and sentenced to death.

*Home-Thoughts, from Abroad*, In this highly Romantic, charming poem, the speaker yearns to be in England as springtime arrives. He imagines how those living there are lucky enough to see the trees begin to sprout as the birds begin to sing. *My Last Duchess* is all about power: the political and social power wielded by the speaker (the Duke) and his attempt to control the domestic sphere (his marriage) in the same way that he rules his lands. *The Pied Piper of Hamelin*, the poem describes a piper, dressed in multicolored clothing, who was a rat-catcher hired by the town to trap rats away with his magic pipe. When the citizens refuse to pay for this service, he reacts by using his instrument's magical power on their children, leading them away as he had the rats.

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## MATTHEW ARNOLD

Matthew Arnold (24 December 1822 – 15 April 1888) was a British poet and cultural critic who worked as an inspector of schools. He was the son of Thomas Arnold, the famed headmaster of Rugby School. Arnold was elected Professor of Poetry at Oxford in 1857. He was the first to deliver his lectures in English rather than Latin.

For 35 years Arnold served as inspector; under his supervision, the school system of England was extensively revised and improved. His first volume of poetry *The Strayed Reveller and Other Poems* (1848) and *Empedocles on Etna and Other Poems* (1853) established his poetic reputation. Though “*Dover Beach*” was published in 1867, most of his major poetry was composed by the time he was thirty.

In 1865, Arnold published *Essays in Criticism: First Series*. *Essays in Criticism*. In 1866, he published *Thyrsis* to commemorate his friend, the poet Arthur Hugh Clough, who had died in November 1861 aged only 42. *Culture and Anarchy*, Arnold's major work in social criticism (and one of the few pieces of his prose work currently in print) was published in 1869. *Literature and Dogma*, Arnold's major work in religious criticism appeared in 1873. In 1883 and 1884, Arnold toured the United States and Canada delivering lectures on education, democracy and Ralph Waldo Emerson. He was elected a Foreign Honorary Member of the American Academy of Arts and Sciences in 1883.

Arnold is sometimes called the third great Victorian poet, along with Alfred, Lord Tennyson and Robert Browning. Sir Edmund Chambers noted, however, that "in a comparison between the best works of Matthew Arnold and that of his six greatest contemporaries... the proportion of work which endures is greater in the case of Matthew Arnold than in any one of them."

The mood of Arnold's poetry tends to be of nostalgic reflection, and he is restrained in expressing emotion. He felt that poetry should be the 'criticism of life' and express a philosophy. Arnold's philosophy is that true happiness comes from within, and that people should seek within themselves for good, while being resigned in acceptance of outward things and avoiding the pointless turmoil of the world. However, he argues that we should not live in the belief that

we shall one day inherit eternal bliss. If we are not happy on earth, we should moderate our desires rather than live in dreams of something that may never be attained. This philosophy is clearly expressed in the poem as "Dover Beach".

He discusses in detail about the various aspects of culture in his essay *Sweetness and Light* included in the collection *Culture and Anarchy*. Arnold begins "The Scholar Gipsy" in pastoral mode, invoking a shepherd and describing the beauties of a rural scene, with Oxford in the distance. *Sohrab and Rustum: An Episode* is a narrative poem with strong tragic themes first published in 1853 by Matthew Arnold.<sup>[1]</sup> The poem retells a famous episode from Ferdowsi's Persian epic *Shahnameh* relating how the great warrior Rustum unknowingly slew his long-lost son Sohrab in single combat. In *Sohrab and Rustum*, Arnold attempted to imitate the "grandeur and rapidity" of Homer's style which he was to discuss in his lectures *On Translating Homer* (1861). The poem consists of 892 lines of blank verse.

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## CHARLES DICKENS

Famed British author Charles Dickens was born Charles John Huffam Dickens on February 7, 1812, in Portsmouth, on the southern coast of England. He was the second of eight children. His father, John Dickens, was a marine clerk who dreamed of striking it rich. Charles Dickens' mother, Elizabeth Barrow, aspired to be a teacher and school director. Despite his parents' best efforts, the family remained poor. In 1822, the Dickens family moved to Camden Town, a poor neighborhood in London. By then the family's financial situation had grown dire, as John Dickens had a dangerous habit of living beyond the family's means. Eventually, John was sent to prison for debt in 1824, when Charles was just 12 years old. Following his father's imprisonment, Charles Dickens was forced to leave school to work at a boot-blackening factory alongside the River Thames.

Much to his relief, Dickens was permitted to go back to school when his father received a family inheritance and used it to pay off his debts. But when Dickens was 15, his education was pulled out from under him once again. In 1827, he had to drop out of school and work as

an office boy to contribute to his family's income. As it turned out, the job became an early launching point for his writing career. Within a year of being hired, Dickens began freelance reporting at the law courts of London. Just a few years later, he was reporting for two major London newspapers. In 1833, he began submitting sketches to various magazines and newspapers under the pseudonym "Boz." In 1836, his clippings were published in his first book, *Sketches by Boz*. Dickens' first success caught the eye of Catherine Hogarth, whom he soon married.

Around this time, Dickens had also become publisher of a magazine called *Bentley's Miscellany*. In it he started publishing his first novel, *Oliver Twist*, which follows the life of an orphan living in the streets. The story was inspired by how Dickens felt as an impoverished child forced to get by on his wits and earn his own keep. He also published *The Life and Adventures of Nicholas Nickleby*, *The Old Curiosity Shop* and *Barnaby Rudge*.

In 1843, Dickens wrote his novel *The Life and Adventures of Martin Chuzzlewit*, a story about a man's struggle to survive on the ruthless American. From 1849 to 1850, Dickens worked on *David Copperfield*, the first work of its kind; no one had ever written a novel that simply followed a character through his everyday life. In writing it, Dickens tapped into his own personal experiences, from his difficult childhood to his work as a journalist. His novels also began to express a darkened worldview. In *Bleak House*, he deals with the hypocrisy of British society. It was considered his most complex novel to date. *Great Expectations* (1860-1861), focuses on the protagonist's lifelong journey of moral development. It is widely considered his greatest literary accomplishment. *Hard Times* surveys English society and satirises the social and economic conditions of the era. The novel follows a classical tripartite structure, and the titles of each book are related to *Galatians* 6:7, "For whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap." Book I is entitled "Sowing", Book II is entitled "Reaping", and the third is "Garnering."

Dickens loved words, and liked to produce a 'pretty piece of writing' in different styles. He included lots of powerful adjectives, and is famous for his use of metaphors and similes. His descriptions often present people, their surroundings, and even the weather, in ways which reinforce each other, so that a certain 'feel' is built up through the passage.

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## WILLIAM THACKERAY

William Makepeace Thackeray was a 19th-century novelist was born in Calcutta, India, the only son of British parents, but he was sent to England for his education at the age of five. In spite of the early death of his father and the separation from his mother, Thackeray's young life was full of promise; he was the sole heir to his father's fortune and studied for a period at Cambridge. His writing was filled with wit, humor, satire, and pathos. It is impossible to list here his many works of literature. The best known are *The Memoirs of Barry Lyndon, Esq.* (1844), *Vanity Fair* (1847-48), *Pendennis* (1848-50) *The History of Henry Esmond, Esq.* (1852), *The Newcomers* (1853-55), and *The Virginians* (1857-59).

Thackeray drew on his own experiences for his writing. He had a great weakness for gambling, a great desire for worldly success, and over his life hung the tragic illness of his wife ***Vanity Fair*** is an English novel by William Makepeace Thackeray which follows the lives of Becky Sharp and Emmy Sedley amid their friends and families during and after the Napoleonic Wars. It was first published as a 19-volume monthly serial from 1847 to 1848, carrying the subtitle ***Pen and Pencil Sketches of English Society***, reflecting both its satirisation of early 19th-century British society. The serial was a popular and critical success; the novel is now considered a classic and has inspired several film adaptations. In 2003, *Vanity Fair* was listed at No. 122 on the BBC's The Big Read poll of the UK's best-loved books.

***The Book of Snobs*** is also a collection of satirical works. While the word 'snob' had been in use since the end of the 18th century Thackeray's adoption of the term to refer to people who look down on others who are "socially inferior" quickly gained popularity.

*The History of Pendennis* (1848–50), which is partly fictionalized autobiography. In it, Thackeray traces the youthful career of Arthur Pendennis—his first love affair, his experiences at “Oxbridge University,” his working as a London journalist, and so on—achieving a convincing portrait of a much-tempted young man. Thackeray returned to the contemporary scene in his novel *The Newcomes* (1853–55). This work is essentially a detailed study of

prosperous middle-class society and is centred upon the family of the title. Col. Thomas Newcome returns to London from India to be with his son Clive.

In his own time Thackeray was regarded as the only possible rival to Dickens. His pictures of contemporary life were obviously real and were accepted as such by the middle classes.

*The Virginians* (1857–59), Thackeray's next novel, is set partly in America and partly in England in the latter half of the 18th century and is concerned mostly with the variations in the lives of two brothers, George and Henry Warrington, who are the grandsons of Henry Esmond, the hero of his earlier novel. Thackeray wrote two other serial novels, *Lovel the Widower* (1860) and *The Adventures of Philip* (1861–62). He died after having begun writing the novel *Denis Duval*.

Thackeray's writing style was formed in opposition to Dickens's accusation of social evils, and against the artificial style and sentimentality (emotionalism) of life and moral (having to do with right and wrong) values of the popular historical romances. Although critical of society, Thackeray remained basically conservative (a person who prefers to preserve existing social and political situations without change). He was one of the first English writers of the time to portray the commonplace with greater realism.

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## GEORGE ELIOT

**Mary Anne Evans** (22 November 1819 – 22 December 1880) IS known by her pen name George Eliot, was an English novelist, poet, journalist, translator and one of the leading writers of the Victorian era.

George Eliot(1819-1880), is one of the most highly praised novelists in the literary world in the 19th century because of her unique position in English literature. She wrote a large quantity of works of the highest merit and of far-reaching influence. Her attitude towards feminism has aroused wide attention and has been discussed hotly among feminist critics in different countries.

She used a male pen name, she said, to ensure that her works would be taken seriously. Female authors were published under their own names during Eliot's life, but she wanted to escape the stereotype of women's writing only lighthearted romances. An additional factor in her use of a pen name may have been a desire to shield her private life from public scrutiny and to prevent scandals attending her relationship with the married George Henry Lewes, with whom she lived for over 20 years.

*Scenes of Clerical Life* was published under the pen name of George Eliot. She was 38. Her first novel, *Adam Bede*, "a country story full of the breath of cows and the scent of hay", for which she drew on her childhood memories, was published the following year. The central character was based on her father. The book attracted tremendous interest and speculation about the real identity of its author. Some readers, her editor and her brother Isaac, recognized characters and background detail, but kept the secret.

The young Evans was obviously intelligent, a voracious reader. Because she was not considered physically beautiful, Evans was thus not thought to have much chance of marriage, and because of her intelligence, her father invested in an education not often afforded women. After age sixteen, Evans had little formal education. Thanks to her father's important role on the estate, she was allowed access to the library of Arbury Hall, which greatly aided her self-education and breadth of learning. Her classical education left its mark; Christopher Stray has observed that "George Eliot's novels draw heavily on Greek literature, and her themes are often influenced by Greek tragedy".

***Romola*** (1862–63) is a historical novel by George Eliot set in the fifteenth century, and is "a deep study of life in the city of Florence from an intellectual, artistic, religious, and social point of view"

***Middlemarch*** comprises of several distinct (though intersecting) stories and a large cast of characters. Significant themes include the status of women, the nature of marriage, idealism, self-interest, religion, hypocrisy, political reform, and education. Most characters in *Middlemarch* marry for love rather than obligation, yet marriage still appears negative and unromantic. Marriage and the pursuit of it are central concerns in *Middlemarch*, but unlike in many novels of the time, marriage is not considered the ultimate source of happiness.

George Eliot's fiction falls into two parts. To the first one belong *Scenes of Clerical Life*, *Adam Bede*, *The Mill on the Floss*, & *Silas Marner*; all published between 1868 and 1861. The second part is her more ambitious period with novels like *Romola*, *Felix Holt*, *the Radical*, *Middlemarch*, & *Daniel Deronda*. Many critics have commented upon the difference between the pastoral charm of her first three novels and the philosophical weight of her last three.

