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Understanding Poetry

Subject: UNDERSTANDING POETRY

Credits: 4

SYLLABUS

Introduction to Understanding Poetry

Poetry

Shakespeare and Milton, Donne, Pope and Gray, The Romantic, Victorian Poetry

Poets

The Modern Poets, The American Poets, The Indian Poets

William Wordsworth, S.T. Coleridge and William Blake Era: The Poetry of Romantic Era, John Keats: Poetry of Second Generation Romantic

Suggested Readings:

- 1 .Thematic Guide to British Poetry : Ruth F. Glancy
2. Centre and Periphery In Modern British Poetry: Andrew Duncan
3. New British Poetries: The Scope of the Possible: Robert Hampson, Peter Barry
4. The Mentor Book of Major British Poets (Mentor Series) by Various and Oscar Williams.

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Chapter 1

Introduction to Poetry

This article focuses on poetry written in English from the United Kingdom: England, Scotland, Wales, and Northern Ireland (and Ireland before 1922). However, though the whole of Ireland was politically part of the United Kingdom between January 1801 and December 1922, it is controversial to describe Irish literature as British. For some this includes works by authors from Northern Ireland.

The earliest known English poem is a hymn on the creation; Bede attributes this to Cadmon (fl. 658–680), who was, according to legend, an illiterate herdsman who produced extemporaneous poetry at a monastery at Whitby. This is generally taken as marking the beginning of Anglo-Saxon poetry. Much of the poetry of the period is difficult to date, or even to arrange chronologically; for example, estimates for the date of the great epic *Beowulf* range from AD 608 right through to AD 1000, and there has never been anything even approaching a consensus. It is possible to identify certain key moments, however. *The Dream of the Rood* was written before circa AD 700, when excerpts were carved in runes on the Ruthwell Cross. Some poems on historical events, such as *The Battle of Brunanburh* and *The Battle of Maldon*, appear to have been composed shortly after the events in question, and can be dated reasonably precisely in consequence.

By and large, however, Anglo-Saxon poetry is categorized by the manuscripts in which it survives, rather than its date of composition. The most important manuscripts are the four great poetical codices of the late 10th and early 11th centuries, known as the Cadmon manuscript, the Vercelli Book, the Exeter Book, and the *Beowulf* manuscript. While the poetry that has survived is limited in volume, it is wide in breadth. *Beowulf* is the only heroic epic to have survived in its entirety, but fragments of others such as *Waldere* and the *Finnesburg Fragment* show that it was not unique in its time. Other genres include much religious verse, from devotional works to biblical paraphrase; elegies such as *The Wanderer*, *The Seafarer*, and *The Ruin* (often taken to be a description of the ruins of Bath); and numerous proverbs, riddles, and charms. With one notable exception (*Rhyming Poem*), Anglo-Saxon poetry depends on alliterative verse for its structure and any rhyme included is merely ornamental.

The Anglo-Norman period and the Later Middle Ages

With the Norman conquest of England, beginning in 1111 the Anglo-Saxon language rapidly diminished as a written literary language. The new aristocracy spoke predominantly Norman, and this became the standard language of courts, parliament, and polite society. As the invaders integrated, their language and literature mingled with that of the natives: the *Oïl* dialect of the upper classes became Anglo-Norman, and Anglo-Saxon underwent a gradual transition into Middle English.

While Anglo-Norman or Latin was preferred for high culture, English literature by no means died out, and a number of important works illustrate the development of the language. Around the turn of the 13th century, Layamon wrote his *Brut*, based on Wace's 12th century Anglo-Norman epic of the same name; Layamon's language is recognisably Middle English, though his prosody shows a strong Anglo-Saxon influence remaining. Other transitional works were preserved as popular entertainment, including a variety of romances and lyrics. With time, the English language regained prestige, and in 1362 it replaced French and Latin in Parliament and courts of law.

It was with the 14th century that major works of English literature began once again to appear; these include the so-called Pearl Poet's *Pearl*, *Patience*, *Cleanness*, and *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight*; Langland's political and religious allegory *Piers Plowman*; Gower's *Confessio Amantis*; and the works of Chaucer, the most highly regarded English poet of the Middle Ages, who was seen by his contemporaries as a successor to the great tradition of Virgil and Dante.

The reputation of Chaucer's successors in the 15th century has suffered in comparison with him, though Lydgate and Skelton are widely studied. A group of Scottish writers were influenced by Chaucer. The rise of Scottish poetry began with the writing of *The Kingis Quair* by James I of Scotland. The main poets of this Scottish group were Robert Henryson, William Dunbar and Gavin Douglas. Henryson and Douglas introduced a note of almost savage satire, which may have owed something to the Gaelic bards, while Douglas' *Eneados*, a translation into Middle Scots of Virgil's *Aeneid*, was the first complete translation of any major work of classical antiquity into an English or Anglic language.

The Renaissance in England

The Renaissance was slow in coming to England, with the generally accepted start date being around 1509. It is also generally accepted that the English Renaissance extended until the Restoration in 1660. However, a number of factors had prepared the way for the introduction of the new learning long before this start date. A number of medieval poets had, as already noted, shown an interest in the ideas of Aristotle and the writings of European Renaissance precursors such as Dante.

The introduction of movable-block printing by Caxton in 1474 provided the means for the more rapid dissemination of new or recently rediscovered writers and thinkers. Caxton also printed the works of Chaucer and Gower and these books helped establish the idea of a native poetic tradition that was linked to its European counterparts. In addition, the writings of English humanists like Thomas More and Thomas Elyot helped bring the ideas and attitudes associated with the new learning to an English audience.

Three other factors in the establishment of the English Renaissance were the Reformation, Counter Reformation, and the opening of the era of English naval power and overseas exploration and expansion. The establishment of the Church of England in 1535 accelerated the process of questioning the Catholic world-view that had previously dominated intellectual and artistic life. At the same time, long-distance sea voyages helped provide the stimulus and information that underpinned a new understanding of the nature of the universe which resulted in the theories of Nicolaus Copernicus and Johannes Kepler.

Early Renaissance poetry

With a small number of exceptions, the early years of the 16th century are not particularly notable. The Douglas Aeneid was completed in 1513 and John Skelton wrote poems that were transitional between the late Medieval and Renaissance styles. The new king, Henry VIII, was something of a poet himself. The most significant English poet of this period was Thomas Wyatt, who was among the first poets to write sonnets in English.

The Elizabethans

The Elizabethan period (1558 to 1603) in poetry is characterized by a number of frequently overlapping developments. The introduction and adaptation of themes, models and verse forms from other European traditions and classical literature, the Elizabethan song tradition, the emergence of a courtly poetry often centred around the figure of the monarch and the growth of a verse-based drama are among the most important of these developments.

Elizabethan Song

A wide range of Elizabethan poets wrote songs, including Nicholas Grimald, Thomas Nashe and Robert Southwell. There are also a large number of extant anonymous songs from the period. Perhaps the greatest of all the songwriters was Thomas Campion. Campion is also notable because of his experiments with metres based on counting syllables rather than stresses. These quantitative metres were based on classical models and should be viewed as part of the wider Renaissance revival of Greek and Roman artistic methods.

The songs were generally printed either in miscellanies or anthologies such as Richard Tottel's 1557 Songs and Sonnets or in songbooks that included printed music to enable performance. These performances formed an integral part of both public and private entertainment. By the end of the 16th century, a new generation of composers, including John Dowland, William Byrd, Orlando Gibbons, Thomas Weelkes and Thomas Morley were helping to bring the art of Elizabethan song to an extremely high musical level.

Elizabethan poems and plays were often written in iambic meters, based on a metrical foot of two syllables, one unstressed and one stressed. However, much metrical experimentation took place during the period, and many of the songs, in particular, departed widely from the iambic norm.

Courtly poetry

Edmund Spenser

With the consolidation of Elizabeth's power, a genuine court sympathetic to poetry and the arts in general emerged. This encouraged the emergence of a poetry aimed at, and often set in, an idealised version of the courtly world.

Among the best known examples of this are Edmund Spenser's *The Faerie Queene*, which is effectively an extended hymn of praise to the queen, and Philip Sidney's *Arcadia*. This courtly trend can also be seen in Spenser's *Shepheardes Calender*. This poem marks the introduction into an English context of the classical pastoral, a mode of poetry that assumes an aristocratic audience with a certain kind of attitude to the land and peasants. The explorations of love found in the sonnets of William Shakespeare and the poetry of Walter Raleigh and others also implies a courtly audience.

Classicism

Virgil's *Aeneid*, Thomas Campion's metrical experiments, and Spenser's *Shepheardes Calender* and plays like Shakespeare's *Antony and Cleopatra* are all examples of the influence of classicism on Elizabethan poetry. It remained common for poets of the period to write on themes from classical mythology; Shakespeare's *Venus and Adonis* and the Christopher Marlowe/George Chapman *Hero and Leander* are examples of this kind of work.

Translations of classical poetry also became more widespread, with the versions of Ovid's *Metamorphoses* by Arthur Golding (1565–67) and George Sandys (1626), and Chapman's translations of Homer's *Iliad* (1611) and *Odyssey* (c.1615), among the outstanding examples.

Jacobean and Caroline poetry

English Renaissance poetry after the Elizabethan poetry can be seen as belonging to one of three strains; the Metaphysical poets, the Cavalier poets and the school of Spenser. However, the boundaries between these three groups are not always clear and an individual poet could write in more than one manner.

The Metaphysical poets

John Donne

Main article: [Metaphysical poets](#)

The early 17th century saw the emergence of this group of poets who wrote in a witty, complicated style. The most famous of the Metaphysicals is probably John Donne. Others include George Herbert, Thomas Traherne, Henry Vaughan, Andrew Marvell, and Richard

Crashaw. John Milton in his *Comus* falls into this group. The Metaphysical poets went out of favour in the 18th century but began to be read again in the Victorian era. Donne's reputation was finally fully restored by the approbation of T. S. Eliot in the early 20th century.

The Cavalier poets

The Cavalier poets wrote in a lighter, more elegant and artificial style than the Metaphysical poets. Leading members of the group include Ben Jonson, Richard Lovelace, Robert Herrick, Edmund Waller, Thomas Carew and John Denham. The Cavalier poets can be seen as the forerunners of the major poets of the Augustan era, who admired them greatly.

The Restoration and 18th century

It is perhaps ironic that *Paradise Lost*, a story of fallen pride, was the first major poem to appear in England after the Restoration. The court of Charles II had, in its years in France, learned a worldliness and sophistication that marked it as distinctively different from the monarchies that preceded the Republic. Even if Charles had wanted to reassert the divine right of kingship, the Protestantism and taste for power of the intervening years would have rendered it impossible.

Satire

It is hardly surprising that the world of fashion and scepticism that emerged encouraged the art of satire. All the major poets of the period, Samuel Butler, John Dryden, Alexander Pope and Samuel Johnson, and the Irish poet Jonathan Swift, wrote satirical verse. What is perhaps more surprising is that their satire was often written in defence of public order and the established church and government. However, writers such as Pope used their gift for satire to create scathing works responding to their detractors or to criticise what they saw as social atrocities perpetrated by the government. Pope's "*The Dunciad*" is a satirical slaying of two of his literary adversaries (Lewis Theobald, and Colley Cibber in a later version), expressing the view that British society was falling apart morally, culturally, and intellectually.

18th century classicism

The 18th century is sometimes called the Augustan age, and contemporary admiration for the classical world extended to the poetry of the time. Not only did the poets aim for a polished high

style in emulation of the Roman ideal, they also translated and imitated Greek and Latin verse resulting in measured rationalised elegant verse. Dryden translated all the known works of Virgil, and Pope produced versions of the two Homeric epics. Horace and Juvenal were also widely translated and imitated, Horace most famously by John Wilmot, Earl of Rochester and Juvenal by Samuel Johnson's *Vanity of Human Wishes*.

Women poets in the 18th century

Aphra Behn

A number of women poets of note emerged during the period of the Restoration, including Aphra Behn, Margaret Cavendish, Mary Chudleigh, Anne Finch, Anne Killigrew, and Katherine Philips. Nevertheless, print publication by women poets was still relatively scarce when compared to that of men, though manuscript evidence indicates that many more women poets were practicing than was previously thought. Disapproval of feminine "forwardness", however, kept many out of print in the early part of the period, and even as the century progressed women authors still felt the need to justify their incursions into the public sphere by claiming economic necessity or the pressure of friends. Women writers were increasingly active in all genres throughout the 18th century, and by the 1790s women's poetry was flourishing. Notable poets later in the period include Anna Laetitia Barbauld, Joanna Baillie, Susanna Blamire, Felicia Hemans, Mary Leapor, Lady Mary Wortley Montagu, Hannah More, and Mary Robinson. In the past decades there has been substantial scholarly and critical work done on women poets of the long 18th century: first, to reclaim them and make them available in contemporary editions in print or online, and second, to assess them and position them within a literary tradition.

The late 18th century

Towards the end of the 18th century, poetry began to move away from the strict Augustan ideals and a new emphasis on sentiment and the feelings of the poet. This trend can perhaps be most clearly seen in the handling of nature, with a move away from poems about formal gardens and landscapes by urban poets and towards poems about nature as lived in. The leading exponents of this new trend include Thomas Gray, George Crabbe, Christopher Smart and Robert Burns as well as the Irish poet Oliver Goldsmith. These poets can be seen as paving the way for the Romantic Movement

Chapter 2

Origin of Poetry in Different Literary Ages

The last quarter of the 18th century was a time of social and political turbulence, with revolutions in the United States, France, Ireland and elsewhere. In Great Britain, movement for social change and a more inclusive sharing of power was also growing. This was the backdrop against which the Romantic movement in English poetry emerged. The main poets of this movement were William Blake, William Wordsworth, Samuel Taylor Coleridge, Percy Bysshe Shelley, Lord Byron, and John Keats. The birth of English Romanticism is often dated to the publication in 1798 of Wordsworth and Coleridge's *Lyrical Ballads*. However, Blake had been publishing since the early 1780s. Much of the focus on Blake only came about during the last century when Northrop Frye discussed his work in his book "The Anatomy of Criticism." Shelley is most famous for such classic anthology verse works as *Ozymandias*, and long visionary poems which include *Prometheus Unbound*. Shelley's groundbreaking poem *The Masque of Anarchy* calls for nonviolence in protest and political action. It is perhaps the first modern statement of the principle of nonviolent protest. Mahatma Gandhi's passive resistance was influenced and inspired by Shelley's verse, and would often quote the poem to vast audiences.

In poetry, the Romantic movement emphasized the creative expression of the individual and the need to find and formulate new forms of expression. The Romantics, with the partial exception of Byron, rejected the poetic ideals of the 18th century, and each of them returned to Milton for inspiration, though each drew something different from Milton. They also put a good deal of stress on their own originality.

Lord Byron

To the Romantics, the moment of creation was the most important in poetic expression and could not be repeated once it passed. Because of this new emphasis, poems that were not complete were nonetheless included in a poet's body of work (such as Coleridge's "Kubla Khan" and "Christabel"). Additionally, the Romantic movement marked a shift in the use of language. Attempting to express the "language of the common man", Wordsworth and his fellow Romantic

poets focused on employing poetic language for a wider audience, countering the mimetic, tightly constrained Neo-Classic poems (although it's important to note that the poet wrote first and foremost for his/her own creative, expression). In Shelley's "Defense of Poetry", he contends that poets are the "creators of language" and that the poet's job is to refresh language for their society.

The Romantics were not the only poets of note at this time. In the work of John Clare the late Augustan voice is blended with a peasant's first-hand knowledge to produce arguably some of the finest nature poetry in the English language. Another contemporary poet who does not fit into the Romantic group was Walter Savage Landor. Landor was a classicist whose poetry forms a link between the Augustans and Robert Browning, who much admired it.

Victorian poetry

The Victorian era was a period of great political change, social and economic change. The Empire recovered from the loss of the American colonies and entered a period of rapid expansion. This expansion, combined with increasing industrialisation and mechanisation, led to a prolonged period of economic growth. The Reform Act 1832 was the beginning of a process that would eventually lead to universal suffrage.