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## THOMAS HARDY

**Thomas Hardy**, OM (2 June 1840 – 11 January 1928) was an English novelist and poet. While Hardy wrote poetry throughout his life and regarded himself primarily as a poet, his first collection was not published until 1898. Initially, therefore, he gained fame as the author of such novels as *Far from the Madding Crowd* (1874), *The Mayor of Casterbridge* (1886), *Tess of the d'Urbervilles* (1891), and *Jude the Obscure* (1895). During his lifetime, Hardy's poetry was acclaimed by younger poets (particularly the Georgians) who viewed him as a mentor. After his death his poems were lauded by Ezra Pound, W. H. Auden and Philip Larkin.

Hardy's first novel, *The Poor Man and the Lady*, finished by 1867, failed to find a publisher. He then showed it to his mentor and friend, the Victorian poet and novelist, George Meredith, who felt that *The Poor Man and the Lady* would be too politically controversial and might damage Hardy's ability to publish in the future. So Hardy followed his advice and he did not try further to publish it. He subsequently destroyed the manuscript, but used some of the ideas in his later work. After he abandoned his first novel, Hardy wrote two new ones that he hoped would have more commercial appeal, *Desperate Remedies* (1871) and *Under the Greenwood Tree* (1872), both of which were published anonymously; it was while working on the latter that he met Emma Gifford, who would become his wife. He also wrote *The Mayor of Casterbridge* (1886), *The Woodlanders* (1887), and *Tess of the d'Urbervilles* (1891).

In his next novel *Far from the Madding Crowd* (1874), Hardy first introduced the idea of calling the region in the west of England, where his novels are set Wessex. *Far from the*

*Madding Crowd* was successful enough for Hardy to give up architectural work and pursue a literary career. The novel is the first to be set in Hardy's fictional region of Wessex in rural south west England. It deals in themes of love, honour and betrayal, against a backdrop of the seemingly idyllic, but often harsh, realities of a farming community in Victorian England. It describes the farmer Bathsheba Everdene, her life and relationships—especially with her lonely neighbour William Boldwood, the faithful shepherd Gabriel Oak, and the thriftless soldier Sergeant Troy.

*Tess of the D'Urbervilles* is the world's most jacked-up novel about a girl who gets raped and impregnated by her fake cousin, buries her illegitimate baby semi-illegally, gets rejected by her new husband because she tells him she was raped, stabs the guy who raped her... and gets arrested.

Considered a Victorian realist, Hardy examines the social constraints on the lives of those living in Victorian England, and criticizes those beliefs, especially those relating to marriage, education and religion, that limited people's lives and caused unhappiness.

In 1898 Hardy published his first volume of poetry, *Wessex Poems*, a collection of poems written over 30 years.

Thomas Hardy wrote in a great variety of poetic forms including lyrics, ballads, satire, dramatic monologues, and dialogue, as well as a three-volume epic closet drama *The Dynasts*. Many of Hardy's poems deal with themes of disappointment in love and life, and "the stubbornness of fate", but the best of them present these themes with "a carefully controlled melancholic feeling". Irony is also an important element in a number of Hardy's poems, including "The Man he Killed" and "Are You Digging on My Grave"

Hardy had a pessimist view on life and love. He wrote in variety of genres, from epic drama to cheerful ballads and he use a meticulous description of events and characters that are not limited to humans, and even nature and animals play a role in his works. He use sexual images in an explicit way and the plot of his novels distinguish his modern style of writing. Many of his works are full of realism and his pessimism "describes nature with its cruelties and difficulties, but never with a sentimental approach".

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## GERALD MANLEY HOPKINS

Born at Stratford, Essex, England, on July 28, 1844, Gerard Manley Hopkins is regarded as one of the Victorian era's greatest poets. He was raised in a prosperous and artistic family. Nicknamed "Skin" at school and "Hop" among his fellow Jesuits, he rarely used his middle name "Manley," was sometimes enthusiastic, sometimes melancholy, was unknown and largely unpublished when he died, and is now recognized as a major, experimental English poet. In 1864, Hopkins first read John Henry Newman's *Apologia pro via sua*, which discussed the author's reasons for converting to Catholicism. Two years later, Newman himself received Hopkins into the Roman Catholic Church. Hopkins soon decided to become a priest himself, and in 1867 he entered a Jesuit novitiate near London. He was ordained as priest in 1877 and for the next seven years carried his duties teaching and preaching in London, Oxford, Liverpool, Glasgow, and Stonyhurst.

During the summer before Hopkins became a Jesuit novice, he burned all the poetry he had written at Highgate and Oxford and "resolved to write no more, as not belonging to my profession, unless it were by the wish of my superiors." For 7 years (1868-1875) he kept this poetic silence. But on the night of Dec. 7, 1875, a German ship, the *Deutschland*, was wrecked by a storm in the mouth of the Thames River. In 1875, Hopkins began to write again after a German ship, the *Deutschland*, was wrecked during a storm at the mouth of the Thames River. Many of the passengers, including five Franciscan nuns, died.

The language of Hopkins's poems is often striking. His imagery can be simple, as in *Heaven-Haven*, where the comparison is between a nun entering a convent and a ship entering a harbour out of a storm. It can be splendidly metaphysical and intricate, as it is in *As Kingfishers Catch Fire*, where he leaps from one image to another to show how each thing expresses its own uniqueness, and how divinity reflects itself through all of them.

After "The Wreck of the Deutschland" Hopkins turned to shorter poetry, often written in the sonnet form. Many of the best of these lyrics express Hopkins's ecstatic joy in the beauty of nature Hopkins loved nature's beauty, and described it with rare skill and vivid images. Hopkins' poetry is notable for its use of sprung rhythm (each foot having one stressed syllable followed by a varying number of unstressed ones). This utilises abrupt single stress metrical feet. He used this technique in his famous poem *The Windhover*. Hopkins also employed alliteration in many of his poems.

Hopkins spent the last five years of his life as a classics professor at University College Dublin. Hopkins' isolation in 1885 was multiple: a Jesuit distanced from his Anglican family and his homeland, an Englishman teaching in Dublin during a time of political strife, an unpublished poet striving to reconcile his artistic and religious callings. The poem "To seem the stranger" was written in Ireland between 1885-1886, and is a poem of isolation and loneliness.

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## WILLIAM BUTLER YEATS

Born in Dublin, Ireland, on June 13, 1865, William Butler Yeats was the son of a well-known Irish painter, John Butler Yeats. He spent his childhood in County Sligo, where his parents were raised, and in London. In 1867, the family moved to England to aid their father, John, to further his career as an artist. At first the Yeats children were educated at home. Their mother entertained them with stories and Irish folktales. John provided an erratic education in geography and chemistry, and took William on natural history explorations of the nearby Slough countryside. On 26 January 1877, the young poet entered the Godolphin school, which he attended for four years. He did not distinguish himself academically, and an early school report describes his performance as "only fair. Perhaps better in Latin than in any other subject. Very poor in spelling". Though he had difficulty with mathematics and languages (possibly because he was tone deaf), he was fascinated by biology and zoology. For financial reasons, the family returned to Dublin toward the end of 1880, living at first in the suburbs of Harold's Cross and later Howth. In October 1881, Yeats resumed his education at Dublin's Erasmus Smith High School. His father's studio was nearby and William spent a great deal of time there, where he met many of the city's artists and writers. During this period he started writing poetry, and, in

1885, the *Dublin University Review* published Yeats's first poems, as well as an essay entitled "The Poetry of Sir Samuel Ferguson"

He returned to Dublin at the age of fifteen to continue his education and study painting, but quickly discovered he preferred poetry. *The Isle of Innisfree* is an uninhabited island within Lough Gill, in County Sligo, Ireland, where Yeats spent his summers as a child. Yeats describes the inspiration for the poem coming from a "sudden" memory of his childhood while walking down Fleet Street in London in 1888. He has decided to make the break from modern society and all of the hectic madness it can bring and go to a place he loves, Innisfree.

In *Sailing to Byzantium*, Yeats's solution is to leave the country of the young and travel to Byzantium. In the final stanza of the poem, he declares that once he is out of his body he will never again appear in the form of a natural thing; rather, he will become a golden bird, sitting on a golden tree, singing of the past ("what is past"), the present (that which is "passing"), and the future (that which is "to come").

***The Second Coming*** The poem uses Christian imagery regarding the Second Coming allegorically to describe the atmosphere of post-war Europe. *A Prayer for My Daughter* by William Butler Yeats opens with an image of the newborn child sleeping in a cradle. A storm is raging with great fury outside his residence. A great gloom is on Yeats' mind and is consumed with anxiety as to how to protect his child from the tide of hard times ahead. The poet keeps walking and praying for the young child and as he does so he is in a state of daydream. He feels a kind of gloom and worry about the future of his daughter

Yeats is generally considered one of the twentieth century key English language poets. He was a Symbolist poet, using allusive imagery and symbolic structures throughout his career. He chose words and assembled them so that, in addition to a particular meaning, they suggest abstract thoughts that may seem more significant. Love was one of William Butler Yeats's great inspirations. It was love that kept him moving and developing. It was love that confused him and made him reflect. It was love that shattered him and made him mourn.

## GEORGE BERNARD SHAW

**George Bernard Shaw** (26 July 1856 – 2 November 1950), known at his insistence simply as **Bernard Shaw**, was an Irish playwright, critic and essayist whose influence on Western theatre, culture and politics extended from the 1880s to his death and beyond. He wrote more than sixty plays, including major works such as *Man and Superman* (1902), *Pygmalion* (1912) and *Saint Joan* (1923). With a range incorporating both contemporary satire and historical allegory, Shaw became the leading dramatist of his generation, and in 1925 was awarded the Nobel Prize in Literature.

Born in Dublin, Shaw moved to London in 1876, where he struggled to establish himself as a writer and novelist. His father, George Carr Shaw was in the wholesale grain trading business and his mother, Lucinda Elisabeth Shaw was the daughter of an impoverished landowner. A young George led a distressed childhood. His alcoholic father remained drunk most of the time. It was due to this that Shaw abstained from alcohol throughout his lifetime. During the course of schooling Shaw attended Wesleyan Connexional School, Dublin's Central Model School and Dublin English Scientific and Commercial Day School where he ended his education. He first began working as a junior clerk at the age of 15. In 1876, Shaw went to live with his mother and sister in London. He did not return to Ireland for almost 30 years.

Influenced by Henrik Ibsen, he sought to introduce a new realism into English-language drama, using his plays as vehicles to publicize his political, social and religious ideas. In 1938 he provided the screenplay for a filmed version of *Pygmalion* for which he received an Academy Award. He has regularly been rated as second only to Shakespeare among British dramatists.

### Notable works

- “Pygmalion”
- “Arms and the Man”
- “Mrs. Warren’s Profession”
- “Saint Joan”
- “Caesar and Cleopatra”

- “Heartbreak House”
- “Major Barbara”
- “Man and Superman”
- “The Doctor’s Dilemma”

*Pygmalion* explores how social identity is formed not only through patterns of speech, but also through one's general appearance. Much like speech, one's physical appearance signals social class. In the opening scene, as people from different walks of life are forced to take shelter under the same entrance, characters' social class is visible through their clothing: the poor flower-girl (later revealed to be Eliza) and the gentleman, for example, easily know each other's status through their different attire. As Pickering comments in Act Four, many noble people believe that one's appearance displays one's natural identity and character, thinking that "style comes by nature to people in their position." Somewhat similarly, at the end of the play, Higgins tells Eliza that he cannot change his nature.

*Arms and the Man* is most obviously an attack on the false ideals of warfare and the soldier's profession. Late nineteenth century British society, especially the aristocratic element, tended to see war as noble and soldiers as brave, courageous, fearing nothing—resolved to conquer or die.

*The Doctor's Dilemma* is a play by George Bernard Shaw first staged in 1906. It is a problem play about the moral dilemmas created by limited medical resources, and the conflicts between the demands of private medicine as a business and a vocation.

*Mrs. Warren's Profession* is about a former prostitute, now a madam (brothel proprietor), who attempts to come to terms with her disapproving daughter. It is a problem play, offering social commentary to illustrate Shaw's belief that the act of prostitution was not caused by moral failure but by economic necessity.

## OSCAR WILDE

**Oscar Fingal O'Flahertie Wills Wilde** (16 October 1854 – 30 November 1900) was a prolific Irish writer who wrote plays, fiction, essays, and poetry. His father, Sir William Wilde, was an eminent Victorian and a doctor of aural surgery. Within six months of leaving *The Woman's World*, Wilde had published the commercially successful novel, *The Picture of Dorian Gray*, about a man with a secret life. This novel was quickly followed by *Intentions*, *Lord Arthur Savile's Crime and Other Stories*, and *A House of Pomegranates*. In the period from 1891 to 1892, he produced *Salome*, *Lady Windermere's Fan*, *A Woman of No Importance*, and an essay, "The Soul of Man Under Socialism." He amused his audiences, and in return they offered standing ovations at his plays.

One would think all this good luck, publicity, and commercial success would be enough for a respectable married man with two sons, who finally was receiving acceptance from British aristocracy. However, during this amazingly prolific period, Wilde was beginning to frequent literary circles that were often homosexual. In 1886, he is said to have had his first homosexual affair with a Canadian named Robert Ross. He was also introduced to Alfred Taylor, who lived in Bloomsbury and often had male prostitutes at his home. One of these young men was the unemployed Charles Parker. Wilde became involved with several of these young men, and was sentenced to two years of hard labor in England's Reading Gaol. In 1897, while in prison, Wilde wrote *De Profundis*, an examination of his newfound spirituality. After his release, he moved to France under an assumed name. He wrote *The Ballad of Reading Gaol* in 1898 and published two letters on the poor conditions of prison. One of the letters helped reform a law to keep children from imprisonment. His new life in France, however, was lonely, penniless, and humiliating.

After writing in different forms throughout the 1880s, he became one of London's most popular playwrights in the early 1890s. He is best remembered for his epigrams and plays, the novel *The Picture of Dorian Gray*, as well as the circumstances of his imprisonment and early death.

As a spokesman for aestheticism, he tried his hand at various literary activities: he published a book of poems, lectured in the United States and Canada on the new "English Renaissance in Art", and then returned to London where he worked prolifically as a journalist. Known for his biting wit, flamboyant dress and glittering conversational skill, Wilde became one of the best-known personalities of his day.

He wrote *Salome* (1891) in French in Paris but it was refused a licence for England due to an absolute prohibition on the portrayal of Biblical subjects on the English stage. At the height of his fame and success, while *The Importance of Being Earnest* (1895) was still being performed in London. ***The Importance of Being Earnest, A Trivial Comedy for Serious People*** is a play by Oscar Wilde. First performed on 14 February 1895 at the St James's Theatre in London, it is a farcical comedy in which the protagonists maintain fictitious personae to escape burdensome social obligations. Working within the social conventions of late Victorian London, the play's major themes are the triviality with which it treats institutions as serious as marriage, and the resulting satire of Victorian ways. Contemporary reviews all praised the play's humour, though some were cautious about its clear lack of social messages, while others foresaw the modern agreement that it was the conclusion of Wilde's artistic career so far

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## CHARLES DARWIN

Charles Robert Darwin was born in Shrewsbury, Shropshire, on 12 February 1809, at his family's home, The Mount. He was an English naturalist, geologist and biologist,<sup>[6]</sup> best known for his contributions to the science of evolution.

Darwin's father was a successful doctor who groomed his son to follow in his footsteps. After spending the summer of 1825 serving as an apprentice in his father's practice, he entered one of Britain's top medical schools at the University of Edinburgh. Darwin, however, hated the sight of blood and was bored with the lectures. He left medical school and dashed his father's dreams. After leaving the University of Edinburgh, the man who would challenge the established religious dogma of creationism enrolled at Cambridge to study theology. "I did not then in the least doubt the strict and literal truth of every word in the Bible," he later wrote.

Darwin, though, never characterized himself as an atheist. He instead referred to himself as an agnostic.

Darwin not only studied an eclectic menagerie of animals from around the globe, he ate them as well. As a student at Cambridge, he formed the Gourmet Club, also known as the Glutton Club, for the purpose of dining on “birds and beasts, which were before unknown to human palate.”

He established that all species of life have descended over time from common ancestors. Darwin published his theory of evolution with compelling evidence in his 1859 book *On the Origin of Species*. *Darwin was not the first person to suggest a Theory of Evolution. What made his work so important, according to Charles Darwin facts, is that it detailed a mechanism for evolution as a process. This mechanism, natural selection, is now widely accepted as a scientific theory.*

Darwin's early interest in nature led him to neglect his medical education at the University of Edinburgh; instead, he helped to investigate marine invertebrates. Studies at the University of Cambridge (Christ's College) encouraged his passion for natural science. His five-year voyage on HMS *Beagle* established him as an eminent geologist whose observations and theories supported Charles Lyell's uniformitarian ideas, and publication of his journal of the voyage made him famous as a popular author.

Although Darwin's most famous work is *On The Origin of Species*, his other works include: '*The Expression of Emotions in Man and Animals*', '*The Descent of Man, and Selection in Relation to Sex*', '*The Power of Movement in Plants*' and '*The Formation of Vegetable Mold Through the Action of Worms*'.

"Survival of the fittest" is a phrase that originated by Charles Darwin.

*The Descent of Man, and Selection in Relation to Sex* discusses many related issues, including evolutionary psychology, evolutionary ethics, differences between human races, differences between sexes, the dominant role of women in mate choice, and the relevance of the evolutionary theory to society

*The Expression of the Emotions in Man and Animals* is Charles Darwin's third major work of evolutionary theory, following *On The Origin of Species* (1859) and *The Descent of Man* (1871). Darwin sets out some early concepts of behavioural genetics, and explores the origins of such

human characteristics as the lifting of the eyebrows in moments of surprise and the mental confusion which typically accompanies blushing. Darwin opens the book with three chapters on "the general principles of expression". This is followed by a section (three more chapters) on modes of emotional expression peculiar to particular species, including man. Chapter 7 discusses "low spirits", including anxiety, grief, dejection and despair; and the contrasting Chapter 8 "high spirits" with joy, love, tender feelings and devotion.

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## THOMAS CARLYLE

**Thomas Carlyle** was a Scottish philosopher, satirical writer, essayist, translator, historian, and teacher.<sup>[1]</sup> Considered one of the most important social commentators of his time, he presented many lectures during his lifetime with certain acclaim in the Victorian era. One of those conferences resulted in his famous work *On Heroes, Hero-Worship, and The Heroic in History* where he explains that the key role in history lies in the actions of the "Great Man", claiming that "History is nothing but the biography of the Great Man".

Carlyle was born in Ecclefechan in Dumfriesshire.<sup>[4]</sup> His father was a stern Calvinist who would greatly influence Carlyle's later philosophies. Carlyle entered the University of Edinburgh as a teen in 1809, and though initially planning a career in the ministry, he chose to explore mathematics and teaching, eventually settling into a career as a writer. His parents determinedly afforded him an education at Annan Academy, Annan, where he was bullied and tormented so much that he left after three years.<sup>[7]</sup> His father was a member of the Burgher secession church.<sup>[8]</sup> In early life, his family's (and nation's) strong Calvinist beliefs powerfully influenced the young man.

### Works of Carlyle:

- The French Revolution (1837)
- Heroes and Hero-Worship (1841)
- Past and Present (1843)

- Oliver Cromwell's Letters and Speeches (1845)
- Life of John Sterling (1851)
- The History of Frederick the Great (1858-65).

After attending the University of Edinburgh, Carlyle became a mathematics teacher,<sup>[4]</sup> first in Annan and then in Kirkcaldy, where he became close friends with the mystic Edward Irving. About 1821 he experienced a kind of conversion, which he described some years later in fictionalized account in *Sartor Resartus*, whose salient feature was that it was negative—hatred of the Devil, not love of God, being the dominating idea.

Carlyle moved to London with his wife and settled in Cheyne Row. Though he had not earned anything by his writings for more than a year and was fearful of the day when his savings would be exhausted, he refused to compromise but began an ambitious historical work, *The French Revolution*.

Thomas Carlyle's *On Heroes, Hero-Worship, and the Heroic in History* remains one of the best sources in English of the development in late Romanticism called heroic vitalism. He discussed the hero as divinity (pagan myths), as prophet (Muhammad), as poet (Dante and William Shakespeare), as priest (Martin Luther and John Knox), as man of letters (Samuel Johnson and Robert Burns), and as king (Oliver Cromwell and Napoleon Bonaparte).

the **great man theory** is a 19th-century idea according to which history can be largely explained by the impact of great men, or heroes; highly influential individuals who, due to either their personal charisma, intelligence, wisdom, or political skill used their power in a way that had a decisive historical impact. The theory was popularized in the 1840s by Scottish writer Thomas Carlyle.

## JOHN RUSKIN

**John Ruskin** (8 February 1819 – 20 January 1900) was the leading English art critic of the Victorian era, as well as an art patron, draughtsman, watercolourist, a prominent social thinker and philanthropist. He wrote on subjects as varied as geology, architecture, myth, ornithology, literature, education, botany and political economy.

John James had hoped to practice law, and was articled as a clerk in London.<sup>[1]</sup> His father, John Thomas Ruskin, described as a grocer (but apparently an ambitious wholesale merchant), was an incompetent businessman. To save the family from bankruptcy, John James and Margaret were engaged in 1809, but opposition to the union from John Thomas, and the issuance of the debt, delayed their wedding which was finally conducted without celebration in 1818.

His childhood was characterised by the contrasting influences of his father and mother, both fiercely ambitious for him. John James Ruskin helped to develop his son's Romanticism. They shared a passion for the works of Byron, Shakespeare and especially Walter Scott. He was educated at home by his parents and private tutors, and from 1834 to 1835 attended the school in Peckham. He was also a renowned teacher; his popularity as a lecturer increased tremendously during the 1850s. He taught art and architecture to the students.

He also travelled widely as a young man. His experiences of visiting different places enriched his knowledge of the world and gave him the chance to observe nature in its varied states. From a young age he maintained notebooks in which he made drawings of maps, landscapes and buildings. As a writer he was publishing short pieces in both prose and verse in magazines by the mid-1830s. From 1843 to 1860, he worked on a series of art books titled 'Modern Painters', in which he argued that recent painters of the contemporary era were superior in the art of landscape to the Old Masters. He produced a total of five volumes in the series.

The purpose of Ruskin's next book, **the Seven Lamps of Architecture**, was to moral feeling were the magic powers by which all good architecture had been produced. **The Stones of Venice** is devoted to the theme of the full flowering of the Byzantine and Gothic architecture,

and the subsequent decline in morals , life and art . *Sesame and Lilies* (1865) would become notorious in the late 20th century as a stock example of Victorian male chauvinism. In fact, Ruskin was using the conventional construction of the feminine, as pacific, altruistic, and uncompetitive.

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## HENRY JAMES

Henry James is considered by many to be among the greatest novelists in the English language. He was the son of Henry James, Sr. and the brother of renowned philosopher and psychologist William James and diarist Alice James. He is best known for a number of novels dealing with the social and marital interplay between emigre Americans, English people, and continental Europeans – examples of such novels include *The Portrait of a Lady*, *The Ambassadors*, and *The Wings of the Dove*. His later works were increasingly experimental. In describing the internal states of mind and social dynamics of his characters, In addition to voluminous works of fiction, James published articles and books of criticism, travel, biography, autobiography, and plays. James was nominated for the Nobel Prize in Literature in 1911, 1912, and 1916.

James was born at 2 Washington Place in New York City on 15 April 1843. His parents were Mary Walsh and Henry James Sr. His father was intelligent, steadfastly congenial, and a lecturer and philosopher who had inherited independent means from his father, an Albany banker and investor. Mary came from a wealthy family long settled in New York City, and her sister Katherine lived with the family for an extended period of time. His education was calculated by his father to expose him to many influences, primarily scientific and philosophical. Henry studied primarily with tutors and briefly attended a few schools while the family travelled in Europe. Their longest stays were in France, where Henry began to feel at home and became fluent in French.

*The Portrait of a Lady* is the story of a spirited young American woman, Isabel Archer, who, in "confronting her destiny",<sup>[1]</sup> finds it irresistible. Her stifling marriage and her desperate fight for freedom—stands as a link between two centuries. *The Golden Bowl* (1904) Set in England, this complex, intense study of marriage and adultery. *The Golden Bowl* explores the tangle of

interrelationships between a father and daughter and their respective spouses. An old woman guards a clutch of love letters from a long-dead poet; an editor wants them and will do almost anything to get them. James wrote many stories about writers and artists, and thought so hard about the relation of art and life that he burned many of his own letters and hoped that he would have no biographer. This story will make anybody who does write about him wonder about the claims of privacy and the inevitability of betrayal. **The Turn of the Screw**” (1898) - The longest and greatest and scariest of James’ ghost stories. An isolated house, a high-strung governess, two charming children, and two dead servants.