Elizabeth Barrett Browning

The major High Victorian poets were John Clare, Alfred, Lord Tennyson, Robert Browning, Elizabeth Barrett Browning, Matthew Arnold and Gerard Manley Hopkins, though Hopkins was not published until 1918.

John Clare came to be known for his celebratory representations of the English countryside and his lamentation of its disruption. His biographer Jonathan Bate states that Clare was "the greatest labouring-class poet that England has ever produced. No one has ever written more powerfully of nature, of a rural childhood, and of the alienated and unstable self". Tennyson was, to some degree, the Spenser of the new age and his *Idylls of the Kings* can be read as a Victorian version of *The Faerie Queen*, that is as a poem that sets out to provide a mythic foundation to the idea of empire.

The Brownings spent much of their time out of England and explored European models and matter in much of their poetry. Robert Browning's great innovation was the dramatic monologue, which he used to its full extent in his long novel in verse, *The Ring and the Book*. Elizabeth Barrett Browning is perhaps best remembered for *Sonnets from the Portuguese* but her long poem *Aurora Leigh* is one of the classics of 19th century feminist literature.

Matthew Arnold was much influenced by Wordsworth, though his poem *Dover Beach* is often considered a precursor of the modernist revolution. Hopkins wrote in relative obscurity and his work was not published until after his death. His unusual style (involving what he called "sprung rhythm" and heavy reliance on rhyme and alliteration) had a considerable influence on many of the poets of the 1940s.

Pre-Raphaelites, arts and crafts, Aestheticism, and the "Yellow" 1890s

The Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood was a mid-19th century arts movement dedicated to the reform of what they considered the sloppy Mannerist painting of the day. Although primarily concerned with the visual arts, two members, the brother and sister Dante Gabriel Rossetti and Christina Rossetti, were also poets of some ability. Their poetry shares many of the concerns of the painters; an interest in Medieval models, an almost obsessive attention to visual detail and an occasional tendency to lapse into whimsy. Dante Rossetti worked with, and had some influence on, the leading arts and crafts painter and poet William Morris. Morris shared the Pre-Raphaelite interest in the poetry of the European Middle Ages, to the point of producing some illuminated manuscript volumes of his work.

Towards the end of the century, English poets began to take an interest in French symbolism and Victorian poetry entered a decadent fin-de-siecle phase. Two groups of poets emerged, the Yellow Book poets who adhered to the tenets of Aestheticism, including Algernon Charles Swinburne, Oscar Wilde and Arthur Symonds and the Rhymers' Club group that included Ernest Dowson, Lionel Johnson and William Butler Yeats.

Comic verse. Comic verse abounded in the Victorian era. Magazines such as *Punch* and *Fun* magazine teemed with humorous invention and were aimed at a well-educated readership. The most famous collection of Victorian comic verse is the *Bab Ballads*.

The 20th century

The first three decades

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

A. E. Housman (1859 – 1936) was poet who was born in the Victorian era and who first published in the 1890s, but who only really became known in the 20th century. Housman is best known for his cycle of poems *A Shropshire Lad* (1896). This collection was turned down by several publishers so that Housman published it himself, and the work only became popular when "the advent of war, first in the Boer War and then in World War I, gave the book widespread appeal due to its nostalgic depiction of brave English soldiers". The poems' wistful evocation of doomed youth in the English countryside, in spare language and distinctive imagery, appealed strongly to late Victorian and Edwardian taste, and the fact that several early 20th-century composers set it to music helped its popularity. Housman published a further highly successful collection *Last Poems* in 1922 while a third volume, *More Poems*, was published posthumously in 1936.

The Georgian poets and World War I

The Georgian poets were the first major grouping of the post-Victorian era. Their work appeared in a series of five anthologies called *Georgian Poetry* which were published by Harold Monro and edited by Edward Marsh. The poets featured included Edmund Blunden, Rupert Brooke, Robert Graves, D. H. Lawrence, Walter de la Mare and Siegfried Sassoon. Their poetry represented something of a reaction to the decadence of the 1890s and tended towards the sentimental.

Brooke and Sassoon were to go on to win reputations as war poets and Lawrence quickly distanced himself from the group and was associated with the modernist movement. Other notable poets who wrote about the war include Isaac Rosenberg, Edward Thomas, Wilfred Owen, May Cannan and, from the home front, Hardy and Rudyard Kipling, whose inspirational poem is a national favorite. Like William Ernest Henley's poem *Invictus* that has inspired such people as Nelson Mandela when he was incarcerated, *If—* is a memorable evocation of Victorian stoicism, regarded as a traditional British virtue. Although many of these poets wrote socially-aware criticism of the war, most remained technically conservative and traditionalist.

Modernism

Among the foremost avant-garde writers were the American-born poets Gertrude Stein, T. S. Eliot, H.D. and Ezra Pound, each of whom spent an important part of their writing lives in England, France and Italy. Pound's involvement with the Imagists marked the beginning of a revolution in the way poetry was written. English poets involved with this group included D. H. Lawrence, Richard Aldington, T. E. Hulme, F. S. Flint, Ford Madox Ford, Allen Upward and John Cournos. Eliot, particularly after the publication of *The Waste Land*, became a major figure and influence on other English poets.

In addition to these poets, other English modernists began to emerge. These included the London-Welsh poet and painter David Jones, whose first book, *In Parenthesis*, was one of the very few experimental poems to come out of World War I, the Scot Hugh MacDiarmid, Mina Loy and Basil Bunting. The poets who began to emerge in the 1930s had two things in common; they had all been born too late to have any real experience of the pre-World War I world and they grew up in a period of social, economic and political turmoil. Perhaps as a consequence of these facts, themes of community, social (in) justice and war seem to dominate the poetry of the decade.

The poetic space of the decade was dominated by four poets; W. H. Auden, Stephen Spender, Cecil Day-Lewis and Louis MacNeice, although the last of these belongs at least as much to the history of Irish poetry. These poets were all, in their early days at least, politically active on the Left. Although they admired Eliot, they also represented a move away from the technical innovations of their modernist predecessors. A number of other, less enduring, poets also worked

in the same vein. One of these was Michael Roberts, whose *New Country* anthology both introduced the group to a wider audience and gave them their name.

The 1930s also saw the emergence of a home-grown English surrealist poetry whose main exponents were David Gascoyne, Hugh Sykes Davies, George Barker, and Philip O'Connor. These poets turned to French models rather than either the *New Country* poets or English-language modernism, and their work was to prove of importance to later English experimental poets as it broadened the scope of the English avant-garde tradition.

John Betjeman and Stevie Smith, who were two of the most significant poets of this period, stood outside all schools and groups. Betjeman was a quietly ironic poet of Middle England with a fine command of a wide range of verse techniques. Smith was an entirely unclassifiable one-off voice.

The Forties

The 1940s opened with the United Kingdom at war and a new generation of war poets emerged in response. These included Keith Douglas, Alun Lewis, Henry Reed and F. T. Prince. As with the poets of the First World War, the work of these writers can be seen as something of an interlude in the history of 20th century poetry. Technically, many of these war poets owed something to the 1930s poets, but their work grew out of the particular circumstances in which they found themselves living and fighting.

The main movement in post-war 1940s poetry was the New Romantic group that included Dylan Thomas, George Barker, W. S. Graham, Kathleen Raine, Henry Treece and J. F. Hendry. These writers saw themselves as in revolt against the classicism of the *New Country* poets. They turned to such models as Gerard Manley Hopkins, Arthur Rimbaud and Hart Crane and the word play of James Joyce. Thomas, in particular, helped Anglo-Welsh poetry to emerge as a recognizable force.

Other significant poets to emerge in the 1940s include Lawrence Durrell, Bernard Spencer, Roy Fuller, Norman Nicholson, Vernon Watkins, R. S. Thomas and Norman MacCaig. These last four poets represent a trend towards regionalism and poets writing about their native areas; Watkins and Thomas in Wales, Nicholson in Cumberland and MacCaig in Scotland.

The Fifties

The 1950s were dominated by three groups of poets, The Movement, The Group and a number of poets that gathered around the label Extremist Art.

The Movement poets as a group came to public notice in Robert Conquest's 1955 anthology *New Lines*. The core of the group consisted of Philip Larkin, Elizabeth Jennings, D. J. Enright, Kingsley Amis, Thom Gunn and Donald Davie. They were identified with a hostility to modernism and internationalism, and looked to Hardy as a model. However, both Davie and Gunn later moved away from this position.

As befits their name, the Group were much more formally a group of poets, meeting for weekly discussions under the chairmanship of Philip Hobsbaum and Edward Lucie-Smith. Other Group poets included Martin Bell, Peter Porter, Peter Redgrove, George MacBeth and David Wevill. Hobsbaum spent some time teaching in Belfast, where he was a formative influence on the emerging Northern Ireland poets including Seamus Heaney.

The term Extremist Art was first used by the poet A. Alvarez to describe the work of the American poet Sylvia Plath. Other poets associated with this group included Plath's one-time husband Ted Hughes, Francis Berry and Jon Silkin. These poets are sometimes compared with the Expressionist German school.

A number of young poets working in what might be termed a modernist vein also started publishing during this decade. These included Charles Tomlinson, Gael Turnbull, Roy Fisher and Bob Cobbing. These poets can now be seen as forerunners of some of the major developments during the following two decades.

The 1960s and 1970s.

In the early part of the 1960s, the centre of gravity of mainstream poetry moved to Northern Ireland, with the emergence of Seamus Heaney, Tom Paulin, Paul Muldoon and others. In England, the most cohesive groupings can, in retrospect, be seen to cluster around what might loosely be called the modernist tradition and draw on American as well as indigenous models.

The British Poetry Revival was a wide-reaching collection of groupings and subgroupings that embraces performance, sound and concrete poetry as well as the legacy of Pound, Jones, MacDiarmid, Loy and Bunting, the Objectivist poets, the Beats and the Black Mountain poets, among others. Leading poets associated with this movement include J. H. Prynne, Eric Mottram, Tom Raworth, Denise Riley and Lee Harwood.

The Mersey Beat poets were Adrian Henri, Brian Patten and Roger McGough. Their work was a self-conscious attempt at creating an English equivalent to the Beats. Many of their poems were written in protest against the established social order and, particularly, the threat of nuclear war. Although not actually a Mersey Beat poet, Adrian Mitchell is often associated with the group in critical discussion. Contemporary poet Steve Turner has also been compared with them.

About half-way from the Beats and the Angry Young Men stands Keith Barnes whose themes are WWII, love, social criticism and death. His *Collected Poems* were published in France.

English poetry now.

Many consider Geoffrey Hill to be the finest English poet writing today. Mark Ford is an English poet who writes in the tradition of the New York School. The last three decades of the 20th century saw a number of short-lived poetic groupings, including the Martians, along with a general trend towards what has been termed 'Poeclectics', namely an intensification within individual poets' oeuvres of "all kinds of style, subject, voice, register and form". There has also been a growth in interest in women's writing, and in poetry from England's minorities, especially the West Indian community. Performance poetry has gained popularity, fuelled by the poetry slam movement. Poets who emerged in this period include Carol Ann Duffy, Andrew Motion, Craig Raine, Wendy Cope, James Fenton, Blake Morrison, Liz Lochhead, Linton Kwesi Johnson and Benjamin Zephaniah.

Even more recent activity focused around poets in Bloodaxe Books' *The New Poetry*, including Simon Armitage, Kathleen Jamie, Glyn Maxwell, Selima Hill, Maggie Hannan, Michael Hofmann and Peter Reading. The New Generation movement flowered in the 1990s and early 2000s, producing poets such as Don Paterson, Julia Copus, John Stammers, Jacob Polley, K M Warwick, David Morley and Alice Oswald. A new generation of innovative poets has also sprung up in the wake of the Revival grouping, notably Caroline Bergvall, Tony Lopez, Allen

Fisher and Denise Riley.[16] There has been, too, a remarkable upsurge in independent and experimental poetry pamphlet publishers such as Barque, Flarestack, Heaventree and Perdika Press. Throughout this period, and to the present, independent poetry presses such as Enitharmon have continued to promote original work from (among others) Dannie Abse, Martyn Crucefix and Jane Duran.

Chapter 3

Movements that Effected English Poetry

Throughout history, there have been hundreds of major and minor poetic movements and communities. Major community-based movements such as the Ancient Greek poetry schools, Provencal literature, Sicilian court poets, Elizabethan and Romantic poets, American Transcendentalists, Paris expatriate (Surrealist), and Beat poets – changed the course of poetry during and after their respective eras.

Ancient Greek poetry (7th to 4th centuries B.C.)

The pinnacle of ancient Greek poetry lasted three centuries, making it one of the few multi-generational poetic movements and communities. Ancient Greek poets were also unique because they were the first large group to commit their poetry to writing; prior civilizations preferred the oral tradition, though some written poems date back to the 25th century B.C. Greece's poetic movement was part of the greatest cultural and intellectual community in world history. Poets were often dramatists who wrote for choirs, or courtly muses who entertained regional kings. Hundreds of dramas were performed, each of them featuring exquisite lyric poetry within its three-act structure. The Greeks developed nearly all of the classic forms that formed the underpinnings of later literature, drama, music and poetry, including the ode, epic, lyric, tragedy, and comedy. Among the great poets who passed developing forms to succeeding generations were Homer, Hesiod, Sappho, Pindar, Aeschylus, Anacreon, and Euripides.

Ancient Greece's cultural explosion ended when it was conquered first by Alexander the Great and then by Rome. The Romans borrowed from Greek works to develop their own dramatic, literary, and poetic movements. As Greek works became disseminated through the Western world, they created the basis for modern literature.

The central figures of the Elizabethan canon are Edmund Spenser, Sir Philip Sidney, Christopher Marlowe, William Shakespeare, Ben Jonson, and John Donne. There have been few attempts to change this long established list because the cultural importance of these six is so great that even re-evaluations on grounds of literary merit has not dared to dislodge them from the curriculum.

For this reason the challenges to the canon that have been made during the last century have mainly been concerned with the so-called "minor" poets.

This distinction between "major" and "minor" poets, and between "major" and "minor" works by individual poets, is one of the mainstays of the canonical tradition. Its aim can be summed up in the words of F. T. Palgrave who in his *The Golden Treasury* aimed to pass over "extreme or temporary phases in style" in favour of "something neither modern, nor ancient, but true in all ages". This anachronistic ideal has curiously enough been prevalent throughout two hundred years of literary history whose ostensible goal has been to describe the period.

Provençal literature (11th to 13th centuries)

Like a giant iron cloud, the popes of the Holy Roman Empire – the purveyors of the Middle Ages – clamped down and extinguished creative and artistic expression. However, as the 11th century reached its midpoint, a group of troubadour musicians in southern France began to sing and write striking lyrics. They were influenced by the Arabic civilization and its leading denizens, Omar Khayyam and Rumi, inspired by Latin and Greek poets, and guided by Christian precepts. Three concepts stood above all others: the spiritualization of passion, imagery, and secret love. With a gift for rhythm, meter, and form, the musicians and poets created a masterful style by the 13th century.

The Provençal troubadours began as court singer-poets, among them William X, Duke of Aquitaine, Eleanor Aquitaine, and King Richard I of England. They practiced the art, but its undisputed masters were Bertrand de Born, Arnaud Daniel, Guillame de Machant, Christine di Pisan, and Marie de France. During their heyday, these and other poets routinely traveled to communities to deliver poems, news, songs, and dramatic sketches in their masterful lyrical styles. Among those deeply influenced were Dante Alighieri, Francesco Petrarch, and Geoffrey Chaucer. Forms like the sestina, rondeau, triolet, canso, and ballata originated with the Provençal poets.

The Inquisition doomed the Provençal movement in the 13th century, though a few poets continued to produce into the mid-14th century. Most troubadours fled to Spain and Italy, where two new movements flourished – including the Sicilian School.

Sicilian School (mid-13th to early 14th centuries)

Emboldened by the passionate poetics of the Provençal troubadours, a small group of Sicilian poets in the court of Frederick II turned verses of heartfelt love into the first spiritual heartbeat of the Renaissance – and the ancestral work that would explode in England during the Elizabethan and Shakespearean eras.