James is one of the major figures of trans-Atlantic literature. His works frequently juxtapose characters from the Old World(Europe), embodying a feudal civilisation that is beautiful, often corrupt, and alluring, and from the New World (United States), where people are often brash, open, and assertive and embody the virtues—freedom and a more highly evolved moral character—of the new American society. James explores this clash of personalities and cultures, in stories of personal relationships in which power is exercised well or badly.

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## **UNIT 5 – History of English Literature – SHS1105**

## E.M FORSTER

**Edward Morgan Forster** (1 January 1879 – 7 June 1970), known as **E. M. Forster**, was an English novelist, short story writer, essayist and librettist. Many of his novels examined class difference and hypocrisy in early 20th-century British society, notably *A Room with a View* (1908), *Howards End* (1910), and *A Passage to India* (1924), which brought him his greatest success. He was nominated for the Nobel Prize in Literature in 16 different years.

Forster was born into an Anglo-Irish and Welsh family at 6 Melcombe Place, Dorset Square, London, in a building that no longer exists. He was the only child of Alice Clara "Lily" and Edward Morgan Llewellyn Forster, an architect. His name was officially registered as Henry Morgan Forster, but at his baptism he was accidentally named Edward Morgan Forster.<sup>[3]</sup> To distinguish him from his father, he was always called Morgan. His father died of tuberculosis on 30 October 1880, before Morgan's second birthday.<sup>[4]</sup> In 1883, Forster and his mother moved to Hertfordshire. This house served as a model for *Howards End*, because he had fond memories of his childhood there. Among Forster's ancestors were members of the Clapham Sect, a social reform group within the Church of England.

He inherited £8,000 from his paternal great-aunt who died on 5 November 1887. The money was enough to live on and enabled him to become a writer. He attended Tonbridge School in Kent, as a day boy. The theatre at the school has been named in his honour. At King's College, Cambridge, between 1897 and 1901, he became a member of a discussion society known as the Apostles.

In the 1930s and 1940s Forster became a successful broadcaster on BBC Radio and a public figure associated with the Union of Ethical Societies. Forster was homosexual (open to his close friends, but not to the public) and a lifelong bachelor. He developed a long-term relationship with Bob Buckingham (1904–1975), a married policeman. Forster was elected an honorary fellow of King's College, Cambridge, in January 1946, and lived for the most part in the college, doing relatively little. Aged 82 he wrote his last short story, *Little Imber*, a science fiction tale. At 85 he went on a pilgrimage to the Wiltshire countryside that had inspired his favourite novel *The Longest Journey*, escorted by William Golding. In 1969 he was made a member of the Order of Merit. Forster died of a stroke on 7 June 1970 at the age of 91, at the

Buckingham's home in Coventry.

Forster had five novels published in his lifetime. Although *Maurice* was published shortly after his death, it had been written nearly sixty years earlier. He never finished a seventh novel, *Arctic Summer*. His first novel, *Where Angels Fear to Tread* (1905), is the story of Lilia, a young English widow who falls in love with an Italian, and of the efforts of her bourgeois relatives to get her back from Monteriano.

Next, Forster published *The Longest Journey* (1907), an inverted *Bildungsroman* following the lame Rickie Elliott from Cambridge to a career as a struggling writer and then to a post as a schoolmaster, married to the unappealing Agnes Pembroke. In a series of scenes on the hills of Wiltshire, which introduce Rickie's wild half-brother Stephen Wonham, Forster attempts a kind of sublime related to those of Thomas Hardy and D. H. Lawrence.

Forster's third novel, *A Room with a View* (1908), is his lightest and most optimistic. It was started as early as 1901, before any of his others; its earliest versions are entitled "Lucy". The book explores the young Lucy Honeychurch's trip to Italy with her cousin, and the choice she must make between the free-thinking George Emerson and the repressed aesthete Cecil Vyse. George's father Mr Emerson quotes thinkers who influenced Forster, including Samuel Butler. *A Room with a View* was adapted as a film in 1985 by the Merchant-Ivory team.

*Where Angels Fear to Tread* and *A Room with a View* can be seen collectively as Forster's Italian novels. Both include references to the famous Baedeker guidebooks and concern narrow-minded middle-class English tourists abroad. The books share many themes with his short stories collected in *The Celestial Omnibus* and *The Eternal Moment*.

*Howards End* (1910) is an ambitious "condition-of-England" novel concerned with different groups within the Edwardian middle classes. Critics have observed that numerous characters in Forster's novels die suddenly. This is true of *Where Angels Fear to Tread*, *Howards End* and, most particularly, *The Longest Journey*. *Howards End* was adapted as a film in 1991 by the

Merchant-Ivory team. An opera libretto *Howards End, America* was created in 2016 by Claudia Stevens.

Forster achieved his greatest success with *A Passage to India* (1924). The novel takes as its subject the relationship between East and West, seen through the lens of India in the later days of the British Raj. Forster connects personal relationships with the politics of colonialism through the story of the Englishwoman Adela Quested, the Indian Dr. Aziz, and the question of what did or did not happen between them in the Marabar Caves. Forster makes special mention of the author Ahmed Ali and his *Twilight in Delhi* in his Preface to its Everyman's Library Edition. *A Passage to India* was adapted as a film in 1984, directed by David Lean.

*Maurice* (1971) was published posthumously. It is a homosexual love story which also returns to matters familiar from Forster's first three novels, such as the suburbs of London in the English home counties, the experience of attending Cambridge, and the wild landscape of Wiltshire. The novel was controversial, given that Forster's homosexuality had not been previously known or widely acknowledged. Today's critics continue to argue over the extent to which Forster's sexuality and personal activities influenced his writing. *Maurice* was adapted as a film in 1987 by the Merchant-Ivory team.

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## EZRA POUND

**Ezra Weston Loomis Pound** (30 October 1885 – 1 November 1972) was an expatriate American poet and critic, as well as a major figure in the early modernist movement. His contribution to poetry began with his development of Imagism, a movement derived from classical Chinese and Japanese poetry, stressing clarity, precision and economy of language. His works include *Ripostes* (1912), *Hugh Selwyn Mauberley* (1920) and the unfinished 120-section epic, *The Cantos*.

Pound worked in London during the early 20th century as foreign editor of several American literary magazines, and helped discover and shape the work of contemporaries such as T. S. Eliot, James Joyce, Robert Frost and Ernest Hemingway. Pound was born in a small, two-story house in Hailey, Idaho Territory, the only child of Homer Loomis Pound (1858–1942) and Isabel Weston (1860–1948). His father had worked in Hailey since 1883 as registrar of the General Land Office.

Both parents' ancestors had emigrated from England in the 17th century. On his mother's side, Pound was descended from William Wadsworth (1594–1675), a Puritan who emigrated to Boston on the *Lion* in 1632.<sup>[5]</sup> The Wadsworths married into the Westons of New York. Harding Weston and Mary Parker were the parents of Isabel Weston, Ezra's mother. Harding apparently spent most of his life without work, with his brother, Ezra Weston, and his brother's wife, Frances, looking after Mary and Isabel's needs.

Pound's education began in a series of dame schools, some of them run by Quakers. After the academy he may have attended Cheltenham Township High School for one year, and in 1901, aged 15, he was admitted to the University of Pennsylvania's College of Liberal Arts. It was at Pennsylvania in 1901 that Pound met Hilda Doolittle, his first serious romance, according to Pound scholar Ira Nadel. Between 1905 and 1907 Pound wrote several poems for her, 25 of which he hand-bound and called *Hilda's Book*, and in 1908 he asked her father, the astronomy professor Charles Doolittle, for permission to marry her, but Doolittle dismissed Pound as a nomad. Pound was seeing two other women at the same time—Viola Baxter and Mary Moore—later dedicating a book of poetry, *Personae* (1909), to the latter. He asked Moore to marry him too, but she turned him down.

In 1905, Pound earned his bachelor's degree in philosophy from Hamilton College. Thereafter, he returned to the University of Pennsylvania to study Romance languages, a branch of the Italic languages within the Indo-European language family. In 1906, on earning his M.A. from Pennsylvania, he started working for his doctoral thesis with a Hamilton Fellowship, which not only covered his tuition fees, but also provided a travel allowance of \$500. His dissertation was intended to be on the jesters of the Spanish playwright Félix Lope de Vega

Carpio. However, he never finished his doctoral work; instead in 1907, he started teaching Romance languages at Wabash College in Crawfordsville, Indiana. Unfortunately, the place, as well as the college, was much too conservative for his bohemian mannerism. He therefore lost his job in early 1908.

## Poetry

- *Lustra and Other Poems* (1917)
- *Personae* (1909)
- *Provenca* (1910)
- *Quia Pauper Amavi* (1919)
- *The Cantos* (1972)
- *The Fifth Decade of Cantos* (1937))
- *Umbra: Collected Poems* (1920)

Ezra Pound is best remembered for his unfinished epic poem, 'The Cantos.' Mostly written between 1915 and 1962, the work contains 116 sections, each of which is a 'canto.' It is a mixture of satire, hymns, elegies and essays, covering different themes such as economics, governance, culture and memoirs.

Pound arrived in Gibraltar on 23 March 1908, where for a few weeks he earned \$15 a day working as a guide to American tourists. By the end of April he was in Venice, living over a bakery near the San Vio bridge. In July he self-published his first book of poetry, *A Lume Spento* (*With Tapers Spent*). The *London Evening Standard* called it "wild and haunting stuff, absolutely poetic, original, imaginative, passionate, and spiritual." The title was from the third canto of Dante's *Purgatorio*, which alluded to the death of Manfred, King of Sicily. The book was dedicated to his friend, the Philadelphia artist William Brooke Smith, who had recently died of tuberculosis.

In August Pound moved to London, where he lived almost continuously for the next 12

years; he told his university friend William Carlos Williams: "London, deah old Lundon, is the place for poesy." English poets such as Maurice Hewlett, Rudyard Kipling and Alfred Lord Tennyson had made a particular kind of Victorian verse—stirring, pompous and propagandistic—popular with the public. According to modernist scholar James Knapp, Pound rejected the idea of poetry as "versified moral essay"; he wanted to focus on the individual experience, the concrete rather than the abstract.

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## WILLIAM CARLOS WILLIAMS

**William Carlos Williams** (September 17, 1883 – March 4, 1963) was a Puerto Rican-American poet closely associated with modernism and imagism.<sup>[1]</sup> His work has a great affinity with painting, in which he had a lifelong interest.

In addition to his writing, Williams had a long career as a physician practicing both pediatrics and general medicine. He was affiliated with what was then known as Passaic General Hospital in Passaic, New Jersey, where he served as the hospital's chief of pediatrics from 1924 until his death. The hospital, which is now known as St. Mary's General Hospital, paid tribute to Williams with a memorial plaque that states "we walk the wards that Williams walked".

Williams was born in Rutherford, New Jersey. His grandmother, an Englishwoman deserted by her husband, had come to the United States with her son, remarried, and moved to Puerto Rico. Her son, Williams's father, married a Puerto Rican woman of French Basque and Dutch Jewish descent.

Williams received his primary and secondary education in Rutherford until 1897, when he was sent for two years to a school near Geneva and to the Lycée Condorcet in Paris. He attended the Horace Mann School upon his return to New York City and, having passed a special

examination, was admitted in 1902 to the medical school of the University of Pennsylvania, from which he graduated in 1906. Upon leaving University of Pennsylvania, Williams did internships at both French Hospital and Child's Hospital in New York before going to Leipzig for advanced study of pediatrics. He published his first book, *Poems*, in 1909.

Although his primary occupation was as a family doctor, Williams had a successful literary career as a poet. In addition to poetry (his main literary focus), he occasionally wrote short stories, plays, novels, essays, and translations. He practiced medicine by day and wrote at night. Early in his career, he briefly became involved in the Imagist movement through his friendships with Pound.

Williams's major collections are *Spring and All* (1923), *The Desert Music and Other Poems* (1954), *Pictures from Brueghel and Other Poems* (1962), and *Paterson*. His most anthologized poem is "The Red Wheelbarrow", an example of the Imagist movement's style and principles. However, Williams, like his peer and friend Ezra Pound, had already rejected the Imagist movement by the time this poem was published as part of *Spring and All* in 1923.

Williams sought to invent an entirely fresh and uniquely American form of poetry whose subject matter centered on everyday circumstances of life and the lives of common people. He came up with the concept of the "variable foot" which Williams never clearly defined, although the concept vaguely referred to Williams's method of determining line breaks. *The Paris Review* called it "a metrical device to resolve the conflict between form and freedom in verse.