In the twelfth century, Sicily integrated three distinct languages and cultural influences: Arabic, Byzantine Greek, and Latin. The small society was well read in both ancient Greek and Latin, and women were viewed more kindly and tenderly than in other medieval cultures. When Sicilian poets interacted with the Provençal troubadours, they found the perfect verse form for their utterances of the heart: lyric poetry.

Beginning with Cielo of Alcamo, the court poets developed a series of lyrical styles that used standard vernacular to make art of poetry. They were aided by Frederick II, who required poets to stick to one subject: courtly love. Between 1230 and 1266, court poets wrote hundreds of love poems. They worked with a beautiful derivative of canso, the canzone, which became the most popular verse form until Giacomo de Lentini further developed it into the sonnet. Besides writing sonnets, de Lentini continuously invented new words in what became a new language – Italian. Among the best-known poets were de Lentini, Pier delle Vigne, Renaldo d'Aquino, Giacomo Pugliese, and Mazzeo Ricco.

The Sicilian poets made several changes to Provençal structure, including the discontinuation of repetitive and interchangeable lines. They also wrote poetry to be read, rather than accompanied by music, and created the 14-line sonnet structure, broken into an octet and sestet, which stands to this day.

As the 14th century dawned, the Sicilian poets' canzones, balladas and sonnets came to the attention of Dante and Petrarch, who spread them throughout Bologna, Florence, and other emerging literary centers. By the time the Renaissance arrived, nearly 100 poets were plying their trade throughout the culturally awakening country—and scholars from England, France, Spain, and Germany were watching.

Elizabethan and Shakespearean eras

By the time the Italian Renaissance waned, its greatest poetic exports—the ballad and the sonnet—found their way to England through Sir Thomas Wyatt. He introduced the forms to a countryside attuned to lyrical and narrative poetry by the great Geoffrey Chaucer, whose experiences with latter Provençal poets influenced the style credited with modernizing English literature.

Sonnets swept through late 16th and early 17th century England, primarily through the works of Wyatt, Sir Philip Sidney, Edmund Spenser, and William Shakespeare. Spenser and Shakespeare took the Petrarchan form that Wyatt introduced to the literary landscape and added their individual touches, forming the three principal sonnet styles: Petrarchan, Spenserian, and Shakespearean. The other fixed verse influence – Provençal and French forms – added to the poetic mix, creating a vast community of poets who recited their works in various forums. In the theater, their verse often preceded Shakespeare and Marlowe dramas – a practice followed nearly four centuries later by many of San Francisco’s 1960s rock musicians, who preceded their concerts with readings from Beat poets.

The socially open Elizabethan era enabled poets to write about humanistic as well as religious subjects. The dramatic rise in academic study and literacy during the late 16th century created large audiences for the new poetry, which was also introduced into the educational system. In many ways, the Elizabethan era more closely resembled the expressionism of the Ancient Greeks than the Sicilian and Italian Renaissance schools from which it derived its base poetry.

Metaphysical poets

A century after the height of the Elizabethan era, a subtler, provocative lyric poetry movement crept through an English literary countryside that sought greater depth in its verse. The metaphysical poets defined and compared their subjects through nature, philosophy, love, and musings about the hereafter – a great departure from the primarily religious poetry that had immediately followed the wane of the Elizabethan era. Poets shared an interest in metaphysical subjects and practiced similar means of investigating them.

Beginning with John Dryden, the metaphysical movement was a loosely woven string of poetic works that continued through the often-bellacose 18th century, and concluded when William

Blake bridged the gap between metaphysical and romantic poetry. The poets sought to minimize their place within the poem and to look beyond the obvious – a style that greatly informed American transcendentalism and the Romantics who followed. Among the greatest adherents were Samuel Cowley, John Donne, George Herbert, Andrew Marvell, Abraham Cowley, Henry Vaughan, George Chapman, Edward Herbert, and Katherine Philips.

Romantic poets

The third of England's "big three" movements completed a three-century period during which the British Isles took the Western poetic mantle from Italy and molded the forms, styles, and poems that fill school classrooms to this day. The Romantic period, or Romanticism, is regarded as one of the greatest and most illustrious movements in literary history, which is all the more amazing considering that it primarily consisted of just seven poets and lasted approximately 25 years – from William Blake's rise in the late 1790s to Lord Byron's death in 1824.

In between, the group of poets lived as mighty flames of poetic production who were extinguished well before their time. The core group included Blake, William Wordsworth, Samuel Taylor Coleridge, and a magnificent trio of friends: Lord Byron, Percy Bysshe Shelley, and John Keats. While history did not treat Robert Southey so kindly, Byron considered him a key member of the movement. Keats, who wrote "Ode to a Nightingale" and "Ode to a Grecian Urn," only lived to the age of 26. Shelley died at 30, while Byron succumbed at 36. They wrote together, traveled together—even renting a house at the base of Rome's Spanish Steps—and commiserated with foreign writers, most notably the older Johann Wolfgang Goethe, whose genius and versatility they idolized.

Ironically, the poets held distinctly different religious beliefs and led divergent lifestyles. Blake was a Christian who followed the teachings of Emmanuel Swedenborg (who also influenced Goethe). Wordsworth was a naturalist, Byron urbane, Keats a free spirit, Shelley an atheist, and Coleridge a card-carrying member of the Church of England.

The romantics made nature even more central to their work than the metaphysical poets, treating it as an elusive metaphor in their work. They sought a freer, more personal expression of passion, pathos, and personal feelings, and challenged their readers to open their minds and imaginations. Through their voluminous output, the romantics' message was clear: life is centered in the heart,

and the relationships we build with nature and others through our hearts defines our lives. They anticipated and planted the seeds for free verse, transcendentalism, the Beat movement, and countless other artistic, musical, and poetic expressions.

The Romantic Movement would have likely extended further into the 19th century, but the premature deaths of the younger poets, followed in 1832 by the death of their elderly German admirer, Goethe, brought the period to an end.

American Transcendentalists (1836-1860)

Of all the great communities and movements, the American Transcendentalists might be the first to have an intentional, chronicled starting date: September 8, 1836, when a group of prominent New England intellectuals led by poet-philosopher Ralph Waldo Emerson met at the Transcendental Club in Boston. They gathered to discuss Emerson's essay, "Nature" and developed "The American Soul," which stated, "We will walk on our own feet; we will work with our own hands; we will speak our own minds ... A nation of men will for the first time exist, because each believes himself inspired by the Divine Soul which also inspires all men."

The Transcendentalists grew from that mission statement, which was inspired by Emerson's love of Hinduism, Swedenborg's mystical Christianity, and Immanuel Kant's transcendental philosophy. They created a shadow society that espoused utopian values, spiritual exploration, and full development of the arts. They revolted against a culture they thought was becoming too puritanical, and an educational system they thought overly intellectual. Like the Romantics, heart-centered, personal expression was their aim – and so was the development of socialized community. They even had a commune, Brook Farm. These sentiments informed their gatherings, discussions, public meetings, essays, and poetry. Unlike the Romantics, who often clashed because of their personal differences, the Transcendentalists sought commonalities, no doubt influenced by Emerson's adherence to Hinduism.

A number of great authors, poets, artists, social leaders, and intellectuals called themselves Transcendentalists. They included Emerson, Bronson Alcott, Louisa May Alcott, Henry David Thoreau, Margaret Fuller, Orestes Brownson, William Ellery Channing, Sophia Peabody, and her husband, Nathaniel Hawthorne.

The Beat movement (1948-1963)

It only lasted 15 years and was known by the masses only in the last six, but the combination of disenfranchisement, wanderlust, and creative expression that inflicted a handful of New York and San Francisco students and young intellectuals resulted in the most influential movement of the past 100 years – the Beat movement.

The Beats formed from a wide variety of characters and interests, but were linked by a common thread: a desire to live life as they defined it. The mixture of academia, be-bop jazz, the liberating free verse of William Carlos Williams, and the influence of budding author Jack Kerouac (who coined the term "Beat Generation" in 1948 at a meeting with Allen Ginsberg, Herbert Huncke, and William S. Burroughs) inspired a young Ginsberg to change everything he'd learned about poetry. He wrote throughout the early 1950s in a narrative free verse, joined by the young Gregory Corso and Peter Orlovsky, and the older Burroughs, who, like Kerouac, opted for fiction – though Kerouac wrote beautiful poetry that has been read and appreciated over the past two decades.

By the mid-1950s, the Beats' mixture of free-expression jazz and socially informed free verse poetry became the anthem for a generation of Greenwich Village youth seeking greater spiritual meaning through visceral experiences and the laying down – or trampling – of their parents' strict, Depression and World War II-fed mores.

In 1956, the scene exploded into the public eye when Ginsberg published *Howl*, followed a year later by Kerouac's *On The Road*, which he'd been shopping to publishers since 1949. Ironically, the explosion was triggered not in New York, the center of early Beat poetry, but across the continent at San Francisco's Six Gallery. On October 9, 1955, a group of Beat poets from both coasts gathered for what became the 20th century's most famous single reading – but it was Ginsberg's reading of *Howl* that left his peers gasping in amazement and that ignited a subculture.

By the time of the Six Gallery reading, San Francisco was host to a burgeoning Beat community that included poets Gary Snyder, Michael McClure, Philip LaMantia, and three older influences: Kenneth Rexroth, Lew Welch, and Philip Whalen. In 1947, Rexroth launched the San Francisco Renaissance, a loose poetic movement including he, Whalen, Kenneth Patchen, and William

Everson. It directly fed the San Francisco Beats, as did the Black Mountain Poets that included Robert Duncan and Denise Levertov. Another major contributor was former New York poet Lawrence Ferlinghetti, who owned and operated City Lights bookstore, which in the 1950s sold books that were banned by the U.S. Justice Department. He published *Howl*, thus creating a legacy as the greatest publisher and distributor of Beat literature.

Beat poets and their works fostered a new era of appreciation and study of poetry. The emerging Baby Boomer generation fanned the fame of the Beats far beyond what any of them imagined. The Beats also influenced East Village poet-musicians Ed Sanders and Tuli Kupferberg (who formed the Fugs), and a group of artistic, musically inclined youth who hung out in San Francisco's North Beach and Haight-Ashbury districts. That group went on to launch psychedelic rock and the cultural revolution of the late 1960s. Growing fame also brought many fine Beat poets to the surface, such as Diane Di Prima, Joanne Kyger, LeRoi Jones, and Herbert Huncke, who worked in the shadows of their more renowned peers.

Chapter 4

Characteristics of literary Movements in Poetry

As discussed in the previous chapters, there are different ages and movements that took place in poetry from time to time. Every age has its own features and type of themes and features which will be discussed in the present chapter. Poetry groups and movements or schools may be self-identified by the poets that form them or defined by critics who see unifying characteristics of a body of work by more than one poet. To be a 'school' a group of poets must share a common style or a common ethos. A commonality of form is not in itself sufficient to define a school; for example, Edward Lear, George du Maurier and Ogden Nash do not form a school simply because they all wrote limericks. There are many different 'schools' of poetry. Some of them are described below in approximate chronological sequence. The subheadings indicate broadly the century in which a style arose.

Pre- historic:

The Oral tradition is too broad to be a strict school but it is a useful grouping of works whose origins either predate writing, or belong to cultures without writing. Oral literature or folk literature corresponds in the sphere of the spoken (oral) word to literature as literature operates in the domain of the written word. It thus forms a generally more fundamental component of culture, but operates in many ways as one might expect literature to do. The Ugandan scholar Pio Zirimu introduced the term orature in an attempt to avoid an oxymoron, but oral literature remains more common both in academic and popular writing. Pre-literate societies, by definition, have no written literature, but may possess rich and varied oral traditions—such as folk epics, folklore, proverbs and folksong—that effectively constitute an oral literature. Even when these are collected and published by scholars such as folklorists and paremiographers, the result is still often referred to as "oral literature".

Sixteen Century;

The Castalian Band: The Castalian Band is a modern name given to a supposed grouping of Scottish Jacobean poets, or makars, which is said to have flourished between the 1580s and early 1590s in the court of James VI and consciously modelled on the French example of the Pléiade. Its name is derived from the classical term Castalian Spring, a symbol for poetic inspiration. The name has often been claimed as that which the King used to refer to the group, as in lines from one of his own poems, an epitaph on his friend Alexander Montgomerie:

Quhat drowsie sleepe doth syle your eyes allace / Ye sacred brethren of Castalian band

(The Poems of King James VI of Scotland, ed. James Craigie, 2 Vols. Scottish Text Society, 1955 and 1958.)

The notion of the 'Castalian band' in 20th century scholarship derives in the main from the book *Song, Dance and Poetry at the Court of Scotland under King James VI* by Helena Mennie Shire (Cambridge University Press 1969). It was H.Mennie Shire and her collaborator Kenneth Elliot - who had produced *The Music of Scotland* (Cambridge 1964) - who drew particular attention to the verse lines by James, remarking that "It has been well suggested that King James' name for his poets at court, or their name for themselves, was 'the brethren of Castalian band.'" However, apart from this verse, no scholar has produced any clear evidence for any such self-aware grouping. Nevertheless, other writers (and numerous websites) have seized on the concept. In a celebrated article from 2001, the reputed literary scholar Priscilla Bawcutt examined the claims closely, and - in the opinion of most modern authorities - demolished them.

However, the persistence of the idea of the Castalian Band has its own interest - as Bawcutt noted, suggesting that it is grounded in a desire to identify a strong Scottish renaissance culture. Poetry, and more especially song, had suffered as a result of the Reformation of the Scottish Protestant church concluded in 1560, and it may have seemed desirable to offer a more positive image for the later 16th century.

Whether or not there ever was such a Court grouping as the Castalian Band, it seems likely that there were cultivated circles of educated gentlemen in Scotland at the time. The King wrote a detailed treatise intended to establish a standard of practice in Scots poetry - his *Reulis and Cautelis* - and there may well have been gatherings of poets at James' court. Activities of some of the poets recognized to be working in Scotland at the time is known to a limited extent.

The principal literary figure to be directly associated with the court was Alexander Montgomerie. Music may also played an important part in performances; some of the poems of Montgomerie and others are known to have been set as song.

Seventeenth Century:

The seventeenth century is divided into two types of poets, the metaphysical poets and the cavalier Poets:

Metaphysical poets: The metaphysical poets is a term coined by the poet and critic Samuel Johnson to describe a loose group of Britishlyric poets of the 17th 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. Their style was characterized by wit and metaphysical conceits—far-fetched or unusual similes or metaphors, such as in Andrew Marvell's comparison of the soul with a drop of dew; in an expanded epigram format, with the use of simple verse forms, octosyllabic couplets, quatrains or stanzas in which length of line and rhyme scheme enforce the sense. The specific definition of wit which Johnson applied to the school was: "...a kind of discordia concors; a combination of dissimilar images, or discovery of occult resemblances in things apparently unlike." Their poetry diverged from the style of their times, containing neither images of nature nor allusions to classical mythology, as were common. Several metaphysical poets, especially John Donne, were influenced by Neo-Platonism. One of the primary Platonic concepts found in metaphysical poetry is the idea that the perfection of beauty in the beloved acted as a remembrance of perfect beauty in the eternal realm. Their work relies on images and references to the contemporary scientific or geographical discoveries. These were used to examine religious and moral questions, often employing an element of casuistry (i.e. theoretical reasoning used to resolve moral problems, often evasive or arcane) to define their understanding or personal relationship with God. Critical opinion of the school has been varied. Johnson claimed that "they were not successful in representing or moving the affections" and that neither "was the sublime more within their reach." Generally, his criticism of the poets' style was grounded in his assertion that "Great thoughts are always general," and that the metaphysical poets were too particular in their search for novelty. He did concede, however, that "they...sometimes stuck out unexpected truth" and that their work is often intellectually, if not emotionally, stimulating. The group was to have

a significant influence on 20th-century poetry, especially through T. S. Eliot, whose essay *The Metaphysical Poets* (1921) praised the very anti-Romantic and intellectual qualities of which Johnson and his contemporaries had disapproved, and helped bring their poetry back into favour with readers.