The U.S. National Book Award was reestablished in 1950 with awards by the book industry to authors of 1949 books in three categories. Williams won the first National Book Award for Poetry, recognizing both the third volume of *Paterson* and *Selected Poems*.

In 1952 Williams was named Consultant in Poetry to the Library of Congress in Washington, DC but barred from serving out his term due to McCarthyism and unfounded accusations of William's membership in a communist organization. Williams retained legal counsel to refute the charges but was never allowed to respond to his critics and never received an apology from the Library of Congress.

In May 1963, he was posthumously awarded the Pulitzer Prize for *Pictures from Brueghel and Other Poems* (1962) and the Gold Medal for Poetry of the National Institute of Arts and Letters. The Poetry Society of America continues to honor William Carlos Williams by presenting the prestigious William Carlos Williams Award annually for the best book of poetry published by a small, non-profit or university press.

Williams's house in Rutherford is now on the National Register of Historic Places. He was inducted into the New Jersey Hall of Fame in 2009.

### **Poetry collections**

- *Poems* (1909)
- *The Tempers* (1913)
- *Sour Grapes* (1921)
- *Spring and All* (1923)
- *Go Go* (1923)
- *The Cod Head* (1932)
- *An Early Martyr and Other Poems* (1935)
- *Adam & Eve & The City* (1936)
- *The Complete Collected Poems of William Carlos Williams, 1906-1938* (1938)
- *The Broken Span* (1941)
- *The Wedge* (1944)
- *The Desert Music and Other Poems* (1954)
- *Journey to Love* (1955)
- *Pictures from Brueghel and Other Poems* (1962)
- *Paterson* (Books I-V in one volume, (1963)

## Prose

- *The Great American Novel* (1923) - A novel.
- *Spring and All* (1923)
- *In the American Grain* (1925),
- *The Knife of the Times, and Other Stories* (1932)
- *White Mule* (1937) - A novel.
- *In the Money* (1940)
- *Make Light of It: Collected Stories* (1950)
- *Autobiography* (1951)
- *The Build-Up* (1952)
- *The Selected Letters of William Carlos Williams* (1957)
- *The Farmers' Daughters: Collected Stories* (1961)
- *Imaginations* (1970)
- *William Carlos Williams: The Doctor Stories*

Williams champions the American idiom and the "local"--either the urban landscape or one's immediate environment. He pays close attention to ordinary scenes (some purely descriptive; others as compositions as in visual art), the working class and poor. Williams's work often demonstrates the artist's need to destroy or deconstruct what has become outworn and to reassemble or recreate with fresh vision and language. His own "hybrid" background is, in his view, particularly American. He uses his experience as a doctor, married man and father, son and friend, in some of the poems, fiction, and plays. In addition, he demonstrates the need to discover rather than impose order on reality.

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## D. H. LAWRENCE

**David Herbert Lawrence** (11 September 1885 – 2 March 1930) was an English novelist, poet, playwright, essayist, literary critic and painter. The fourth child of Arthur John Lawrence, a barely-literate miner at Brinsley Colliery, and Lydia Beardsall, a former pupil teacher who had been forced to perform manual work in a lace factory due to her family's financial difficulties, Lawrence spent his formative years in the coal mining town of Eastwood, Nottinghamshire. The house in which he was born, 8a Victoria Street, is now the D. H. Lawrence Birthplace Museum. His working-class background and the tensions between his parents provided the raw material for a number of his early works. Lawrence roamed out from an early age in the patches of open, hilly country and remaining fragments of Sherwood Forest in Felley woods to the north of Eastwood, beginning a lifelong appreciation of the natural world, and he often wrote about "the country of my heart" as a setting for much of his fiction.

The young Lawrence attended Beauvale Board School (now renamed Greasley Beauvale D. H. Lawrence Primary School in his honour) from 1891 until 1898, becoming the first local pupil to win a County Council scholarship to Nottingham High School in nearby Nottingham. He left in 1901, working for three months as a junior clerk at Haywood's surgical appliances factory, but a severe bout of pneumonia ended this career. During his convalescence he often visited Hagg's Farm, the home of the Chambers family, and began a friendship with Jessie Chambers. An important aspect of this relationship with Chambers and other adolescent acquaintances was a shared love of books, an interest that lasted throughout Lawrence's life. In the years 1902 to 1906 Lawrence served as a pupil teacher at the British School, Eastwood. He went on to become a full-time student and received a teaching certificate from University College, Nottingham, in 1908. During these early years he was working on his first poems, some short stories, and a draft of a novel, *Laetitia*, which was eventually to become *The White Peacock*. At the end of 1907 he won a short story competition in the *Nottingham Guardian*, the first time that he had gained any wider recognition for his literary talents.

*The Rainbow* follows three generations of a Nottinghamshire farming family from

the pre-industrial to the industrial age, focusing particularly on a daughter, Ursula, and her aspiration for a more fulfilling life than that of becoming a housebound wife. *Women in Love* delves into the complex relationships between four major characters, including the sisters Ursula and Gudrun. Both novels challenged conventional ideas about the arts, politics, economic growth, gender, sexual experience, friendship and marriage and can be seen as far ahead of their time. The frank and relatively straightforward manner in which Lawrence dealt with sexual attraction was ostensibly what got the books banned, perhaps in particular the mention of same-sex attraction – Ursula has an affair with a woman in *The Rainbow* and in *Women in Love* there is an undercurrent of attraction between the two principal male characters. While writing *Women in Love* in Cornwall during 1916–17, Lawrence developed a strong and possibly romantic relationship with a Cornish farmer named William Henry Hocking.<sup>[9]</sup> Although it is not clear if their relationship was sexual, Frieda said she believed it was. Lawrence's fascination with the theme of homosexuality, which is overtly manifested in *Women in Love*, could be related to his own sexual orientation.

Lawrence is best known for his novels *Sons and Lovers*, *The Rainbow*, *Women in Love* and *Lady Chatterley's Lover*. In these books, Lawrence explores the possibilities for life within an industrial setting. In particular Lawrence is concerned with the nature of relationships that can be had within such a setting. Though often classed as a realist, Lawrence in fact uses his characters to give form to his personal philosophy. His depiction of sexuality, though seen as shocking when his work was first published in the early 20th century, has its roots in this highly personal way of thinking and being.

Lawrence's best-known short stories include "The Captain's Doll", "The Fox", "The Ladybird", "Odour of Chrysanthemums", "The Princess", "The Rocking-Horse Winner", "St Mawr", "The Virgin and the Gypsy" and "The Woman who Rode Away". (*The Virgin and the Gypsy* was published as a novella after he died.) Among his most praised collections is *The Prussian Officer and Other Stories*, published in 1914. His collection *The Woman Who Rode Away and Other Stories*, published in 1928, develops the theme of leadership that Lawrence also explored in novels such as *Kangaroo*, *The Plumed Serpent* and *Fanny and Annie*.

## Novels

- *The White Peacock* (1911)
  - *The Trespasser* (1912)
  - *Sons and Lovers* (1913)
  - *The Rainbow* (1915)
  - *Women in Love* (1920)
  - *The Lost Girl* (1920)
  - *Aaron's Rod* (1922)
  - *Kangaroo* (1923)
  - *The Boy in the Bush* (1924)
  - *The Plumed Serpent* (1926)
  - *Lady Chatterley's Lover* (1928)
  - *The Escaped Cock* (1929).
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## H. G. WELLS

**Herbert George Wells** (21 September 1866 – 13 August 1946), usually referred to as **H. G. Wells**, was an English writer. He was prolific in many genres, including the novel, history, politics, social commentary, and textbooks and rules for war games. Wells is now best remembered for his science fiction novels and is called a "father of science fiction", along with Jules Verne and Hugo Gernsback. A futurist, his works predicted the airplane, tank, space travel, nuclear weapons, satellite television and the world wide web. His fiction imagined time travel, alien invasion, invisibility, and biological engineering. Brian Aldiss referred to Wells as the "Shakespeare of science fiction". His most notable science fiction works include *The Time Machine* (1895), *The Island of Doctor Moreau* (1896), *The Invisible Man* (1897), and *The War of the Worlds* (1898). He was nominated for the Nobel Prize in Literature four times.<sup>[9]</sup>

Wells's earliest specialised training was in biology, and his thinking on ethical matters took place in a specifically and fundamentally Darwinian context.<sup>[10]</sup> He was also from an early date an outspoken socialist, often (but not always, as at the beginning of the First World War) sympathising with pacifist views. His later works became increasingly political and didactic, and he wrote little science fiction, while he sometimes indicated on official documents that his profession was that of journalist.<sup>[11]</sup> Novels like *Kipps* and *The History of Mr Polly*, which describe lower-middle-class life, led to the suggestion that he was a worthy successor to Charles Dickens,<sup>[12]</sup> but Wells described a range of social strata and even attempted, in *Tono-Bungay* (1909), a diagnosis of English society as a whole. A diabetic, in 1934, Wells co-founded the charity The Diabetic Association (known today as Diabetes UK).

Herbert George Wells was born at Atlas House, 162 High Street in Bromley, Kent, on 21 September 1866. Called "Bertie" in the family, he was the fourth and last child of Joseph Wells (a former domestic gardener, and at the time a shopkeeper and professional cricketer) and his wife, Sarah Neal (a former domestic servant). An inheritance had allowed the family to acquire a shop in which they sold china and sporting goods, although it failed to prosper: the stock was old and worn out, and the location was poor. Joseph Wells managed to earn a meagre income, but little of it came from the shop and he received an unsteady amount of money from playing professional cricket for the Kent county team. Payment for skilled bowlers and batsmen came from voluntary donations afterwards, or from small payments from the clubs where matches were played.

His father was a domestic gardener, shopkeeper and professional cricket player and his mother was a former domestic servant. In 1874 H.G. Wells broke his leg and it was during this time that he started to develop a love of reading, which led to his interest in writing. He attended a private school until family finances forced him to seek apprenticeship work. He later gained work as a teacher at Midhurst Grammar School. A scholarship gained him access to the Normal School of Science, where he wrote for the school magazine. In 1895 his novel *The Time Machine* was published and he became instantly famous.

Later that year he entered Thomas Morley's Commercial Academy, a private school founded in

1849 following the bankruptcy of Morley's earlier school. The teaching was erratic, the curriculum mostly focused, Wells later said, on producing copperplate handwriting and doing the sort of sums useful to tradesmen. Wells continued at Morley's Academy until 1880. In 1877, his father, Joseph Wells, fractured his thigh. The accident effectively put an end to Joseph's career as a cricketer, and his subsequent earnings as a shopkeeper were not enough to compensate for the loss of the primary source of family income.

No longer able to support themselves financially, the family instead sought to place their sons as apprentices in various occupations.<sup>[16]</sup> From 1880 to 1883, Wells had an unhappy apprenticeship as a draper at the Southsea Drapery Emporium, Hyde's. His experiences at Hyde's, where he worked a thirteen-hour day and slept in a dormitory with other apprentices, later inspired his novels *The Wheels of Chance* and *Kipps*, which portray the life of a draper's apprentice as well as providing a critique of society's distribution of wealth

One of the ways that Wells expressed himself was through his drawings and sketches. One common location for these was the endpapers and title pages of his own diaries, and they covered a wide variety of topics, from political commentary to his feelings toward his literary contemporaries and his current romantic interests. During his marriage to Amy Catherine, whom he nicknamed Jane, he drew a considerable number of pictures, many of them being overt comments on their marriage. During this period, he called these pictures "picshuas". These picshuas have been the topic of study by Wells scholars for many years, and in 2006, a book was published on the subject.