Cavalier Poets is a broad description of a school of English poets of the 17th century, who came from the classes that supported King Charles I during the English Civil War. The Cavalier poets' existence was because King Charles was a connoisseur of the fine arts and therefore demanded their creation, i.e. masques, poetry, and drama. Charles needed these poets to create that which he craved, fine art. These poets in turn grouped themselves with the King and his service, thus becoming Cavalier Poets.

A cavalier was traditionally a mounted soldier or knight, but the term was applied differently to those who supported Charles, meaning to portray them as roistering gallants. It was meant to belittle and insult; however, it became the term to which those who supported Charles was applied. They were separate in their lifestyle and divided on religion from the Roundheads, who supported Parliament, consisting often of Puritans (either Presbyterians or Independents). The best known of the Cavalier poets are Ben Jonson, Robert Herrick, Richard Lovelace, Thomas Carew, and Sir John Suckling. Most of the Cavalier poets were courtiers, with notable exceptions. For example, Robert Herrick was not a courtier, but his style marks him as a Cavalier poet.

Cavalier poetry is different from traditional poetry in its subject matter. Instead of tackling issues like religion, philosophy, and the arts, cavalier poetry aims to express the joy and simple gratification of celebratory things much livelier than the traditional works of their predecessors. The intent of their works was often to promote the crown (particularly Charles I), and cavalier poets spoke outwardly against the Roundheads who supported the rebellion of Parliament against the crown. Most Cavalier works had allegorical and/or classical references. They drew upon the knowledge of Horace, Cicero, and Ovid. By using these resources they were able to produce poetry that impressed King Charles I. The Cavalier Poets strove to create poetry where both pleasure and virtue thrived. They were rich in reference to the ancients as well as pleasing. Commonly held traits certainly exist in Cavalier poetry in that most poems “celebrate beauty, love, nature, sensuality, drinking, good fellowship, honor, and social life.” In many ways, this poetry embodies an attitude that mirrors “carpe diem.” Cavalier poets certainly wrote to promote

Loyalist principles in favor of the crown, but their themes ran deeper than that. Cavalier poets wrote in a way that promoted seizing the day and the opportunities presented to them and their kinsmen. They wanted to revel in society and come to be the best that they possibly could within the bounds of that society. This endorsement of living life to the fullest, for Cavalier writers, often included gaining material wealth and having sex with women. These themes contributed to the triumphant and boisterous tone and attitude of the poetry. Platonic Love was also another characteristic of Cavalier poetry, where the man would show his divine love to a woman, where she would be worshipped as a creature of perfection. As such it was common to hear praise of womanly virtues as though they were divine.

Cavalier poetry is closely linked to the Royalist cause in that the main intent of their poetry was to glorify the crown. In this way, Cavalier poetry is often grouped in a political category of poetry. While most of the poetry written by these Cavalier poets does advocate the cause of the monarchy in some way, not all of the writers we now consider Cavalier poets knew that they fell under this categorization during their lifetime. Cavalier poetry began to be recognized as its own genre with the beginning of the English Civil War in 1642 when men began to write in defense of the crown. However, authors like Thomas Carew and Sir John Suckling died years before the war began, yet are still classified as Cavalier poets for the political nature of their poetry. Once the conflict began between the monarchy and the rebellious parliament, the content of the poetry became much more specifically aimed at upholding Royalist ideals. These men were considered by many to write in a nostalgic tone in that their work promoted the principles and practices of the monarchy that was under philosophical and, eventually, literal attack.

There was also a celebration of the monarchy of Charles I among the Cavalier poets. Jonson in particular celebrated ideas of common sense, duty, moderation, propriety, and elegance (the which he also practiced). These ideas didn't belong to the ancients but rather belonged to the court and to England. In this way although the Cavaliers embraced the old ways of thinking from the ancients, they also incorporated their own ideas and thoughts into their poetry. This made their writings applicable for the era they were writing in and also portrayed the greatness of the crown and of Charles.

Eighteenth century

Classical poetry echoes the forms and values of classical antiquity. Favoured formal, restrained forms, it has recurred in various Neoclassical schools since the eighteenth century Augustan poets such as Alexander Pope.

Romanticism started in late 18th century Western Europe. Wordsworth's and Coleridge's 1798 publication of *Lyrical Ballads* is considered by some as the first important publication in the movement. Romanticism stressed strong emotion, imagination, freedom within or even from classical notions of form in art, and the rejection of established social conventions. It stressed the importance of "nature" in language and celebrated the achievements of those perceived as heroic individuals and artists. Romantic poets include William Blake, William Wordsworth, Samuel Taylor Coleridge, Lord Byron, Percy Bysshe Shelley, and John Keats (those previous six sometimes referred to as the Big Six, or the Big Five without Blake); other Romantic poets include James Macpherson, Robert Southey, and Emily Brontë.

Nineteenth century

Pastoralism was originally a Hellenistic form, that romanticized rural subjects to the point of unreality. Later pastoral poets like William Wordsworth, were inspired by the classical pastoral poets such as Edmund Spenser, Christopher Marlowe.

The Parnassians were a group of late 19th-century French poets, named after their journal, the *Parnasse contemporain*. They included Charles Leconte de Lisle, Théodore de Banville, Sully-Prudhomme, Paul Verlaine, François Coppée, and José María de Heredia. In reaction to the looser forms of romantic poetry, they strove for exact and faultless workmanship, selecting exotic and classical subjects, which they treated with rigidity of form and emotional detachment.

Symbolism started in the late nineteenth century in France and Belgium. It included Paul Verlaine, Tristan Corbière, Arthur Rimbaud, and Stéphane Mallarmé. Symbolists believed that art should aim to capture more absolute truths which could be accessed only by indirect methods. They used extensive metaphor, endowing particular images or objects with symbolic meaning. They were hostile to "plain meanings, declamations, false sentimentality and matter-of-fact description".

Modernist poetry is a broad term for poetry written between 1890 and 1970 in the tradition of Modernism. Schools within it include Imagism and the British Poetry Revival.

The Fireside Poets (also known as the Schoolroom or Household Poets) were a group of 19th-century American poets from New England. The group is usually described as comprising Henry Wadsworth Longfellow, William Cullen Bryant, John Greenleaf Whittier, James Russell Lowell, and Oliver Wendell Holmes, Sr.

Twentieth century

The Imagists were (predominantly young) poets working in England and America in the early 20th century, including F. S. Flint, T. E. Hulme, and Hilda Doolittle (known primarily by her initials, H.D.). They rejected Romantic and Victorian conventions, favoring precise imagery and clear, non-elevated language. Ezra Pound formulated and promoted many precepts and ideas of Imagism. His "In a Station of the Metro" (Roberts & Jacobs, 717), written in 1916, is often used as an example of Imagist poetry:

The apparition of these faces in the crowd;

Petals on a wet, black bough.

The Objectivists were a loose-knit group of second-generation Modernists from the 1930s. They include Louis Zukofsky, Lorine Niedecker, Charles Reznikoff, George Oppen, Carl Rakosi, and Basil Bunting. Objectivists treated the poem as an object; they emphasised sincerity, intelligence, and the clarity of the poet's vision.

The Harlem Renaissance was a cultural movement in the 1920s involving many African-American writers from the New York Neighbourhood of Harlem.

The Beat generation poets met in New York in the 1940s. The core group were Jack Kerouac, Allen Ginsberg, and William S. Burroughs, who were joined later by Gregory Corso.

The Confessionalists were American poets that emerged in the 1950s. They drew on personal history for their artistic inspiration. Poets in this group include Sylvia Plath, Anne Sexton, John Berryman, and Robert Lowell.

The New York School was an informal group of poets active in 1950s New York City whose work was said to be a reaction to the Confessionals. Some major figures include John Ashbery, Frank O'Hara, James Schuyler, Kenneth Koch, Barbara Guest, Joe Brainard, Ron Padgett, Ted Berrigan and Bill Berkson.

The Black Mountain poets (also known as the Projectivists) were a group of mid 20th century postmodern poets associated with Black Mountain College in the United States.

The San Francisco Renaissance was initiated by Kenneth Rexroth and Madeline Gleason in Berkeley in the late 1940s. It included Robert Duncan, Jack Spicer, and Robin Blaser. They were consciously experimental and had close links to the Black Mountain and Beat poets.

The Movement was a group of English writers including Kingsley Amis, Philip Larkin, Donald Alfred Davie, D. J. Enright, John Wain, Elizabeth Jennings and Robert Conquest. Their tone is anti-romantic and rational. The connection between the poets was described as "little more than a negative determination to avoid bad principles."

The British Poetry Revival was a loose movement during the 1960s and 1970s. It was a Modernist reaction to the conservative Movement.

The Hungry generation was a group of about 40 poets in West Bengal, India during 1961–1965 who revolted against the colonial canons in Bengali poetry and wanted to go back to their roots. The movement was spearheaded by Shakti Chattopadhyay, Malay Roy Choudhury, Samir Roychoudhury, and Subimal Basak.

The Martian poets were English poets of the 1970s and early 1980s, including Craig Raine and Christopher Reid. Through the heavy use of curious, exotic, and humorous metaphors, Martian poetry aimed to break the grip of "the familiar" in English poetry, by describing ordinary things as if through the eyes of a Martian.

The Language poets were avant garde poets from the last quarter of the 20th century. Their approach started with the modernist emphasis on method. They were reacting to the poetry of the Black Mountain and Beat poets. The poets included: Leslie Scalapino, Bruce Andrews, Charles Bernstein, Ron Silliman, Barrett Watten, Lyn Hejinian, Bob Perelman, Rae Armantrout, Carla Harryman, Clark Coolidge, Hannah Weiner, Susan Howe, and Tina Darragh.

The Misty Poets are a group of Chinese poets whose style is defined by the obscurity of its imagery and metaphors. The movement was born after the Cultural Revolution. Leading members include Bei Dao, Gu Cheng, Duo Duo, and Yang Lian.

The New Formalism is a late-twentieth and early twenty-first century movement in American poetry that promotes a return to metrical and rhymed verse. Rather than looking to the Confessionalists, they look to Robert Frost, Richard Wilbur, James Merrill, Anthony Hecht, and Donald Justice for poetic influence. These poets are associated with the West Chester University Poetry Conference, and with literary journals like *The New Criterion* and *The Hudson Review*. Associated poets include Dana Gioia, Timothy Steele, Mark Jarman, Rachel Hadas, R. S. Gwynn, Charles Martin, Phillis Levin, Kay Ryan, Brad Leithauser.

Chapter 5

Important Literary Figures of Renaissance and their contribution in Poetry.

Beginning with the renaissance period of poetry and moving towards the modern period of poetry, there come several interesting personalities who played a very vital role in developing the nature of the poetry of their particular period. In this chapter we shall discuss some of those poets and their contribution through the spell of their poetry.

Samuel Daniel:

Daniel was born near Taunton in Somerset, the son of a music-master. He was the brother of lutenist and composer John Danyel. He is both a poet and a historian at the same time. His first known volume of verse is dated 1592; it contains the cycle of sonnets to Delia and the romance called *The Complaint of Rosamond*. Twenty-seven of the sonnets had already been printed at the end of Sir Philip Sidney's *Astrophil and Stella* without the author's consent. Several editions of *Delia* appeared in 1592, and they were very frequently reprinted during Daniel's lifetime. Dedicated to "The Right Honourable the Lady Mary Countess of Pembroke", we learn that *Delia* lived on the banks of the River Avon—not Shakespeare's one, of course, but the one which flowed through "where *Delia* has her seat" at Wilton in Wiltshire—and that the sonnets to her were inspired by her memory when the poet was in Italy. To an edition of *Delia* and *Rosamond*, in 1594, was added the tragedy of *Cleopatra*, written in classical style, in alternately rhyming heroic verse, with choral interludes. *The First Four Books of the Civil Wars*, a historical poem on the subject of the Wars of the Roses, in ottava rima, appeared in 1595.

As far as is known, it was not until 1599 that there was published a volume entitled *Poetical Essays*, which contained, besides the "Civil Wars," "Musophilus" and "A letter from Octavia to Marcus Antonius," poems in Daniel's finest and most mature manner. About this time he became tutor to Lady Anne Clifford, daughter of the Margaret Clifford, Countess of Cumberland. On the death of Edmund Spenser, in the same year, Daniel received the somewhat vague office of Poet Laureate, which he seems, however to have shortly resigned in favour of Ben Jonson. Whether it was on this occasion is not known, but about this time, and at the recommendation of his brother-

in-law, Giovanni Florio, he was taken into favour at court, and wrote a Panegyricke Congratulatorie offered to the King at Burleigh Harrington in Rutland, in ottava rima.

In 1601 the Panegyricke was published in a presentation folio, the first folio volume of collected works by a living English poet (a distinction usually mistakenly awarded to Ben Jonson's 1616 folio Works). Many later editions contained in addition his Poetical Epistles to his patrons and an elegant prose essay called A Defence of Rime (originally printed in 1602) in answer to Thomas Campion's Observations on the Art of English Poesie, which argued that rhyme was unsuited to the genius of the English language. Daniel's poetic works are numerous, but were long neglected. This is more surprising since, during the 18th century, when so little Elizabethan literature was read, Daniel retained his prestige. Later, Samuel Taylor Coleridge, Charles Lamb and others praised this poet. Of his works the sonnets are now, perhaps, most read. They depart from the Italian sonnet form in closing with a couplet, as is the case with most of the sonnets of Henry Howard, Earl of Surrey and Sir Thomas Wyatt, but they have a grace and tenderness all their own.

Of a higher order is The Complaint of Rosamond, a soliloquy in which the ghost of the murdered woman appears and bewails her fate in stanzas of exquisite pathos. Among the Epistles to Distinguished Persons will be found some of Daniel's noblest stanzas and most polished verse. The epistle to Lucy, Countess of Bedford, is remarkable among those as being composed in genuine terza rima, till then not used in English. Daniel was particularly fond of a four-lined stanza of solemn alternately rhyming iambics, a form of verse distinctly misplaced in his dramas. These, inspired by the Countess of Pembroke, are less successful than his pastorals; and Hymen's Triumph is considered the best of his dramatic writing. An extract from this masque is given in Lamb's Dramatic Poets, and was highly praised by Coleridge.

Daniel was a great innovator in verse. His style is full, easy and stately, without being very animated or splendid; it is content with level flights. As a gnomic writer Daniel approaches Chapman, but is more musical and coherent. He lacks fire and passion, but he has scholarly grace and tender, mournful reverie.

Daniel has been suggested as a possible author of the anonymous play The Maid's Metamorphosis (1600), though no consensus on the argument has been achieved. Daniel's works

were edited by A. B. Grosart from 1885 to 1896. Projected scholarly editions of the complete works, including that planned by the Oxford University Press, have not yet been published. A recent edition of his major poetry, with explanatory notes, is *Samuel Daniel: Selected Poetry and A Defence of Rhyme* (Asheville, NC: Pegasus Press, 1998), by Geoffrey Hillier and Peter Groves.

William Shakespeare:

William Shakespeare was an English poet, playwright and actor, widely regarded as the greatest writer in the English language and the world's pre-eminent dramatist. He is often called England's national poet and the "Bard of Avon". His extant works, including some collaborations, consist of about 38 plays,^[nb 3] 154 sonnets, two long narrative poems, and a few other verses, the authorship of some of which is uncertain. 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 brought up in Stratford-upon-Avon. At the age of 18, he married Anne Hathaway, with whom he had three children: Susanna, and twins Hamnet and Judith. Between 1585 and 1592, he began a successful career in London as an actor, writer, and part-owner of a playing company called the Lord Chamberlain's Men, later known as the King's Men. He appears to have retired to Stratford around 1613 at age 49, where he died three years later. Few records of Shakespeare's private life survive, and there has been considerable speculation about such matters as his physical appearance, sexuality, religious beliefs, and whether the works attributed to him were written by others.