Some of his early novels, called "scientific romances", invented several themes now classic in science fiction in such works as *The Time Machine*, *The Island of Doctor Moreau*, *The Invisible Man*, *The War of the Worlds*, *When the Sleeper Wakes*, and *The First Men in the Moon*. He also wrote realistic novels that received critical acclaim, including *Kipps* and a critique of English culture during the Edwardian period, *Tono-Bungay*. Wells also wrote dozens of short stories and novellas, including, "The Flowering of the Strange Orchid", which helped bring the full impact of Darwin's revolutionary botanical ideas to a wider public, and was followed by many later successes such as "The Country of the Blind" (1904)

Wells also wrote nonfiction. Wells's first nonfiction bestseller was *Anticipations of the Reaction of Mechanical and Scientific Progress upon Human Life and Thought* (1901). When originally serialised in a magazine it was subtitled, "An Experiment in Prophecy", and is considered his most explicitly futuristic work. Wells contemplates the ideas of nature and nurture and questions humanity in books such as *The Island of Doctor Moreau*. Not all his scientific romances ended in a Utopia, and Wells also wrote a dystopian novel, *When the Sleeper Wakes* (1899, rewritten as *The Sleeper Awakes*, 1910), which pictures a future society where the classes have become more and more separated, leading to a revolt of the masses against the rulers.<sup>[60]</sup> *The Island of Doctor Moreau* is even darker. The narrator, having been trapped on an island of animals vivisected (unsuccessfully) into human beings, eventually returns to England; like Gulliver on his return from the Houyhnhnms, he finds himself unable to shake off the perceptions of his fellow humans as barely civilised beasts, slowly reverting to their animal natures.<sup>[61]</sup>

*The Invisible Man* (1897). This novel might be read as Wells's take on Stevenson's *Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde*: a scientist, Griffin, succeeds in making himself invisible but finds it difficult to reverse the scientific process, just as Jekyll finds he can no longer keep his alter ego.

He also more or less invented the concept of the time machine. The short novel recounts the adventures of the Time Traveller, who builds a machine which enables him to travel into the future. But what the precise relationship is between the two remains at first a mystery – until the Time Traveller discovers the horrific truth.

Seeking a more structured way to play war games, Wells also wrote *Floor Games* (1911) followed by *Little Wars* (1913), which set out rules for fighting battles with toy soldiers (miniatures). *Little Wars* is recognised today as the first recreational war game and Wells is regarded by gamers and hobbyists as "the Father of Miniature War Gaming".

The science fiction historian John Clute describes Wells as "the most important writer the genre has yet seen", and notes his work has been central to both British and American science fiction. He was nominated for the Nobel Prize in Literature in 1921, 1932, 1935, and 1946.

## JAMES JOYCE

**James Augustine Aloysius Joyce** (2 February 1882 – 13 January 1941) was an Irish novelist, short story writer, and poet. He contributed to the modernist avant-garde and is regarded as one of the most influential and important authors of the 20th century. Joyce is best known for *Ulysses* (1922), a landmark work in which the episodes of Homer's *Odyssey* are paralleled in a variety of literary styles, perhaps most prominently stream of consciousness. Other well-known works are the short-story collection *Dubliners* (1914), and the novels *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man* (1916) and *Finnegans Wake* (1939). His other writings include three books of poetry, a play, his published letters and occasional journalism.

Joyce was born in 41 Brighton Square, Rathgar, Dublin, into a middle-class family on the way down. A brilliant student, he briefly attended the Christian Brothers-run O'Connell School before excelling at the Jesuit schools Clongowes and Belvedere, despite the chaotic family life imposed by his father's alcoholism and unpredictable finances. He went on to attend University College Dublin.

On 2 February 1882, Joyce was born in Rathgar, Dublin, Ireland. Joyce's father was John Stanislaus Joyce and his mother was Mary Jane "May" Murray. Joyce enrolled at the recently established University College Dublin (UCD) in 1898, studying English, French and Italian. He became active in theatrical and literary circles in the city. Joyce attempted to publish *A Portrait of the Artist*, an essay-story dealing with aesthetics, only to have it rejected by the free-thinking magazine *Dana*. He decided, on his twenty-second birthday, to revise the story into a novel he called *Stephen Hero*. It was a fictional rendering of Joyce's youth, but he eventually grew frustrated with its direction and abandoned this work. It was

never published in this form, but years later, in Trieste, Joyce completely rewrote it as *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man*. The unfinished *Stephen Hero* was published after his death.

Works:

- *Chamber Music* (poems, 1907)
- *Dubliners* (short-story collection, 1914)
- *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man* (novel, 1916)
- *Exiles* (play, 1918)
- *Ulysses* (novel, 1922)
- *Pomes Penyeach* (poems, 1927)
- *Finnegans Wake* (novel, 1939)

*Dubliners* is a collection of fifteen short stories by Joyce, first published in 1914. They form a naturalistic depiction of Irish middle class life in and around Dublin in the early years of the 20th century. The stories were written when Irish nationalism was at its peak and a search for a national identity and purpose was raging; at a crossroads of history and culture, Ireland was jolted by converging ideas and influences. The stories centre on Joyce's idea of an epiphany: a moment when a character experiences a life-changing self-understanding or illumination. Many of the characters in *Dubliners* later appear in minor roles in Joyce's novel *Ulysses*. The initial stories in the collection are narrated by child protagonists. Subsequent stories deal with the lives and concerns of progressively older people. This aligns with Joyce's tripartite division of the collection into childhood, adolescence and maturity.

*A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man* is a nearly complete rewrite of the abandoned novel *Stephen Hero*. Joyce attempted to burn the original manuscript in a fit of rage during an argument with Nora, though to his subsequent relief it was rescued by his sister. A *Künstlerroman*, *Portrait* is a heavily autobiographical<sup>[51]</sup> coming-of-age novel depicting the childhood and adolescence of protagonist Stephen Dedalus and his gradual growth into artistic self-consciousness. Some hints of the techniques Joyce frequently employed in later works, such as stream of consciousness, interior monologue, and references to a character's psychic reality

rather than to his external surroundings are evident throughout this novel.

*Finnegans Wakes* a work of avant-garde comic fiction by Irish writer James Joyce. It is significant for its experimental style and reputation as one of the most difficult works of fiction in the English language.<sup>[1][2]</sup> Written in Paris over a period of seventeen years and published in 1939, two years before the author's death, *Finnegans Wake* was Joyce's final work. The entire book is written in a largely idiosyncratic language. Owing to the work's expansive linguistic experiments, stream of consciousness writing style, literary allusions, free dream associations, and abandonment of narrative conventions, *Finnegans Wake* remains largely unread by the general public.

Joyce's method of stream of consciousness, literary allusions and free dream associations was pushed to the limit in *Finnegans Wake*, which abandoned all conventions of plot and character construction and is written in a peculiar and obscure English, based mainly on complex multi-level puns.

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## GILBERT KEITH CHESTERTON

(29 May 1874 – 14 June 1936), better known as **G. K. Chesterton**, was an English writer, poet, philosopher, dramatist, journalist, orator, lay theologian, biographer, and literary and art critic. Chesterton is often referred to as the "prince of paradox".

Chesterton is well known for his fictional priest-detective Father Brown, and for his reasoned apologetics. Even some of those who disagree with him have recognised the wide appeal of such works as *Orthodoxy* and *The Everlasting Man*.<sup>[4][6]</sup> Chesterton routinely referred to himself as an "orthodox" Christian, and came to identify this position more and more with Catholicism, eventually converting to Catholicism from High Church Anglicanism. George Bernard Shaw, his "friendly enemy", said of him, "He was a man of colossal genius."<sup>[4]</sup> Biographers have identified him as a successor to such Victorian authors as Matthew Arnold, Thomas Carlyle, Cardinal John Henry Newman, and John Ruskin.

Chesterton was educated at St Paul's School, then attended the Slade School of Art to become an illustrator. The Slade is a department of University College London, where Chesterton also took classes in literature, but did not complete a degree in either subject. In September 1895 Chesterton began working for the London publisher Redway, where he remained for just over a year.<sup>[14]</sup> In October 1896 he moved to the publishing house T. Fisher Unwin,<sup>[14]</sup> where he remained until 1902. During this period he also undertook his first journalistic work, as a freelance art and literary critic. In 1902 the *Daily News* gave him a weekly opinion column, followed in 1905 by a weekly column in *The Illustrated London News*, for which he continued to write for the next thirty years. Early on Chesterton showed a great interest in and talent for art. He had planned to become an artist, and his writing shows a vision that clothed abstract ideas in concrete and memorable images. Even his fiction contained carefully concealed parables. Chesterton loved to debate, often engaging in friendly public disputes with such men as George Bernard Shaw,<sup>[16]</sup> H. G. Wells, Bertrand Russell and Clarence Darrow.

### **Major Works:**

- *The Man Who Was Thursday.*
- *Orthodoxy.*
- *The Innocence of Father Brown*
- *The Ballad of the White Horse*
- *Father Brown*
- *The New Jerusalem*
- *Eugenics and Other Evils.*
- *Saint Francis of Assisi.*
- *The Everlasting Man.*
- *Saint Thomas Aquinas.*
- *The Autobiography.*
- *The Common Man*

***Tremendous Trifles***, a collection of essays meditating on the joys of common life, is a real treasure. Unlike his fiction, it gets Chesterton wrapped up in the fun of the real human experience

without worrying about characterizing some caricature; unlike his serious and political essays, he can safely rely on his memory and the reader can trust him because there is no fear of him getting some crucial fact absolutely wrong. His non-fiction essays involve storytelling with a flourish, and that is where Chesterton is best.

*The Man Who Was Thursday: A Nightmare* is a novel by G. K. Chesterton, first published in 1908. It is possible to say that it is a gripping adventure story of murderous criminals and brilliant policemen; but it was to be expected that the author of the Father Brown stories should tell a detective story like no-one else. On this level, therefore, THE MAN WHO WAS THURSDAY succeeds superbly; if nothing else, it is a magnificent tour-de-force of suspense-writing.

*The Ball and the Cross* is a novel by G. K. Chesterton. The title refers to a more worldly and rationalist worldview, represented by a ball or sphere, and the cross representing Christianity. The novel's beginning involves debates about rationalism and religion between a Professor Lucifer and a monk named Michael.

Chesterton wrote around 80 books, several hundred poems, some 200 short stories, 4000 essays, and several plays. He was a literary and social critic, historian, playwright, novelist, Catholic theologian and apologist, debater, and mystery writer. He was a columnist for the Daily News, the Illustrated London News, and his own paper, G. K.'s Weekly; he also wrote articles for the Encyclopædia Britannica, including the entry on Charles Dickens and part of the entry on Humour in the 14th edition (1929). His best-known character is the priest-detective Father Brown, who appeared only in short stories, while *The Man Who Was Thursday* is arguably his best-known novel. He was a convinced Christian long before he was received into the Catholic Church, and Christian themes and symbolism appear in much of his writing. In the United States, his writings on distributism were popularized through *The American Review*, published by Seward Collins in New York.

Of his nonfiction, *Charles Dickens: A Critical Study* (1906) has received some of the broadest-based praise. According to Ian Ker (*The Catholic Revival in English Literature, 1845–1961*, 2003), "In Chesterton's eyes Dickens belongs to Merry, not Puritan, England" ;

Ker treats Chesterton's thought in Chapter 4 of that book as largely growing out of his true appreciation of Dickens, a somewhat shop-soiled property in the view of other literary opinions of the time. Chesterton's writings consistently displayed wit and a sense of humour. He employed paradox, while making serious comments on the world, government, politics, economics, philosophy, theology and many other topics.

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## VIRGINIA WOOLF

**Adeline Virginia Woolf** (née **Stephen**; 25 January 1882 – 28 March 1941) was an English writer who is considered one of the foremost modernists of the twentieth century, and a pioneer in the use of stream of consciousness as a narrative device. Born in an affluent household in Kensington, London, she attended the King's College London and was acquainted with the early reformers of women's higher education.

Having been home-schooled for most part of her childhood, mostly in English classics and Victorian literature, Woolf began writing professionally in 1900. During the interwar period, Woolf was a significant figure in London literary society and a central figure in the influential Bloomsbury Group of intellectuals. She published her first novel titled *The Voyage Out* in 1915, through the Hogarth Press, a publishing house that she established with her husband, Leonard Woolf. Her best-known works include the novels *Mrs Dalloway* (1925), *To the Lighthouse* (1927) and *Orlando* (1928), and the book-length essay *A Room of One's Own* (1929), with its dictum, "A woman must have money and a room of her own if she is to write fiction."

Woolf became one of the central subjects of the 1970s movement of feminist criticism, and her works have since garnered much attention and widespread commentary for "inspiring feminism", an aspect of her writing that was unheralded earlier. Her works are widely read all over the world and have been translated into more than fifty languages. She suffered from severe bouts of mental illness throughout her life and took her own life by drowning in 1941 at the age of 59.