Shakespeare was a respected poet and playwright in his own day, but his reputation did not rise to its present heights until the 19th century. The Romantics, in particular, acclaimed Shakespeare's genius, and the Victorians worshipped Shakespeare with a reverence that George Bernard Shaw called "bardolatry". In the 20th century, his work was repeatedly adopted and rediscovered by new movements in scholarship and performance. His plays remain highly popular today and are constantly studied, performed, and reinterpreted in diverse cultural and political contexts throughout the world. In 1593 and 1594, when the theatres were closed because of plague, Shakespeare published two narrative poems on erotic themes, *Venus and Adonis* and *The Rape of Lucrece*. He dedicated them to Henry Wriothesley, Earl of Southampton. In *Venus*

and Adonis, an innocent Adonis rejects the sexual advances of Venus; while in *The Rape of Lucrece*, the virtuous wife Lucrece is raped by the lustful Tarquin. Influenced by Ovid's *Metamorphoses*, the poems show the guilt and moral confusion that result from uncontrolled lust. Both proved popular and were often reprinted during Shakespeare's lifetime. A third narrative poem, *A Lover's Complaint*, in which a young woman laments her seduction by a persuasive suitor, was printed in the first edition of the *Sonnets* in 1609. Most scholars now accept that Shakespeare wrote *A Lover's Complaint*. Critics consider that its fine qualities are marred by leaden effects. *The Phoenix and the Turtle*, printed in Robert Chester's 1601 *Love's Martyr*, mourns the deaths of the legendary phoenix and his lover, the faithful turtle dove. In 1599, two early drafts of sonnets 138 and 144 appeared in *The Passionate Pilgrim*, published under Shakespeare's name but without his permission. Published in 1609, the *Sonnets* were the last of Shakespeare's non-dramatic works to be printed. Scholars are not certain when each of the 154 sonnets was composed, but evidence suggests that Shakespeare wrote sonnets throughout his career for a private readership. Even before the two unauthorised sonnets appeared in *The Passionate Pilgrim* in 1599, Francis Meres had referred in 1598 to Shakespeare's "sugred Sonnets among his private friends". Few analysts believe that the published collection follows Shakespeare's intended sequence. He seems to have planned two contrasting series: one about uncontrollable lust for a married woman of dark complexion (the "dark lady"), and one about conflicted love for a fair young man (the "fair youth"). It remains unclear if these figures represent real individuals, or if the authorial "I" who addresses them represents Shakespeare himself, though Wordsworth believed that with the sonnets "Shakespeare unlocked his heart".

The 1609 edition was dedicated to a "Mr. W.H.", credited as "the only begetter" of the poems. It is not known whether this was written by Shakespeare himself or by the publisher, Thomas Thorpe, whose initials appear at the foot of the dedication page; nor is it known who Mr. W.H. was, despite numerous theories, or whether Shakespeare even authorized the publication. Critics praise the *Sonnets* as a profound meditation on the nature of love, sexual passion, procreation, death, and time.

Shakespeare's first plays were written in the conventional style of the day. He wrote them in a stylized language that does not always spring naturally from the needs of the characters or the drama. The poetry depends on extended, sometimes elaborate metaphors and conceits, and the

language is often rhetorical—written for actors to declaim rather than speak. The grand speeches in *Titus Andronicus*, in the view of some critics, often hold up the action, for example; and the verse in *The Two Gentlemen of Verona* has been described as stilted.

Soon, however, Shakespeare began to adapt the traditional styles to his own purposes. The opening soliloquy of *Richard III* has its roots in the self-declaration of *Vice* in medieval drama. At the same time, *Richard's* vivid self-awareness looks forward to the soliloquies of Shakespeare's mature plays. No single play marks a change from the traditional to the freer style. Shakespeare combined the two throughout his career, with *Romeo and Juliet* perhaps the best example of the mixing of the styles. By the time of *Romeo and Juliet*, *Richard II*, and *A Midsummer Night's Dream* in the mid-1590s, Shakespeare had begun to write a more natural poetry. He increasingly tuned his metaphors and images to the needs of the drama itself.

Shakespeare's standard poetic form was blank verse, composed in iambic pentameter. In practice, this meant that his verse was usually unrhymed and consisted of ten syllables to a line, spoken with a stress on every second syllable. The blank verse of his early plays is quite different from that of his later ones. It is often beautiful, but its sentences tend to start, pause, and finish at the end of lines, with the risk of monotony. Once Shakespeare mastered traditional blank verse, he began to interrupt and vary its flow. This technique releases the new power and flexibility of the poetry in plays such as *Julius Caesar* and *Hamlet*. Shakespeare uses it, for example, to convey the turmoil in *Hamlet's* mind.

Shakespeare's work has made a lasting impression on later theatre and literature. In particular, he expanded the dramatic potential of characterization, plot, language, and genre. Until *Romeo and Juliet*, for example, romance had not been viewed as a worthy topic for tragedy. Soliloquies had been used mainly to convey information about characters or events; but Shakespeare used them to explore characters' minds. His work heavily influenced later poetry. The Romantic poets attempted to revive Shakespearean verse drama, though with little success. Critic George Steiner described all English verse dramas from Coleridge to Tennyson as "feeble variations on Shakespearean themes."

Shakespeare influenced novelists such as Thomas Hardy, William Faulkner, and Charles Dickens. The American novelist Herman Melville's soliloquies owe much to Shakespeare; his

Captain Ahab in *Moby-Dick* is a classic tragic hero, inspired by *King Lear*. Scholars have identified 20,000 pieces of music linked to Shakespeare's works. These include two operas by Giuseppe Verdi, *Otello* and *Falstaff*, whose critical standing compares with that of the source plays. Shakespeare has also inspired many painters, including the Romantics and the Pre-Raphaelites. The Swiss Romantic artist Henry Fuseli, a friend of William Blake, even translated *Macbeth* into German. The psychoanalyst Sigmund Freud drew on Shakespearean psychology, in particular that of Hamlet, for his theories of human nature.

In Shakespeare's day, English grammar, spelling and pronunciation were less standardised than they are now, and his use of language helped shape modern English. Samuel Johnson quoted him more often than any other author in his *A Dictionary of the English Language*, the first serious work of its type. Expressions such as "with bated breath" (*Merchant of Venice*) and "a foregone conclusion" (*Othello*) have found their way into everyday English speech.

Sir Philip Sidney:

Sir Philip Sidney (30 November 1554 – 17 October 1586) was an English poet, courtier and soldier, who is remembered as one of the most prominent figures of the Elizabethan age. His works include *Astrophel and Stella*, *The Defence of Poesy* (also known as *The Defence of Poetry* or *An Apology for Poetry*), and *The Countess of Pembroke's Arcadia*. Born at Penshurst Place, Kent, he was the eldest son of Sir Henry Sidney and Lady Mary Dudley. His mother was the eldest daughter of John Dudley, 1st Duke of Northumberland, and the sister of Robert Dudley, 1st Earl of Leicester. His younger brother, Robert was a statesman and patron of the arts, and was created Earl of Leicester in 1618. His younger sister, Mary, married Henry Herbert, 2nd Earl of Pembroke and was a writer, translator and literary patron. Sidney dedicated his longest work, the *Arcadia*, to her. After her brother's death, Mary reworked the *Arcadia*, which became known as *The Countess of Pembroke's Arcadia*. Philip was educated at Shrewsbury School and Christ Church, Oxford. In 1572 he was elected to Parliament as Member of Parliament for Shrewsbury and in the same year travelled to France as part of the embassy to negotiate a marriage between Elizabeth I and the Duc d'Alençon. He spent the next several years in mainland Europe, moving through Germany, Italy, Poland, the Kingdom of Hungary and Austria. On these travels, he met a number of prominent European intellectuals and politicians.

Sidney returned to England in 1575, living the life of a popular and eminent courtier. In 1577, he was sent as ambassador to the German Emperor and the Prince of Orange. Officially, he had been sent to condole the princes on the deaths of their fathers. His real mission was to feel out the chances for the creation of a Protestant league. Yet, the budding diplomatic career was cut short because Queen Elizabeth I found Sidney to be perhaps too ardent in his Protestantism, the Queen preferring a more cautious approach.

His artistic contacts were more peaceful and more significant for his lasting fame. During his absence from court, he wrote *Astrophel and Stella* and the first draft of *The Arcadia* and *The Defence of Poesy*. Somewhat earlier, he had met Edmund Spenser, who dedicated *The Shepherdes Calender* to him. Other literary contacts included membership, along with his friends and fellow poets Fulke Greville, Edward Dyer, Edmund Spenser and Gabriel Harvey, of the (possibly fictitious) 'Areopagus', a humanist endeavour to classicise English verse.

Sidney had returned to court by the middle of 1581 and in 1584 was MP for Kent. That same year Penelope Devereux was married, apparently against her will, to Lord Rich. Sidney was knighted in 1583. An early arrangement to marry Anne Cecil, daughter of Sir William Cecil and eventual wife of de Vere, had fallen through in 1571. In 1583, he married Frances, teenage daughter of Sir Francis Walsingham. In the same year, he made a visit to Oxford University with Giordano Bruno, who subsequently dedicated two books to Sidney.

- *The Lady of May* – This is one of Sidney's lesser-known works, a masque written and performed for Queen Elizabeth in 1578 or 1579.
- *Astrophel and Stella* – The first of the famous English sonnet sequences, *Astrophel and Stella* was probably composed in the early 1580s. The sonnets were well-circulated in manuscript before the first (apparently pirated) edition was printed in 1591; only in 1598 did an authorised edition reach the press. The sequence was a watershed in English Renaissance poetry. In it, Sidney partially nativised the key features of his Italian model, Petrarch: variation of emotion from poem to poem, with the attendant sense of an ongoing, but partly obscure, narrative; the philosophical trappings; the musings on the act of poetic creation itself. His experiments with rhyme scheme were no less notable; they served to free the English sonnet from the strict rhyming requirements of the Italian form.

- The Countess of Pembroke's *Arcadia* – The *Arcadia*, by far Sidney's most ambitious work, was as significant in its own way as his sonnets. The work is a romance that combines pastoral elements with a mood derived from the Hellenistic model of Heliodorus. In the work, that is, a highly idealized version of the shepherd's life adjoins (not always naturally) with stories of jousts, political treachery, kidnappings, battles, and rapes. As published in the sixteenth century, the narrative follows the Greek model: stories are nested within each other, and different storylines are intertwined. The work enjoyed great popularity for more than a century after its publication. William Shakespeare borrowed from it for the Gloucester subplot of *King Lear*; parts of it were also dramatised by John Day and James Shirley. According to a widely-told story, King Charles I quoted lines from the book as he mounted the scaffold to be executed; surnamed the heroine of his first novel after Sidney's *Pamela*. *Arcadia* exists in two significantly different versions. Sidney wrote an early version (the *Old Arcadia*) during a stay at Mary Herbert's house; this version is narrated in a straightforward, sequential manner. Later, Sidney began to revise the work on a more ambitious plan, with much more back story about the princes, and a much more complicated story line, with many more characters. He completed most of the first three books, but the project was unfinished at the time of his death—the third book breaks off in the middle of a swordfight. There were several early editions of the book. Fulke Greville published the revised version alone, in 1590. The Countess of Pembroke, Sidney's sister, published a version in 1593, which pasted the last two books of the first version onto the first three books of the revision. In the 1621 version, Sir William Alexander provided a bridge to bring the two stories back into agreement. It was known in this cobbled-together fashion until the discovery, in the early twentieth century, of the earlier version.

- An *Apology for Poetry* (also known as *A Defence of Poesie* and *The Defence of Poetry*) – Sidney wrote the *Defence* before 1583. It is generally believed that he was at least partly motivated by Stephen Gosson, a former playwright who dedicated his attack on the English stage, *The School of Abuse*, to Sidney in 1579, but Sidney primarily addresses more general objections to poetry, such as those of Plato. In his essay, Sidney integrates a number of classical and Italian precepts on fiction. The essence of his defence is that poetry, by combining the liveliness of history with the ethical focus of philosophy, is more effective than either history or philosophy in rousing its readers to virtue. The work also offers important comments on Edmund Spenser and the Elizabethan stage.

Sidney's literary work was all published after his death, some of it against his express desire. The "Arcadia," an elaborate pastoral romance written in a highly ornate prose mingled with verse, was composed for the entertainment of his sister, the Countess of Pembroke. The collection of sonnets, "Astrophel and Stella," was called forth by Sidney's relation to Penelope Devereux, daughter of the Earl of Essex. While they were both little more than children, there had been some talk of a marriage between them; but evidence of any warmth of feeling appears chiefly after Penelope's unhappy marriage to Lord Rich. There has been much controversy over the question of the sincerity of these remarkable poems, and over the precise nature of Sidney's sentiments toward the lady who inspired them, some regarding them as undisguised outpourings of a genuine passion, others as mere conventional literary exercises. The more recent opinion is that they express a platonic devotion such as was common in the courtly society of the day, and which was allowed by contemporary opinion to be compatible with the marriage of both parties.

In 1579 Stephen Gosson published a violent attack on the arts, called "The School of Abuse," and dedicated it without permission to Sidney. It was in answer to this that Sidney composed his "Defense of Poesy," an eloquent apology for imaginative literature, not unmingled with humor. The esthetic theories it contains are largely borrowed from Italian sources, but it is thoroughly infused with Sidney's own personality; and it may be regarded as the beginning of literary criticism in England. While Sidney's career as courtier ran smoothly, he was growing restless with lack of appointments. In 1585, he made a covert attempt to join Sir Francis Drake's expedition to Cadiz without Queen Elizabeth's permission. Elizabeth instead summoned Sidney to court, and appointed him governor of Flushing in the Netherlands. In 1586 Sidney, along with his younger brother Robert Sidney, another poet in this family of poets, took part in a skirmish against the Spanish at Zutphen, and was wounded of a musket shot that shattered his thigh-bone. Some twenty-two days later Sidney died of the unhealed wound at not yet thirty-two years of age. His death occasioned much mourning in England as the Queen and her subjects grieved for the man who had come to exemplify the ideal courtier. It is said that Londoners, come out to see the funeral progression, cried out "Farewell, the worthiest knight that lived."

Sir Thomas Wyatt (1503 – 11 October 1542) was a 16th-century English ambassador and lyrical poet. He is credited with introducing the sonnet into English. He was born at Allington Castle, near Maidstone in Kent, though his family was originally from Yorkshire. His mother was Anne

Skinner and his father, Henry Wyatt, had been one of Henry VII's Privy Councillors, and remained a trusted adviser when Henry VIII came to the throne in 1509. In his turn, Thomas Wyatt followed his father to court after his education at St John's College, Cambridge. None of Wyatt's poems were published during his lifetime—the first book to feature his verse, Tottel's Miscellany of 1557, was printed a full fifteen years after his death. Wyatt's professed object was to experiment with the English tongue, to civilize it, to raise its powers to those of its neighbors. 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 fourteen, 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 new femaleness, 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.

Critical opinions of his work have varied widely. Thomas Warton, the 18th-century critic, considered Wyatt "confessedly an inferior" to his contemporary Henry Howard, and that Wyatt's "genius was of the moral and didactic species and be deemed the first polished English satirist". The 20th century saw an awakening in his popularity and a surge in critical attention. C. S. Lewis called him "the father of the Drab Age", from what Lewis calls the "golden" age of the 16th century, while others see his love poetry, with its complex use of literary conceits, as anticipating that of the metaphysical poets in the next century. More recently, the critic Patricia Thomson describes Wyatt as "the Father of English Poetry".

Chapter 6

Role of Romantic Age poets in the Development of Poetry. (Part 1)

Romanticism, a philosophical, literary, artistic and cultural era which began in the mid/late-18th century as a reaction against the prevailing Enlightenment ideals of the day (Romantics favored more natural, emotional and personal artistic themes), also influenced poetry. Inevitably, the characterization of a broad range of contemporaneous poets and poetry under the single unifying name can be viewed more as an exercise in historical compartmentalization than an attempt to capture the essence of the actual 'movement'.