## Novels

- *The Voyage Out* (1915)
- *Night and Day* (1919)
- *Jacob's Room* (1922)
- *Mrs Dalloway* (1925)
- *To the Lighthouse* (1927)
- *Orlando* (1928)
- *The Waves* (1931)
- *The Years* (1937)
- *Between the Acts* (1941)

## Short story collections

- *Kew Gardens (short story)* (1919)
- *Monday or Tuesday* (1921)
- *A Haunted House and Other Short Stories* (1944)
- *Mrs Dalloway's Party* (1973)
- *The Complete Shorter Fiction* (1985)
- *Carlyle's House and Other Sketches* (2003)

Woolf is a major novelist and one of the pioneers among modernist writers using stream of consciousness as a narrative device, alongside her contemporaries Marcel Proust, Dorothy Richardson and James Joyce.<sup>[41]</sup> Woolf's reputation declined sharply after World War II, but her importance was re-established with the growth of feminist criticism in the 1970s.<sup>[42]</sup>

She began writing professionally in 1900. The first of her writings to be accepted for publication, "Haworth, November 1904", a journalistic account of a visit to the Brontë family home at Haworth, was published anonymously in a women's supplement to a clerical journal,

*The Guardian* in December 1904. From 1905 she wrote for *The Times Literary Supplement*. Woolf went on to publish novels and essays as a public intellectual to both critical and popular acclaim. Much of her work was self-published through the Hogarth Press.

*Mrs Dalloway* (1925) centres on the efforts of Clarissa Dalloway, a middle-aged society woman, to organise a party, even as her life is paralleled with that of Septimus Warren Smith, a working-class veteran who has returned from the First World War bearing deep psychological scars",

*To the Lighthouse* (1927) is set on two days ten years apart. The plot centres on the Ramsay family's anticipation of and reflection upon a visit to a lighthouse and the connected familial tensions. One of the primary themes of the novel is the struggle in the creative process that beset painter Lily Briscoe while she struggles to paint in the midst of the family drama. The novel is also a meditation upon the lives of a nation's inhabitants in the midst of war, and of the people left behind."<sup>[45]</sup> It also explores the passage of time, and how women are forced by society to allow men to take emotional strength from them.

*Who's Afraid of Virginia Woolf?* is a play by Edward Albee first staged in 1962. It examines the breakdown of the marriage of a middle-aged couple, Martha and George. Late one evening, after a university faculty party, they receive an unwitting younger couple, Nick and Honey, as guests, and draw them into their bitter and frustrated relationship.

*Mrs Dalloway* Created from two short stories, "Mrs Dalloway in Bond Street" and the unfinished "The Prime Minister," the novel addresses Clarissa's preparations for a party she will host that evening. With an interior perspective, the story travels forwards and back in time and in and out of the characters' minds to construct an image of Clarissa's life and of the inter-war social structure.

## E.E CUMMINGS

**Edward Estlin "E. E." Cummings** (October 14, 1894 – September 3, 1962), often styled as **e e cummings**, as he sometimes signed his name, was an American poet, painter, essayist, author, and playwright. He wrote approximately 2900 poems, two autobiographical novels, four plays, and several essays.

Edward Estlin Cummings was born on October 14, 1894, to Edward Cummings and Rebecca Haswell Clarke who were Unitarian. They were a well-known family in Cambridge, Massachusetts. His father was a professor at Harvard University and later the nationally known minister of South Congregational Church in Boston, Massachusetts.<sup>[1]</sup> His mother, who loved to spend time with her children, played games with Cummings and his sister, Elizabeth. From an early age, Cummings's parents supported his creative gifts. Cummings wrote poems and also drew as a child, and he often played outdoors with the many other children who lived in his neighborhood. He also grew up in the company of such family friends as the philosophers William James and Josiah Royce. He graduated from Harvard University in 1915 and then received an advanced degree from Harvard in 1916.

He exhibited transcendental leanings his entire life. As he matured, Cummings moved to an "I, Thou" relationship with God. Cummings wanted to be a poet from childhood and wrote poetry daily aged 8 to 22, exploring assorted forms. He went to Harvard and developed an interest in modern poetry which ignored conventional grammar and syntax, aiming for a dynamic use of language.

Cummings' poetry often deals with themes of love and nature, as well as the relationship of the individual to the masses and to the world. His poems are also often rife with satire. While some of his poetry is free verse (with no concern for rhyme or meter), many have a recognizable sonnet structure of 14 lines, with an intricate rhyme scheme. A number of his poems feature a typographically exuberant style, with words, parts of words, or punctuation symbols scattered across the page, often making little sense until read aloud, at which point the meaning and emotion become clear. Cummings, who was also a painter, understood the importance of presentation, and used typography to "paint a picture" with some of his poems.

Following his autobiographical novel, *The Enormous Room*, Cummings' first published work was a collection of poems titled *Tulips and Chimneys* (1923). This work was the public's first encounter with his characteristic eccentric use of grammar and punctuation.

*since feeling is first*- Nature and love were Cummings' favored themes. His poems which touch these themes are among the most popular works in the genres, especially among youngsters. In this poem, the speaker is trying to explain to his lover the nature of love, which he believes is more closely connected to feeling and passion than to wisdom and knowledge.

*next to of course god america I*- This is a satirical poem on patriotism. It is in the form of a *broken sonnet*. Instead of having an octave and a sestet like traditional sonnets, it contains thirteen lines in quotes recited by a speaker, presumably a politician, and then a single line in which he stops and drinks water. The speaker sings praise of his country and stresses on the importance of patriotism. The last line of the poem suggests that the speaker is nervous; perhaps because he knows what he had been reciting is a ploy to misguide the listeners.

*may I feel said he*- E.E. Cummings wrote a lot of erotic poetry especially during the time he was having an affair with the wife of one of his friends from Harvard. This poem with its humor, sexual tension and playful words is perhaps the *most famous among Cummings' erotic poems*. The audacious work can be viewed as a sensuous tribute to the mating rituals between men and women.

*In just*- Cummings' most renowned poem on nature, *in Just*-, can be simply interpreted as a child's narrative at the arrival of spring. The nursery rhyme structure of the poem and compound words indicating child's language are some of the factors that clearly suggest that the poem is narrated by a child.

A pacifist, Cummings was imprisoned for several months by French authorities for suspicion of treason due to letters he'd written. He later recounted his jail experiences in the autobiographical novel *The Enormous Room*, published in 1922.

His next book, *Tulips and Chimneys* (1923), was a collection of poems. He published a few more volumes of poetry in the 1920s and '30s. Cummings, who lived in Paris and New York, became known for poems that played wildly with form and spacing, punctuation, capitalization, overall grammar and pacing (a sample title of one of his poems: "the hours rise up putting off stars and it is"), perhaps serving as a structural metaphor for the writer's belief that much of modern society killed individual creativity and freedom.

*Santa Claus: A Morality* (1946) (or just *Santa Claus*) is a play written by 20th-century poet E. E. Cummings in 1946. The play is an allegorical Christmas tale consisting of one act of five scenes. In the play, Santa Claus deals with the increasing materialism and lust for knowledge around him and becomes consumed by it because of Death. However, the love Santa has for his family allows him to reject these things.

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## SAMUEL BECKETT

**Samuel Barclay Beckett** (/ˈbeɪkɪt/; 13 April 1906 – 22 December 1989) was an Irish avant-garde novelist, playwright, theatre director, and poet, who lived in Paris for most of his adult life and wrote in both English and French.

Beckett's work offers a bleak, tragicomic outlook on human existence, often coupled with black comedy and gallows humour, and became increasingly minimalist in his later career. He is considered one of the last modernist writers, and one of the key figures in what Martin Esslin called the "Theatre of the Absurd".

Beckett was awarded the 1969 Nobel Prize in Literature "for his writing, which—in new forms for the novel and drama—in the destitution of modern man acquires its elevation".<sup>[4]</sup> He was elected Saoi of Aosdána in 1984.

Samuel Beckett was born in a suburb of Dublin. Like his fellow Irish writers George Bernard Shaw, Oscar Wilde, and William Butler Yeats, he came from a Protestant, Anglo-Irish background. At the age of 14 he went to the Portora Royal School, in what became Northern Ireland, a school that catered to the Anglo-Irish middle classes. From 1923 to 1927, he studied Romance languages at Trinity College, Dublin, where he received his bachelor's degree. After a brief spell of teaching in Belfast, he became a reader in English at the École Normale Supérieure in Paris in 1928. There he met the self-exiled Irish writer James Joyce, the author of the controversial and seminally modern novel *Ulysses*, and joined his circle. Contrary to often-repeated reports, however, he never served as Joyce's secretary. He returned to Ireland in 1930 to take up a post as lecturer in French at Trinity College, but after only four terms he resigned, in December 1931, and embarked upon a period of restless travel in London, France, Germany, and Italy. In 1937 Beckett decided to settle in Paris. In 1929, his first critical essay titled, 'Dante... Bruno. Vico.. Joyce' was published. This piece of writing defended author James Joyce's works and his methodology.

His relatively few prewar publications included two essays on Joyce and the French novelist Marcel Proust. The volume *More Pricks Than Kicks* (1934) contained 10 stories describing episodes in the life of a Dublin intellectual, Belacqua Shuah, and the novel *Murphy* (1938) concerns an Irishman in London who escapes from a girl he is about to marry to a life of contemplation as a male nurse in a mental institution. His two slim volumes of poetry were *Whoroscope* (1930), a poem on the French philosopher René Descartes, and the collection *Echo's Bones* (1935). A number of short stories and poems were scattered in various periodicals. He wrote the novel *Dream of Fair to Middling Women* in the mid-1930s, but it remained incomplete and was not published until 1992.

During his years in hiding in unoccupied France, Beckett also completed another novel, *Watt*, which was not published until 1953. After his return to Paris, between 1946 and 1949, Beckett produced a number of stories, the major prose narratives *Molloy* (1951), *Malone meurt* (1951; *Malone Dies*), and *L'Innommable* (1953; *The Unnamable*), and two plays, the unpublished three-act *Eleutheria* and *Waiting for Godot*. ***Waiting for Godot*** a play by Samuel Beckett, in which two characters, Vladimir and Estragon, wait for the arrival of someone named Godot who

never arrives, and while waiting they engage in a variety of discussions and encounter three other characters. His play, 'Waiting for Godot' was voted as 'the most significant English language play of the 20th century'. This play is regarded as a timeless classic and it was one of his most famous works. His play, 'Waiting for Godot' was voted as 'the most significant English language play of the 20th century'. This play is regarded as a timeless classic and it was one of his most famous works. *Happy Days* is a play in two acts, written by Samuel Beckett. Winnie, buried to her waist, follows her daily routine and prattles to her husband, Willie, who is largely hidden and taciturn. Her frequent refrain is "Oh this *is* a happy day." Later, in Act II she is buried up to her neck, but continues to talk and remember happier days.

One of Beckett's most prominent themes throughout his works is something that easily pertains to all humanity, as no human can escape it: the passage of time. The passing of time is just a single aspect of time that Beckett ponders; in his novel *Molloy*, Beckett defines the fine line between past and present. In 1959, he received the honorary doctorate from Trinity College in Dublin. In 1961, he was awarded the International Publishers' Formentor Prize. In 1968, he became a Foreign Honorary Member of the American Academy of Arts and Sciences. In 1969, he was the recipient of the Nobel Prize in Literature.

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## GEORGE ORWELL

**Eric Arthur Blair** (25 June 1903 – 21 January 1950), better known by his pen name **George Orwell**, was an English novelist, essayist, journalist, and critic. His work is marked by lucid prose, awareness of social injustice, opposition to totalitarianism, and outspoken support of democratic socialism.<sup>[2][3]</sup>

He was born in Bengal, into the class of sahibs. His father was a minor British official in the Indian civil service; his mother, of French extraction, was the daughter of an unsuccessful teak merchant in Burma (Myanmar). Their attitudes were those of the "landless gentry," as Orwell

later called lower-middle-class people whose pretensions to social status had little relation to their income. Orwell was thus brought up in an atmosphere of impoverished snobbery. After returning with his parents to England, he was sent in 1911 to a preparatory boarding school on the Sussex coast, where he was distinguished among the other boys by his poverty and his intellectual brilliance. He grew up a morose, withdrawn, eccentric boy, and he was later to tell of the miseries of those years in his posthumously published autobiographical essay, *Such, Such Were the Joys* (1953).