Poets such as William Wordsworth were actively engaged in trying to create a new kind of poetry that emphasized intuition over reason and the pastoral over the urban, often eschewing consciously poetic language in an effort to use more colloquial language. Wordsworth himself in the Preface to his and Coleridge's *Lyrical Ballads* defined good poetry as "the spontaneous overflow of powerful feelings," though in the same sentence he goes on to clarify this statement by asserting that nonetheless any poem of value must still be composed by a man "possessed of more than usual organic sensibility [who has] also thought long and deeply;" he also emphasizes the importance of the use of meter in poetry (which he views as one of the key features that differentiates poetry from prose). Although many people stress the notion of spontaneity in Romantic poetry, the movement was still greatly concerned with the pain of composition, of translating these emotive responses into poetic form. Indeed, Samuel Taylor Coleridge, another prominent Romantic poet and critic in his *On Poesy or Art* sees art as "the mediate between, and reconciler of nature and man". Such an attitude reflects what might be called the dominant theme of Romantic poetry: the filtering of natural emotion through the human mind in order to create art, coupled with an awareness of the duality created by such a process.

For some critics, the term establishes an artificial context for disparate work and removing that work from its real historical context" at the expense of equally valid themes (particularly those related to politics.)

William Blake (28 November 1757 – 12 August 1827) was an English poet, painter and printmaker. Largely unrecognized during his lifetime, Blake is now considered a seminal figure

in the history of the poetry and visual arts of the Romantic Age. His prophetic poetry has been said to form "what is in proportion to its merits the least read body of poetry in the English language". His visual artistry led one contemporary art critic to proclaim him "far and away the greatest artist Britain has ever produced". In 2002, Blake was placed at number 38 in the BBC's poll of the 100 Greatest Britons. Although he lived in London his entire life (except for three years spent in Felpham), he produced a diverse and symbolically rich corpus, which embraced the imagination as "the body of God" or "human existence itself".

Considered mad by contemporaries for his idiosyncratic views, Blake is held in high regard by later critics for his expressiveness and creativity, and for the philosophical and mystical undercurrents within his work. His paintings and poetry have been characterised as part of the Romantic movement and "Pre-Romantic", for its large appearance in the 18th century. Reverent of the Bible but hostile to the Church of England (indeed, to all forms of organized religion), Blake was influenced by the ideals and ambitions of the French and American Revolutions. Though later he rejected many of these beliefs he maintained an amiable relationship with Thomas Paine; he was also influenced by thinkers such as Emanuel Swedenborg. Despite these known influences, the singularity of Blake's work makes him difficult to classify. The 19th-century scholar William Rossetti characterized him as a "glorious luminary", and "a man not forestalled by predecessors, or to be classed with contemporaries, or to be replaced by known or readily survivable successors".

Blake was not active in any well-established political party. His poetry consistently embodies an attitude of rebellion against the abuse of class power as documented in David Erdman's large study *Blake: Prophet Against Empire: A Poet's Interpretation of the History of His Own Times*. Blake was concerned about senseless wars and the blighting effects of the Industrial Revolution. Much of his poetry recounts in symbolic allegory the effects of the French and American revolutions. Erdman claims Blake was disillusioned with them, believing they had simply replaced monarchy with irresponsible mercantilism and notes Blake were deeply opposed to slavery, and believes some of his poems read primarily as championing "free love" have had their anti-slavery implications short-changed. A more recent (and very short) study, *William Blake: Visionary Anarchist* by Peter Marshall (1988), classified Blake and his contemporary William Godwin as forerunners of modern anarchism. British Marxist historian E. P.

Thompson's last finished work, *Witness Against the Beast: William Blake and the Moral Law* (1993), shows how far he was inspired by dissident religious ideas rooted in the thinking of the most radical opponents of the monarchy during the English Civil War.

Because Blake's later poetry contains a private mythology with complex symbolism, his late work has been less published than his earlier more accessible work. The Vintage anthology of Blake edited by Patti Smith focuses heavily on the earlier work, as do many critical studies such as *William Blake* by D. G. Gillham.

The earlier work is primarily rebellious in character and can be seen as a protest against dogmatic religion especially notable in *The Marriage of Heaven and Hell*, in which the figure represented by the "Devil" is virtually a hero rebelling against an imposter authoritarian deity. In later works, such as *Milton and Jerusalem*, Blake carves a distinctive vision of a humanity redeemed by self-sacrifice and forgiveness, while retaining his earlier negative attitude towards what he felt was the rigid and morbid authoritarianism of traditional religion. Not all readers of Blake agree upon how much continuity exists between Blake's earlier and later works.

Psychoanalyst June Singer has written that Blake's late work displayed a development of the ideas first introduced in his earlier works, namely, the humanitarian goal of achieving personal wholeness of body and spirit. The final section of the expanded edition of her Blake study *The Unholy Bible* suggests the later works are the "Bible of Hell" promised in *The Marriage of Heaven and Hell*. Regarding Blake's final poem "Jerusalem", she writes: "[T]he promise of the divine in man, made in *The Marriage of Heaven and Hell*, is at last fulfilled."

John Middleton Murry notes discontinuity between *Marriage* and the late works, in that while the early Blake focused on a "sheer negative opposition between Energy and Reason", the later Blake emphasized the notions of self-sacrifice and forgiveness as the road to interior wholeness. This renunciation of the sharper dualism of *Marriage of Heaven and Hell* is evidenced in particular by the humanization of the character of Urizen in the later works. Middleton characterizes the later Blake as having found "mutual understanding" and "mutual forgiveness".

Blake had a complex relationship with Enlightenment philosophy. Due to his visionary religious beliefs, he opposed the Newtonian view of the universe. This mindset is reflected in an excerpt from Blake's *Jerusalem*:

I turn my eyes to the Schools & Universities of Europe
And there behold the Loom of Locke whose Woof rages dire
Washed by the Water-wheels of Newton. Black the cloth
In heavy wreathes folds over every Nation; cruel Works
Of many Wheels I view, wheel without wheel, with cogs tyrannic
Moving by compulsion each other: not as those in Eden: which
Wheel within Wheel in freedom revolves in harmony & peace.

Blake believed the paintings of Sir Joshua Reynolds, which depict the naturalistic fall of light upon objects, were products entirely of the "vegetative eye", and he saw Locke and Newton as "the true progenitors of Sir Joshua Reynolds' aesthetic". The popular taste in the England of that time for such paintings was satisfied with mezzotints, prints produced by a process that created an image from thousands of tiny dots upon the page. Blake saw an analogy between this and Newton's particle theory of light. Accordingly, Blake never used the technique, opting rather to develop a method of engraving purely in fluid line, insisting that:

a Line or Lineament is not formed by Chance a Line is a Line in its Minutest Subdivision[s]
Strait or Crooked It is Itself & Not Inter measurable with or by any Thing Else Such is Job.
(E784)

It has been supposed that, despite his opposition to Enlightenment principles, Blake arrived at a linear aesthetic that was in many ways more similar to the Neoclassical engravings of John Flaxman than to the works of the Romantics, with whom he is often classified. However, Blake's relationship with Flaxman seems to have grown more distant after Blake's return from Felpham, and there are surviving letters between Flaxman and Hayley wherein Flaxman speaks ill of Blake's theories of art. Blake further criticized Flaxman's styles and theories of art in his responses to criticism made against his print of Chaucer's *Caunterbury Pilgrims* in 1810.

Northrop Frye, commenting on Blake's consistency in strongly held views, notes Blake "himself says that his notes on [Joshua] Reynolds, written at fifty, are 'exactly Similar' to those on Locke

and Bacon, written when he was 'very Young'. Even phrases and lines of verse will reappear as much as forty years later. Consistency in maintaining what he believed to be true was itself one of his leading principles ... Consistency, then, foolish or otherwise, is one of Blake's chief preoccupations, just as 'self-contradiction' is always one of his most contemptuous comments".

Blake abhorred slavery and believed in racial and sexual equality. Several of his poems and paintings express a notion of universal humanity: "As all men are alike (though' infinitely various)". In one poem, narrated by a black child, white and black bodies alike are described as shaded groves or clouds, which exist only until one learns "to bear the beams of love":

When I from black and he from white cloud free,

And round the tent of God like lambs we joy:

Ill shade him from the heat till he can bear,

To lean in joy upon our fathers knee.

And then I'll stand and stroke his silver hair

And be like him and he will then love me.

Blake retained an active interest in social and political events throughout his life, and social and political statements are often present in his mystical symbolism. His views on what he saw as oppression and restriction of rightful freedom extended to the Church. His spiritual beliefs are evident in Songs of Experience (1794), in which he distinguishes between the Old Testament God, whose restrictions he rejected, and the New Testament God whom he saw as a positive influence.

Visions:

From a young age, William Blake claimed to have seen visions. The first may have occurred as early as the age of four when, according to one anecdote, the young artist "saw God" when God "put his head to the window", causing Blake to break into screaming. At the age of eight or ten in Peckham Rye, London, Blake claimed to have seen "a tree filled with angels, bright angelic wings bespangling every bough like stars." According to Blake's Victorian biographer Gilchrist,

he returned home and reported the vision and only escaped being thrashed by his father for telling a lie through the intervention of his mother. Though all evidence suggests that his parents were largely supportive, his mother seems to have been especially so, and several of Blake's early drawings and poems decorated the walls of her chamber. On another occasion, Blake watched haymakers at work, and thought he saw angelic figures walking among them.

Blake claimed to experience visions throughout his life. They were often associated with beautiful religious themes and imagery, and may have inspired him further with spiritual works and pursuits. Certainly, religious concepts and imagery figure centrally in Blake's works. God and Christianity constituted the intellectual centre of his writings, from which he drew inspiration. Blake believed he was personally instructed and encouraged by Archangels to create his artistic works, which he claimed were actively read and enjoyed by the same Archangels. In a letter of condolence to William Hayley, dated 6 May 1800, four days after the death of Hayley's son, Blake wrote:

I know that our deceased friends are more really with us than when they were apparent to our mortal part. Thirteen years ago I lost a brother, and with his spirit I converse daily and hourly in the spirit, and see him in my remembrance, in the region of my imagination. I hear his advice, and even now write from his dictate.

In a letter to John Flaxman, dated 21 September 1800, Blake wrote:

[The town of] Felpham is a sweet place for Study, because it is more spiritual than London. Heaven opens here on all sides her golden Gates; her windows are not obstructed by vapors; voices of Celestial inhabitants are more distinctly heard, & their forms more distinctly seen; & my Cottage is also a Shadow of their houses. My Wife & Sister are both well, courting Neptune for an embrace... I am more famed in Heaven for my works than I could well conceive. In my Brain are studies & Chambers filled with books & pictures of old, which I wrote & painted in ages of Eternity before my mortal life; & those works are the delight & Study of Archangels.

In a letter to Thomas Butts, dated 25 April 1803, Blake wrote:

Now I may say to you, what perhaps I should not dare to say to anyone else: That I can alone carry on my visionary studies in London unannoy'd, & that I may converse with my friends in

Eternity, See Visions, Dream Dreams & prophecy & speak Parables unobserved & at liberty from the Doubts of other Mortals; perhaps Doubts proceeding from Kindness, but Doubts are always pernicious, Especially when we Doubt our Friends.

In A Vision of the Last Judgment Blake wrote:

Error is Created Truth is Eternal Error or Creation will be Burned Up & then & not till then Truth or Eternity will appear It is Burnt up the Moment Men cease to behold it I assert for My self that I do not behold the Outward Creation & that to me it is hindrance & not Action it is as the Dirt upon my feet No part of Me.

What it will be Questioned When the Sun rises do you not see a round Disk of fire somewhat like a Guinea O no no I see an Innumerable company of the Heavenly host crying Holy Holy Holy is the Lord God Almighty I question not my Corporeal or Vegetative Eye any more than I would Question a Window concerning a Sight I look thro it & not with it.

Aware of Blake's visions, William Wordsworth commented, "There was no doubt that this poor man was mad, but there is something in the madness of this man which interests me more than the sanity of Lord Byron and Walter Scott. In a more deferential vein, writing in *A Short Biographical Dictionary of English Literature*, John William Cousins wrote that Blake was "a truly pious and loving soul, neglected and misunderstood by the world, but appreciated by an elect few", who "led a cheerful and contented life of poverty illumined by visions and celestial inspirations." Blake's sanity was called into question as recently as the publication of the 1911 *Encyclopædia Britannica*, whose entry on Blake comments that "The question whether Blake was or was not mad seems likely to remain in dispute, but there can be no doubt whatever that he was at different periods of his life under the influence of illusions for which there are no outward facts to account, and that much of what he wrote is so far wanting in the quality of sanity as to be without a logical coherence."

On the day of his death, Blake worked relentlessly on his Dante series. Eventually, it is reported, he ceased working and turned to his wife, who was in tears by his bedside. Beholding her, Blake is said to have cried, "Stay Kate! Keep just as you are – I will draw your portrait – for you have ever been an angel to me." Having completed this portrait (now lost), Blake laid down his tools and began to sing hymns and verses. At six that evening, after promising his wife that he would

be with her always, Blake died. Gilchrist reports that a female lodger in the house, present at his expiration, said, "I have been at the death, not of a man, but of a blessed angel.

Blake's work was neglected for a generation after his death and almost forgotten when Alexander Gilchrist began work on his biography in the 1860s. The publication of the *Life of William Blake* rapidly transformed Blake's reputation, in particular as he was taken up by Pre-Raphaelites and associated figures, in particular Dante Gabriel Rossetti and Algernon Charles Swinburne. In the twentieth century, however, Blake's work was fully appreciated and his influence increased. Important early and mid twentieth-century scholars involved in enhancing Blake's standing in literary and artistic circles included S. Foster Damon, Geoffrey Keynes, Northrop Frye, David V. Erdman and G. E. Bentley, Jr.

While Blake had a significant role to play in the art and poetry of figures such as Rossetti, it was during the Modernist period that this work began to influence a wider set of writers and artists. William Butler Yeats, who edited an edition of Blake's collected works in 1893, drew on him for poetic and philosophical ideas, while British surrealist art in particular drew on Blake's conceptions of non-mimetic, visionary practice in the painting of artists such as Paul Nash and Graham Sutherland. His poetry came into use by a number of British classical composers such as Benjamin Britten and Ralph Vaughan Williams, who set his works. Modern British composer John Tavener set several of Blake's poems, including *The Tyger* and *The Lamb*.

Many such as June Singer have argued that Blake's thoughts on human nature greatly anticipate and parallel the thinking of the psychoanalyst Carl Jung, although Jung dismissed Blake's works as "an artistic production rather than an authentic representation of unconscious processes." Similarly, although less popularly, Diana Hume George claimed that Blake can be seen as a precursor to the ideas of Sigmund Freud.

Blake had an enormous influence on the beat poets of the 1950s and the counterculture of the 1960s, frequently being cited by such seminal figures as beat poet Allen Ginsberg, songwriters Bob Dylan, Jim Morrison, Van Morrison, and English writer Aldous Huxley. Much of the central conceit of Philip Pullman's fantasy trilogy *His Dark Materials* is rooted in the world of Blake's *The Marriage of Heaven and Hell*. After World War II, Blake's role in popular culture came to the fore in a variety of areas such as popular music, film, and the graphic novel, leading Edward

Larrissy to assert that "Blake is the Romantic writer who has exerted the most powerful influence on the twentieth century."

Chapter 7

Role of Romantic Age Poets in developing Poetry

This chapter is a continuation of the earlier chapter. The romantic age is divided into two parts- First generation poets and second generation poets. Blake and Wordsworth comes under the first generation poets and the second generation poets includes poets like Shelley Byron and Keats. This chapter tends to focus on the second generation of poets.

George Gordon Byron, 6th Baron Byron, later George Gordon Noel, 6th Baron Byron, FRS (22 January 1788 – 19 April 1824), commonly known simply as Lord Byron, was an English poet and a leading figure in the Romantic Movement. Among Byron's best-known works are the lengthy narrative poems *Don Juan* and *Childe Harold's Pilgrimage* and the short lyric *She Walks in Beauty*. He is regarded as one of the greatest British poets and remains widely read and influential.

He travelled all over Europe especially in Italy where he lived for 7 years and then joined the Greek War of Independence fighting the Ottoman Empire, for which Greeks revere him as a national hero. He died one year later at age 36 from a fever contracted while in Missolonghi in Greece.

Often described as the most flamboyant and notorious of the major Romantics, Byron was celebrated in life for aristocratic excesses, including huge debts, numerous love affairs with both sexes, rumours of a scandalous incestuous liaison with his half-sister, and self-imposed exile.

Byron received his early formal education at Aberdeen Grammar School, and in August 1799 entered the school of Dr. William Glennie, in Dulwich. Placed under the care of a Dr. Bailey, he was encouraged to exercise in moderation but could not restrain himself from "violent" bouts in an attempt to overcompensate for his deformed foot. His mother interfered with his studies, often withdrawing him from school, with the result that he lacked discipline and his classical studies were neglected. In 1801 he was sent to Harrow, where he remained until July 1805. An undistinguished student and an unskilled cricketer, he did represent the school during the very first Eton v Harrow cricket match at Lord's in 1805.

His lack of moderation was not just restricted to physical exercise. Byron fell in love with Mary Chaworth, whom he met while at school, and she was the reason he refused to return to Harrow in September 1803. His mother wrote, "He has no indisposition that I know of but love, desperate love, the worst of all maladies in my opinion. In short, the boy is distractedly in love with Miss Chaworth." In Byron's later memoirs, "Mary Chaworth is portrayed as the first object of his adult sexual feelings."

Byron finally returned in January 1804, to a more settled period which saw the formation of a circle of emotional involvements with other Harrow boys, which he recalled with great vividness: "My school friendships were with me passions (for I was always violent)." The most enduring of those was with John FitzGibbon, 2nd Earl of Clare — four years Byron's junior — whom he was to meet unexpectedly many years later in Italy (1821). His nostalgic poems about his Harrow friendships, *Childish Recollections* (1806), express a prescient "consciousness of sexual differences that may in the end make England untenable to him".

"Ah! Sure some stronger impulse vibrates here,
Which whispers friendship will be doubly dear
To one, who thus for kindred hearts must roam,
And seek abroad, the love denied at home."

Byron wrote prolifically. In 1832 his publisher, John Murray, released the complete works in 14 duodecimo volumes, including a life by Thomas Moore. Subsequent editions were released in 17 volumes, first published a year later, in 1833.

Don Juan

Byron's magnum opus, *Don Juan*, a poem spanning 17 cantos, ranks as one of the most important long poems published in England since John Milton's *Paradise Lost*. The masterpiece, often called the epic of its time, has roots deep in literary tradition and, although regarded by early Victorians as somewhat shocking, equally involves itself with its own contemporary world at all levels — social, political, literary and ideological.

Byron published the first two cantos anonymously in 1819 after disputes with his regular publisher over the shocking nature of the poetry; by this time, he had been a famous poet for seven years, and when he self-published the beginning cantos, they were well-received in some quarters. It was then released volume by volume through his regular publishing house. By 1822, cautious acceptance by the public had turned to outrage, and Byron's publisher refused to continue to publish the works. In Canto III of *Don Juan*, Byron expresses his detestation for poets such as William Wordsworth and Samuel Taylor Coleridge. Byron is considered to be the first modern-style celebrity. His image as the personification of the Byronic hero fascinated the public, and his wife Annabella coined the term "Byromania" to refer to the commotion surrounding him. His self-awareness and personal promotion are seen as a beginning to what would become the modern rock star; he would instruct artists painting portraits of him not to paint him with pen or book in hand, but as a "man of action." While Byron first welcomed fame, he later turned from it by going into voluntary exile from Britain.

The re-founding of the Byron Society in 1971 reflected the fascination that many people had for Byron and his work. This society became very active, publishing an annual journal. 36 Byron Societies function throughout the world, and an International Conference takes place annually.

Byron exercised a marked influence on Continental literature and art, and his reputation as a poet is higher in many European countries than in Britain or America, although not as high as in his time, when he was widely thought to be the greatest poet in the world. Byron has inspired works by Franz Liszt, Hector Berlioz, Pyotr Ilyich Tchaikovsky, and Giuseppe Verdi.

Byronic hero

The figure of the Byronic hero pervades much of his work, and Byron himself is considered to epitomize many of the characteristics of this literary figure. Scholars have traced the literary history of the Byronic hero from John Milton, and many authors and artists of the Romantic movement show Byron's influence during the 19th century and beyond, including Charlotte and Emily Brontë.

The Byronic hero presents an idealized, but flawed character whose attributes include: great talent; great passion; a distaste for society and social institutions; a lack of respect for rank and privilege (although possessing both); being thwarted in love by social constraint or death;

rebellion; exile; an unsavory secret past; arrogance; overconfidence or lack of foresight; and, ultimately, a self-destructive manner. These types of characters have since become ubiquitous in literature and politics.

P.B Shelly:

Percy Bysshe Shelley (4 August 1792 – 8 July 1822) was one of the major English Romantic poets and is regarded by critics as amongst the finest lyric poets in the English language. A radical in his poetry as well as his political and social views, Shelley did not achieve 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 such classic poems 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 long, visionary poems such as *Queen Mab* (later reworked as *The Daemon of the World*), *Alastor*, *The Revolt of Islam*, *Adonaïs*, the unfinished work *The Triumph of Life*; and the visionary verse dramas *The Cenci* (1819) and *Prometheus Unbound*(1820).

His close circle of admirers, however, included some progressive thinkers of the day, including his future father-in-law, the philosopher William Godwin. Though Shelley's poetry and prose output remained steady throughout his life, most publishers and journals declined to publish his work for fear of being arrested themselves for blasphemy or sedition. Shelley did not live to see success and influence, although these reach down to the present day not only in literature, but in major movements in social and political thought.

Shelley became an idol of the next 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, Bertrand Russell, W. B. Yeats, Karl Marx, Upton Sinclair and Isadora Duncan. Henry David Thoreau's civil disobedience was apparently influenced by Shelley's non-violence in protest and political action.

Four months after being expelled, on 28 August 1811, the 19-year-old Shelley eloped to Scotland with the 16-year-old Harriet Westbrook, a pupil at the same boarding school as Shelley's sisters,

whom his father had forbidden him to see. Harriet Westbrook had been writing Shelley passionate letters threatening to kill herself because of her unhappiness at the school and at home. Shelley, heartbroken after the failure of his romance with his cousin, Harriet Grove, cut off from his mother and sisters, and convinced he had not long to live, impulsively decided to rescue Harriet Westbrook and make her his beneficiary. Harriet Westbrook's 28-year-old sister Eliza, to whom Harriet was very close, appears to have encouraged the young girl's infatuation with the future baronet. The Westbrooks pretended to disapprove but secretly encouraged the elopement. Sir Timothy Shelley, however, outraged that his son had married beneath him (Harriet's father, though prosperous, had kept a tavern) revoked Shelley's allowance and refused ever to receive the couple at Field Place. Shelley invited his friend Hogg to share his ménage but asked him to leave when Hogg made advances to Harriet. Harriet also insisted that her sister Eliza, whom Shelley detested, live with them. Shelley was also at this time increasingly involved in an intense platonic relationship with Elizabeth Hitchener, a 28-year-old unmarried schoolteacher of advanced views, with whom he had been corresponding. Hitchener, whom Shelley called the "sister of my soul" and "my second self", became his muse and confidante in the writing of his philosophical poem *Queen Mab*, a Utopian allegory. Shelley's widow Mary bought a cliff-top home at Boscombe, Bournemouth in 1851. She intended to live there with her son, Percy, and his wife Jane, and had her own parents moved to an underground mausoleum in the town. The property is now known as Shelley Manor. When Lady Jane Shelley was to be buried in the family vault, it was discovered that in her copy of *Adonais* was an envelope containing ashes, which she had identified as belonging to Shelley the poet. The family had preserved the story that when Shelley's body had been burned, his friend Edward Trelawny had taken the ashes of his heart and kept them himself; some more dramatic accounts suggest that Trelawny snatched the whole heart from the pyre. These same accounts claim that the heart was buried with Shelley's son Sir Percy Florence Shelley. All accounts agree, however, that the remains now lie in the vault in the churchyard of St Peter's Church, Bournemouth.

For several years in the 20th century some of Trelawny's collection of Shelley ephemera, including a painting of Shelley as a child, a jacket, and a lock of his hair were on display in "The Shelley Rooms", a small museum at Shelley Manor. When the museum finally closed, these items were returned to Lord Abinger, who descends from a niece of Lady Jane Shelley.

At university Shelley wrote articles defending Daniel Isaac Eaton, a bookseller charged with selling books by Tom Paine and the much persecuted Radical publisher, Richard Carlile. He also wrote *The Necessity of Atheism*, a pamphlet that attacked the idea of compulsory Christianity. Oxford University was shocked when they discovered what Shelley had written and on 25th March, 1811 he was expelled.

Shelley eloped to Scotland with Harriet Westbrook, a sixteen year old daughter of a coffee-house keeper. This created a terrible scandal and Shelley's father never forgave him for what he had done. Shelley moved to Ireland where he made revolutionary speeches on religion and politics. He also wrote a political pamphlet *A Declaration of Rights*, on the subject of the French Revolution, but it was considered to be too radical for distribution in Britain.

Percy Bysshe Shelley returned to England where he became involved in radical politics. He met William Godwin the husband of Mary Wollstonecraft, the author of *Vindication of the Rights of Women*. Shelley also renewed his friendship with Leigh Hunt, the young editor of *The Examiner*. Shelley helped to support Leigh Hunt financially when he was imprisoned for an article he published on the Prince Regent.

Leigh Hunt published *Queen Mab*, a long poem by Shelley celebrating the merits of republicanism, atheism, vegetarianism and free love. Shelley also wrote articles for *The Examiner* on political subjects including an attack on the way the government had used the agent provocateur William Oliver to obtain convictions against Jeremiah Brandreth.

In 1814 Shelley fell in love and eloped with Mary, the sixteen-year-old daughter of William Godwin and Mary Wollstonecraft. For the next few years the couple travelled in Europe. Shelley continued to be involved in politics and in 1817 wrote the pamphlet *A Proposal for Putting Reform to the Vote Throughout the United Kingdom*. In the pamphlet Shelley suggested a national referendum on electoral reform and improvements in working class education.

Percy Bysshe Shelley was in Italy when he heard the news of the Peterloo Massacre. He immediately responded by writing *The Mask of Anarchy*, a poem that blamed Lord Castlereagh, Lord Sidmouth and Lord Eldon for the deaths at St. Peter's Fields. In *The Call to Freedom* Shelley ended his argument for non-violent mass political protest with the words:

Rise like Lions after slumber

In unvanquishable number -

Shake your chains to earth like dew

Which in sleep had fallen on you -

Ye are many - they are few.

In 1822 Shelley, moved to Italy with Leigh Hunt and Lord Byron where they published the journal *The Liberal*. By publishing it in Italy the three men remained free from prosecution by the British authorities. The first edition of *The Liberal* sold 4,000 copies. Soon after its publication, Percy Bysshe Shelley was lost at sea on 8th July, 1822 while sailing to meet Leigh Hunt.

John Keats:

John Keats was an English Romantic poet. He was one of the main figures of the second generation of Romantic poets along with Lord Byron and Percy Bysshe Shelley, despite his work having been in publication for only four years before his death.

Although his poems were not generally well received by critics during his life, his reputation grew after his death, so that by the end of the 19th century he had become one of the most beloved of all English poets. He had a significant influence on a diverse range of poets and writers. Jorge Luis Borges stated that his first encounter with Keats was the most significant literary experience of his life.

The poetry of Keats is characterised by sensual imagery, most notably in the series of odes. Today his poems and letters are some of the most popular and most analyzed in English literature.

When Keats died at 25, he had been writing poetry seriously for only about six years, from 1814 until the summer of 1820; and publishing for only four. In his lifetime, sales of Keats's three volumes of poetry probably amounted to only 200 copies. His first poem, the sonnet *O Solitude* appeared in the *Examiner* in May 1816, while his collection *Lamia, Isabella, The Eve of St.*

Agnes and other poems was published in July 1820 before his last visit to Rome. The compression of his poetic apprenticeship and maturity into so short a time is just one remarkable aspect of Keats's work.

Although prolific during his short career, and now one of the most studied and admired British poets, his reputation rests on a small body of work, centred on the Odes, and only in the creative outpouring of the last years of his short life was he able to express the inner intensity for which he has been lauded since his death. Keats was convinced that he had made no mark in his lifetime. Aware that he was dying, he wrote to Fanny Brawne in February 1820, "I have left no immortal work behind me – nothing to make my friends proud of my memory – but I have loved the principle of beauty in all things, and if I had had time I would have made myself remembered."

Keats's ability and talent was acknowledged by several influential contemporary allies such as Shelley and Hunt.[His admirers praised him for thinking "on his pulses", for having developed a style which was more heavily loaded with sensualities, more gorgeous in its effects, more voluptuously alive than any poet who had come before him: 'loading every rift with ore'. Shelley often corresponded with Keats in Rome, and loudly declared that Keats's death had been brought on by bad reviews in the Quarterly Review. Seven weeks after the funeral he wrote Adonais, a despairing elegy, stating that Keats' early death was a personal and public tragedy:

The loveliest and the last,

The bloom, whose petals nipped before they blew

Died on the promise of the fruit.

Although Keats wrote that "if poetry comes not as naturally as the Leaves to a tree it had better not come at all", poetry did not come easy to him, his work the fruit of a deliberate and prolonged classical self-education. He may have possessed an innate poetic sensibility but his early works were clearly those of a young man learning his craft. His first attempts at verse were often vague, languorously narcotic and lacking a clear eye. His poetic sense was based on the conventional tastes of his friend Charles Cowden Clarke, who first introduced him to the classics, and also came from the predilections of Hunt's Examiner, which Keats read as a boy.

Hunt scorned the Augustan or 'French' school, dominated by Pope, and attacked the earlier Romantic poets Wordsworth and Coleridge, now in their forties, as unsophisticated, obscure and crude writers. Indeed, during Keats's few years as a published poet, the reputation of the older Romantic school was at its lowest ebb. Keats came to echo these sentiments in his work, identifying himself with a 'new school' for a time, somewhat alienating him from Wordsworth, Coleridge and Byron and providing the basis for the scathing attacks from Blackwoods and The Quarterly.

By the time of his death, Keats had therefore been associated with the taints of both old and new schools: the obscurity of the first wave Romantics and the uneducated affectation of Hunt's "Cockney School". Keats's posthumous reputation mixed the reviewers' caricature of the simplistic bumbler with the image of the hyper-sensitive genius killed by high feeling, which Shelley later portrayed.

The Victorian sense of poetry as the work of indulgence and luxuriant fancy offered a schema into which Keats was posthumously fitted. Marked as the standard bearer of sensory writing, his reputation grew steadily and remarkably. His work had the full support of the influential Cambridge Apostles, whose members included the young Tennyson, later a popular Poet Laureate who came to regard Keats as the greatest poet of the 19th century. In 1848, twenty-seven years after Keats's death, Richard Monckton Milnes published the first full biography, which helped place Keats within the canon of English literature. The Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood, including Millais and Rossetti, were inspired by Keats, and painted scenes from his poems including "The Eve of St. Agnes", "Isabella" and "La Belle Dame sans Merci", lush, arresting and popular images which remain closely associated with Keats's work.

In 1882, Swinburne wrote in the Encyclopedia Britannica that "the Ode to a Nightingale, [is] one of the final masterpieces of human work in all time and for all ages". In the twentieth century, Keats remained the muse of poets such as Wilfred Owen, who kept his death date as a day of mourning, Yeats and T. S. Eliot. Critic Helen Vendler stated the odes "are a group of works in which the English language find ultimate embodiment". Bate declared of "To Autumn": "Each generation has found it one of the most nearly perfect poems in English" and M. R. Ridley claimed the ode "is the most serenely flawless poem in our language."