Orwell won scholarships to two of England's leading schools, Winchester and Eton, and chose the latter. He stayed from 1917 to 1921. Aldous Huxley was one of his masters, and it was at Eton that he published his first writing in college periodicals. Instead of accepting a scholarship to a university, Orwell decided to follow family tradition and, in 1922, went to Burma as assistant district superintendent in the Indian Imperial Police. He served in a number of country stations and at first appeared to be a model imperial servant. Yet from boyhood he had wanted to become a writer, and when he realized how much against their will the Burmese were ruled by the British, he felt increasingly ashamed of his role as a colonial police officer. Later he was to recount his experiences and his reactions to imperial rule in his novel *Burmese Days* and in two brilliant autobiographical sketches, "Shooting an Elephant" and "A Hanging," classics of expository prose.

Orwell wrote literary criticism, poetry, fiction, and polemical journalism. He is best known for the allegorical novella *Animal Farm* (1945) and the dystopian novel *Nineteen Eighty-Four* (1949). His non-fiction works, including *The Road to Wigan Pier* (1937), documenting his experience of working class life in the north of England, and *Homage to Catalonia* (1938), an account of his experiences in the Spanish Civil War, are widely acclaimed, as are his essays on politics, literature, language, and culture. In 2008, *The Times* ranked him second on a list of "The 50 greatest British writers since 1945".

*Animal Farm* book reflects events leading up to the Russian Revolution of 1917. The purpose of the revolution was to create a fair society made only by animals, or **animalism** and it was based on **seven commandments** such as "Four legs good, two legs bad" and most importantly: "All

animals are equal". They also changed the name of the farm to "Animal Farm" from Manor Farm. **Orwell** doesn't try to use long, intricate sentences with words you won't understand. Throughout the novel, **Orwell** uses a particular **writing style** that enhances the imagery and themes throughout the novel

*Burmese Days* is a novel by British writer George Orwell. It was first published in the United Kingdom in 1934. It is a tale from the waning days of British colonialism, when Burma was ruled from Delhi as a part of British India.

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## TENNESSEE WILLIAMS

**Tennessee Williams** was an American playwright. Along with Eugene O'Neill and Arthur Miller, he is considered among the three foremost playwrights of 20th-century American drama. After years of obscurity, he became suddenly famous with *The Glass Menagerie* (1944), a play that closely reflected his own unhappy family background. This heralded a string of successes, including *A Streetcar Named Desire* (1947), *Cat on a Hot Tin Roof* (1955), and *Sweet Bird of Youth* (1959). His later work attempted a new style that did not appeal to audiences, and alcohol and drug dependence further inhibited his creative output. His drama *A Streetcar Named Desire* is often numbered on short lists of the finest American plays of the 20th century alongside Eugene O'Neill's *Long Day's Journey into Night* and Arthur Miller's *Death of a Salesman*.

As a small child Williams suffered from a case of diphtheria which nearly ended his life, leaving him weak and virtually confined to his house during a period of recuperation that lasted a year. When Williams was eight years old, his father was promoted to a job at the home office of the International Shoe Company in St. Louis, Missouri. His mother's continual search for what she considered to be an appropriate address, as well as his father's heavy drinking and loudly turbulent behavior, caused them to move numerous times around the city. He attended Soldan High School, a setting he referred to in his play *The Glass Menagerie*.<sup>[8]</sup> Later he studied at University City High School. From 1929 to 1931, he attended the University of Missouri, in Columbia, where he enrolled in journalism classes.<sup>[12]</sup> Williams found his classes boring,

however, and was distracted by his unrequited love for a girl. He was soon entering his poetry, essays, stories, and plays in writing contests, hoping to earn extra income. His first submitted play was *Beauty Is the Word* (1930), followed by *Hot Milk at Three in the Morning* (1932).

Between 1948 and 1959 seven of his plays were performed on Broadway: *Summer and Smoke* (1948), *The Rose Tattoo* (1951), *Camino Real* (1953), *Cat on a Hot Tin Roof* (1955), *Orpheus Descending* (1957), *Garden District* (1958), and *Sweet Bird of Youth* (1959). By 1959 he had earned two Pulitzer Prizes, three New York Drama Critics' Circle Awards, three Donaldson Awards, and a Tony Award.

Williams' work reached wide audiences in the early 1950s when *The Glass Menagerie* and *A Streetcar Named Desire* were made into motion pictures. Later plays also adapted for the screen included *Cat on a Hot Tin Roof*, *The Rose Tattoo*, *Orpheus Descending*, *The Night of the Iguana*, *Sweet Bird of Youth*, and *Summer and Smoke*.

Characters in his plays are often seen as representations of his family members. Laura Wingfield in *The Glass Menagerie* was understood to be modeled on his sister Rose. Some biographers believed that the character of Blanche DuBois in *A Streetcar Named Desire* is also based on her.

Amanda Wingfield in *The Glass Menagerie* was generally seen to represent Williams' mother, Edwina. Characters such as Tom Wingfield in *The Glass Menagerie* and Sebastian in *Suddenly, Last Summer* were understood to represent Williams himself. In addition, he used a lobotomy operation as a motif in *Suddenly, Last Summer*.

*The Glass Menagerie*<sup>[1]</sup> is a five-character memory play by Tennessee Williams that premiered in 1944 and catapulted Williams from obscurity to fame. The play has strong autobiographical elements, featuring characters based on Williams himself, his histrionic mother, and his mentally fragile sister Rose. In writing the play, Williams drew on an earlier short story, as well as a screenplay he had written under the title of *The Gentleman Caller*.

*Streetcar named Desire*- Fantasy's Inability to Overcome **Reality**. Although Williams's protagonist in *A Streetcar Named Desire* is the romantic Blanche DuBois, the play is a work of social realism. Blanche explains to Mitch that she fibs because she refuses to accept the hand fate

has dealt her. **Tennessee Williams** used a lyrical **writing style** that incorporated elements of the Southern Gothic **style** For example, in *The Glass Menagerie* and *A Streetcar Named Desire*.

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## ALICE WALKER

**Alice Malsenior Walker** (born February 9, 1944) is an American novelist, short story writer, poet, and activist. She wrote the critically acclaimed novel *The Color Purple* (1982) for which she won the National Book Award and the Pulitzer Prize for Fiction. She also wrote the novels *Meridian* (1976) and *The Third Life of Grange Copeland* (1970), among other works.

Walker was born in Putnam County, Georgia, the youngest of eight children, to African-American sharecroppers Willie Lee Walker and Minnie Lou Tallulah Grant. Her father, who was, in her words, "wonderful at math but a terrible farmer," earned only \$300 (\$4,000 in 2013 dollars) a year from sharecropping and dairy farming. Her mother supplemented the family income by working as a maid.<sup>[5]</sup> The family also had Native American ancestry, which Walker drew from in her writing and spirituality. Minnie Lou worked 11 hours a day for \$17 per week to help pay for Alice to attend college.

Growing up with an oral tradition, listening to stories from her grandfather (who was the model for the character of "Mr." in *The Color Purple*), Walker began writing, very privately, when she was eight years old. "With my family, I had to hide things," she said. "And I had to keep a lot in my mind."

In 1952, Walker was accidentally wounded in the right eye by a shot from a BB gun fired by one of her brothers.<sup>[9]</sup> In 2013, on BBC Radio's *Desert Island Discs*, she said the act was deliberate but she agreed to protect her brother against their parents' anger if they knew the truth. Because the family had no car, the Walkers could not take their daughter to a hospital for immediate treatment. By the time they reached a doctor a week later, she had become permanently blind in that eye. When a layer of scar tissue formed over her wounded eye, Alice became self-conscious and painfully shy. Stared at and sometimes taunted by other children, she felt like an outcast and turned for solace to reading and to writing poetry. After high school, Walker went to Spelman College in Atlanta on a full scholarship in 1961 and later transferred to Sarah

Lawrence College in New York, graduating in 1966.

Walker resumed her writing career when she joined *Ms.* magazine as an editor. In addition to publishing her collected short stories and poetry in 1970, that year Walker published her first novel, *The Third Life of Grange Copeland*. It explores the life of Grange Copeland, an abusive, irresponsible sharecropper, husband and father. In 1976, Walker's second novel *Meridian* was published. *Meridian* is a "semi-autobiographical narrative based upon Walker's experience in the 1960. In the late 1970s Walker moved to northern California. In 1982, she published what has become her best-known work, *The Color Purple*. The novel follows a young troubled black woman fighting her way through not just racist white culture but patriarchal black culture as well.

Walker has written several other novels, including *The Temple of My Familiar* and *Possessing the Secret of Joy* (which featured several characters and descendants of characters from *The Color Purple*). She has published a number of collections of short stories, poetry, and other writings. Her work is focused on the struggles of black people, particularly women, and their lives in a racist, sexist, and violent society. Walker is a leading figure in liberal politics. In 2007, Walker donated her papers, consisting of 122 boxes of manuscripts and archive material, to Emory University's Manuscript, Archives, and Rare Book Library.

She addresses many different themes in her work, but overall Alice Walker writes about race relations, our relationships to God, African history, and human sexuality. Her work is influenced by and often responding to current racial and gender issues in the world. The poetic devices that Alice Walker uses most often in her poetry are metaphors, imagery and idioms.

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## MARGARET ATWOOD

Margaret Atwood is a Canadian poet, novelist, literary critic, essayist, inventor, and environmental activist. She is a winner of the Arthur C. Clarke Award, Prince of Asturias Award for Literature and the Peace Prize of the German Book Trade. While she is best known for her

work as a novelist, she has also published fifteen books of poetry. Many of her poems have been inspired by myths and fairy tales, which have been interests of hers from an early age. Atwood has published short stories in *Tamarack Review*, *Alphabet*, *Harper's*, *CBC Anthology*, *Ms.*, *Saturday Night*, and many other magazines. She has also published four collections of stories and three collections of unclassifiable short prose works.

Atwood was born in Ottawa, Ontario, Canada, as the second of three children. She did not attend school full-time until she was eight years old. She became a voracious reader of literature. Atwood realized she wanted to write professionally when she was 16.<sup>[16]</sup> In 1957, she began studying at Victoria College in the University of Toronto, where she published poems and articles in *Acta Victoriana*, the college literary journal. Her professors included Jay Macpherson and Northrop Frye. She graduated in 1961 with a Bachelor of Arts in English (honours) and minors in philosophy and French.

Atwood, who was surrounded by the intellectual dialogue of the female faculty members at Victoria College, often portrays female characters dominated by patriarchy in her novels. She also sheds light on women's social oppression as a result from patriarchal ideology. Still, Atwood denies that *The Edible Woman*, published in 1969 and coinciding with the early second wave of the feminist movement, for example, is feminist, and claims that she wrote it four years before the movement. Atwood believes that the feminist label can only be applied to writers who consciously work within the framework of the feminist movement. Margaret Atwood has repeatedly made observations about our relationships to animals in her works. In *Surfacing*, one character remarks about eating animals. Some characters in her books link sexual oppression to meat-eating and consequently give up meat-eating. In *The Edible Woman*, Atwood's character Marian identifies with hunted animals and cries after hearing her fiancé's experience of hunting and eviscerating a rabbit. Marian stops eating meat but then later returns to it.

## **Novels**

- *The Edible Woman* (1969)
- *Surfacing* (1972)

- *Lady Oracle* (1976)
- *Life Before Man*
- *Bodily Harm* (1981)
- *The Handmaid's Tale*
- *Cat's Eye*
- *The Blind Assassin*

***The Handmaid's Tale***-The novel is based around the journey of the handmaid Offred, an emphasis on the possessive form "of Fred," as handmaids are forbidden to use their birth names and must echo the male, or master, for whom they serve. *The Handmaid's Tale* explores themes of women in subjugation to misogyny in a patriarchal society and the various means by which these women gain individualism and independence.

***Cat's Eye*** is a 1988 novel by Canadian writer Margaret Atwood about controversial painter Elaine Risley, who vividly reflects on her childhood and teenage years. Her strongest memories are of Cordelia, who was the leader of a trio of girls who were both very cruel and very kind to her in ways that tint Elaine's perceptions of relationships and her world — not to mention her art — into her middle years.

***Life Before Man*** The novel has three principal characters: Nate, Elizabeth and Lesje. Nate and Elizabeth are an unhappily married couple, with both husband and wife involved in extramarital affairs. Margaret Atwood in her novels, short stories and even poetry uses a similar style of writing. It is a style that is not only distinctive but also effective. Her sense of description is one of her best talents. It allows her to create pieces of work that constantly reinforce her themes of political chaos and the effect that a patriarchal society has on women. As a feminist writer, much of her work deals with how men not only empower women but how they manage to hurt each other. his piece of work at times tends to be a very political feminist novel, immediately concerned with such issues as body image, female sexuality, male-female relationships, and male brutality in a patriarchal society.

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