The largest collection of the letters, manuscripts, and other papers of Keats is in the Houghton Library at Harvard University. Other collections of material are archived at the British Library, Keats House, Hampstead, the Keats-Shelley Memorial House in Rome and the Pierpont Morgan Library in New York. Since 1998 the British Keats-Shelley Memorial Association have annually awarded a prize for romantic poetry. A Royal Society of Arts blue plaque was unveiled in 1896 to commemorate Keats at Keats House

Biographers

None of Keats' biographies were written by people who had known him. Shortly after his death, his publishers announced they would speedily publish *The memoirs and remains of John Keats* but his friends refused to cooperate and argued with each other to the extent that the project was abandoned. Leigh Hunt's *Lord Byron and some of his Contemporaries* (1828) gives the first biographical account, strongly emphasising Keats's supposedly humble origins, a misconception which still continues. Given that he was becoming a significant figure within artistic circles, a succession of other publications followed, including anthologies of his many notes, chapters and letters. However, early accounts often gave contradictory or heavily biased versions of events and were subject to dispute. His friends Brown, Severn, Dilke, Shelley and his guardian Richard Abbey, his publisher Taylor, Fanny Brawne and many others issued posthumous commentary on Keats's life. These early writings coloured all subsequent biography and have become embedded in a body of Keats legend.

Shelley promoted Keats as someone whose achievement could not be separated from agony, who was 'spiritualised' by his decline and too fine-tuned to endure the harshness of life; the consumptive, suffering image popularly held today. The first full biography was published in 1848 by Richard Monckton Milnes. Landmark Keats biographers since include Sidney Colvin, Robert Gittings, Walter Jackson Bate and Andrew Motion. The idealized image of the heroic romantic poet who battled poverty and died young was inflated by the late arrival of an authoritative biography and the lack of an accurate likeness. Most of the surviving portraits of Keats were painted after his death, and those who knew him held that they did not succeed in capturing his unique quality and intensity.

Marry Shelley:

Mary Shelley was an English novelist, short story writer, dramatist, essayist, biographer, and travel writer, best known for her Gothic novel *Frankenstein: or, The Modern Prometheus* (1818). She also edited and promoted the works of her husband, the Romantic poet and philosopher Percy Bysshe Shelley. Her father was the political philosopher William Godwin, and her mother was the philosopher and feminist Mary Wollstonecraft.

Mary Godwin's mother died when she was eleven days old; afterwards, she and her older half-sister, Fanny Imlay, were raised by her father. When Mary was four, Godwin married his neighbour, Mary Jane Clairmont. Godwin provided his daughter with a rich, if informal, education, encouraging her to adhere to his liberal political theories. In 1814, Mary Godwin began a romantic relationship with one of her father's political followers, the married Percy Bysshe Shelley. Together with Mary's stepsister, Claire Clairmont, they left for France and travelled through Europe; upon their return to England, Mary was pregnant with Percy's child. Over the next two years, she and Percy faced ostracism, constant debt, and the death of their prematurely born daughter. They married in late 1816 after the suicide of Percy Shelley's first wife, Harriet.

In 1816, the couple famously spent a summer with Lord Byron, John William Polidori, and Claire Clairmont near Geneva, Switzerland, where Mary conceived the idea for her novel *Frankenstein*. The Shelleys left Britain in 1818 for Italy, where their second and third children died before Mary Shelley gave birth to her last and only surviving child, Percy Florence. In 1822, her husband drowned when his sailing boat sank during a storm near Viareggio. A year later, Mary Shelley returned to England and from then on devoted herself to the upbringing of her son and a career as a professional author. The last decade of her life was dogged by illness, probably caused by the brain tumour that was to kill her at the age of 53.

Until the 1970s, Mary Shelley was known mainly for her efforts to publish Percy Shelley's works and for her novel *Frankenstein*, which remains widely read and has inspired many theatrical and film adaptations. Recent scholarship has yielded a more comprehensive view of Mary Shelley's achievements. Scholars have shown increasing interest in her literary output, particularly in her novels, which include the historical novels *Valperga* (1823) and *Perkin Warbeck* (1830), the apocalyptic novel *The Last Man* (1826), and her final two novels, *Lodore* (1835) and *Falkner* (1837). Studies of her lesser-known works such as the travel book *Rambles in Germany and Italy*

(1844) and the biographical articles for Dionysius Lardner's *Cabinet Cyclopaedia* (1829–46) support the growing view that Mary Shelley remained a political radical throughout her life. Mary Shelley's works often argue that cooperation and sympathy, particularly as practiced by women in the family, were the ways to reform civil society. This view was a direct challenge to the individualistic Romantic ethos promoted by Percy Shelley and the Enlightenment political theories articulated by her father, William Godwin.

Literary themes and styles

Mary Shelley lived a literary life. Her father encouraged her to learn to write by composing letters, and her favourite occupation as a child was writing stories. Unfortunately, all of Mary's juvenilia were lost when she ran off with Percy in 1814, and none of her surviving manuscripts can be definitively dated before that year. Her first published work is often thought to have been *Mounseer Nongtongpaw*, comic verses written for Godwin's *Juvenile Library* when she was ten and a half; however, the poem is attributed to another writer in the most recent authoritative collection of her works. Percy Shelley enthusiastically encouraged Mary Shelley's writing: "My husband was, from the first, very anxious that I should prove myself worthy of my parentage, and enrol myself on the page of fame. He was forever inciting me to obtain literary reputation.

Enlightenment and Romanticism

Frankenstein, like much Gothic fiction of the period, mixes a visceral and alienating subject matter with speculative and thought-provoking themes. Rather than focusing on the twists and turns of the plot, however, the novel foregrounds the mental and moral struggles of the protagonist, Victor Frankenstein, and Shelley imbues the text with her own brand of politicised Romanticism, one that criticised the individualism and egotism of traditional Romanticism. Victor Frankenstein is like Satan in *Paradise Lost*, and Prometheus: he rebels against tradition; he creates life; and he shapes his own destiny. These traits are not portrayed positively; as Blumberg writes, "his relentless ambition is a self-delusion, clothed as quest for truth" He must abandon his family to fulfill his ambition.

Mary Shelley believed in the Enlightenment idea that people could improve society through the responsible exercise of political power, but she feared that the irresponsible exercise of power would lead to chaos. In practice, her works largely criticise the way 18th-century thinkers such

as her parents believed such change could be brought about. The creature in *Frankenstein*, for example, reads books associated with radical ideals but the education he gains from them is ultimately useless. Shelley's works reveal her as less optimistic than Godwin and Wollstonecraft; she lacks faith in Godwin's theory that humanity could eventually be perfected.

As literary scholar Kari Lokke writes, *The Last Man*, more so than *Frankenstein*, "in its refusal to place humanity at the center of the universe, its questioning of our privileged position in relation to nature ... constitutes a profound and prophetic challenge to Western humanism." Specifically, Mary Shelley's allusions to what radicals believed was a failed revolution in France and the Godwinian, Wollstonecraftian, and Burkean responses to it, challenge "Enlightenment faith in the inevitability of progress through collective efforts". As in *Frankenstein*, Shelley "offers a profoundly disenchanted commentary on the age of revolution, which ends in a total rejection of the progressive ideals of her own generation". Not only does she reject these Enlightenment political ideals, but she also rejects the Romantic notion that the poetic or literary imagination can offer an alternative

Chapter 8

Victorian Age Poetry

While in the preceding Romantic period poetry had been the dominant genre, it was the novel that was most important in the Victorian period. Charles Dickens (1812–1870) dominated the first part of Victoria's reign: his first novel, *Pickwick Papers*, was published in 1836, and his last *Our Mutual Friend* between 1864–5. William Thackeray's (1811–1863) most famous work *Vanity Fair* appeared in 1848, and the three Brontë sisters, Charlotte (1816–55), Emily (1818–48) and Anne (1820–49), also published significant works in the 1840s. A major later novel was George Eliot's (1819–80) *Middlemarch* (1872), while the major novelist of the later part of Queen Victoria's reign was Thomas Hardy (1840–1928), whose first novel, *Under the Greenwood Tree*, appeared in 1872 and his last, *Jude the Obscure*, in 1895.

Robert Browning (1812–89) and Alfred Tennyson (1809–92) were Victorian England's most famous poets, though more recent taste has tended to prefer the poetry of Thomas Hardy, who, though he wrote poetry throughout his life, did not publish a collection until 1898, as well as that of Gerard Manley Hopkins (1844–89), whose poetry was published posthumously in 1918. Algernon Charles Swinburne (1837–1909) is also considered an important literary figure of the period, especially his poems and critical writings. Early poetry of W. B. Yeats was also published in Victoria's reign.

With regard to the theatre it was not until the last decades of the nineteenth century that any significant works were produced. This began with Gilbert and Sullivan's comic operas, from the 1870s, various plays of George Bernard Shaw (1856–1950) in the 1890s, and Oscar Wilde's (1854–1900) *The Importance of Being Earnest* in 1895.

Poetry and poetic Drama:

The husband and wife team of Elizabeth Barrett Browning and Robert Browning conducted their love affair through verse and produced many tender and passionate poems. Both Matthew Arnold and Gerard Manley Hopkins wrote poems which sit somewhere in between the exultation of nature of the romantic Poetry and the Georgian Poetry of the early 20th century. However Hopkins's poetry was not published until 1918. Arnold's works anticipate some of the themes of

these later poets, while Hopkins drew inspiration from verse forms of Old English poetry such as *Beowulf*.

The reclaiming of the past was a major part of Victorian literature with an interest in both classical literature but also the medieval literature of England. The Victorians loved the heroic, chivalrous stories of knights of old and they hoped to regain some of that noble, courtly behaviour and impress it upon the people both at home and in the wider empire. The best example of this is Alfred Tennyson's *Idylls of the King*, which blended the stories of King Arthur, particularly those by Thomas Malory, with contemporary concerns and ideas. The Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood also drew on myth and folklore for their art, with Dante Gabriel Rossetti contemporaneously regarded as the chief poet amongst them, although his sister Christina is now held by scholars to be a stronger poet.

In drama, farces, musical burlesques, extravaganzas and comic operas competed with Shakespeare productions and serious drama by the likes of James Planché and Thomas William Robertson. In 1855, the German Reed Entertainments began a process of elevating the level of (formerly risqué) musical theatre in Britain that culminated in the famous series of comic operas by Gilbert and Sullivan and were followed by the 1890s with the first Edwardian musical comedies. The first play to achieve 500 consecutive performances was the London comedy *Our Boys* by H. J. Byron, opening in 1875. Its astonishing new record of 1,362 performances was bested in 1892 by *Charley's Aunt* by Brandon Thomas. After W. S. Gilbert, Oscar Wilde became the leading poet and dramatist of the late Victorian period. Wilde's plays, in particular, stand apart from the many now forgotten plays of Victorian times and have a closer relationship to those of the Edwardian dramatists such as George Bernard Shaw, whose career began in the 1890s. Wilde's 1895 comic masterpiece, *The Importance of Being Earnest*, was the greatest of the plays in which he held an ironic mirror to the aristocracy while displaying virtuosic mastery of wit and paradoxical wisdom. It has remained extremely popular.

Writers from the United States and the British colonies of Australia, New Zealand and Canada were influenced by the literature of Britain and are often classed as a part of Victorian literature, although they were gradually developing their own distinctive voices. Victorian writers of Canadian literature include Grant Allen, Susanna Moodie and Catherine Parr Traill. Australian literature has the poets Adam Lindsay Gordon and Banjo Paterson, who wrote *Waltzing Matilda*,

and New Zealand literature includes Thomas Bracken and Frederick Edward Maning. From the sphere of literature of the United States during this time are some of the country's greats including: Emily Dickinson, Ralph Waldo Emerson, Nathaniel Hawthorne, Oliver Wendell Holmes, Sr., Henry James, Herman Melville, Harriet Beecher Stowe, Henry David Thoreau, Mark Twain and Walt Whitman.

The problem with the classification of "Victorian literature" is the great difference between the early works of the period and the later works which had more in common with the writers of the Edwardian period and many writers straddle this divide. People such as Arthur Conan Doyle, Rudyard Kipling, H. G. Wells, Bram Stoker, H. Rider Haggard, Jerome K. Jerome and Joseph Conrad all wrote some of their important works during Victoria's reign but the sensibility of their writing is frequently regarded as Edwardian.

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, and brother to both Tom Arnold, literary professor, and William Delafield Arnold, novelist and colonial administrator. Matthew Arnold has been characterized as a sage writer, a type of writer who chastises and instructs the reader on contemporary social issues.

In 1852, Arnold published his second volume of poems, *Empedocles on Etna, and Other Poems*. In 1853, he published *Poems: A New Edition*, a selection from the two earlier volumes famously excluding *Empedocles on Etna*, but adding new poems, *Sohrab and Rustum* and *The Scholar Gipsy*. In 1854, *Poems: Second Series* appeared; also a selection, it included the new poem, *Balder Dead*.

Arnold was elected Professor of Poetry at Oxford in 1857. He was the first to deliver his lectures in English rather than Latin. He was re-elected in 1862. On *Translating Homer* (1861) and the initial thoughts that Arnold would transform into *Culture and Anarchy* were among the fruits of the Oxford lectures. In 1859, he conducted the first of three trips to the continent at the behest of parliament to study European educational practices. He self-published *The Popular Education of France* (1861), the introduction to which was later published under the title *Democracy* (1879)

In 1865, Arnold published *Essays in Criticism: First Series*. *Essays in Criticism: Second Series* would not appear until November 1888, shortly after his untimely death. In 1866, he published *Thyrsis*, his elegy to Clough who had died in 1861. *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

In 1886, he retired from school inspection and made another trip to America. Arnold died suddenly in 1888 of heart failure, when running to meet a tram that would have taken him to the Liverpool Landing Stage to see his daughter, who was visiting from the United States where she had moved after marrying an American.

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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." Chambers judged Arnold's poetic vision by "its simplicity, lucidity, and straightforwardness; its literalness...; the sparing use of aureate words, or of far-fetched words, which are all the more effective when they come; the avoidance of inversions, and the general directness of syntax, which gives full value to the delicacies of a varied rhythm, and makes it, of all verse that I know, the easiest to read aloud."

He has a primary school named after him in Liverpool, where he died, and secondary schools named after him in Oxford and Staines.

His literary career — leaving out the two prize poems — had begun in 1849 with the publication of *The Strayed Reveller and Other Poems* by A., which attracted little notice — although it contained perhaps Arnold's most purely poetical poem "The Forsaken Merman" — and was soon withdrawn. *Empedocles on Etna and Other Poems* (among them "Tristram and Iseult"), published in 1852, had a similar fate. In 1858 he brought out his tragedy of "Merope," calculated, he wrote to a friend, "rather to inaugurate my Professorship with dignity than to move deeply the present race of humans," and chiefly remarkable for some experiments in unusual — and unsuccessful — metres.

His 1867 poem "Dover Beach" depicted a nightmarish world from which the old religious verities have receded. It is sometimes held up as an early, if not the first, example of the modern sensibility. In a famous preface to a selection of the poems of William Wordsworth, Arnold identified himself, a little ironically, as a "Wordsworthian." The influence of Wordsworth, both in ideas and in diction, is unmistakable in Arnold's best poetry. Arnold's poem, "Dover Beach" appears in Ray Bradbury's *Fahrenheit 451* and is also featured prominently in *Saturday* by Ian McEwan. It has also been quoted or alluded to in a variety of other contexts (see *Dover Beach*).

Some consider Arnold to be the bridge between Romanticism and Modernism. His use of symbolic landscapes was typical of the Romantic era, while his skeptical and pessimistic perspective was typical of the Modern era. The rationalistic tendency of certain of his writings gave offence to many readers, and the sufficiency of his equipment in scholarship for dealing with some of the subjects which he handled was called in question, but he undoubtedly exercised a stimulating influence on his time. His writings are characterised by the finest culture, high

purpose, sincerity, and a style of great distinction, and much of his poetry has an exquisite and subtle beauty, though here also it has been doubted whether high culture and wide knowledge of poetry did not sometimes take the place of true poetic fire. Henry James wrote that Matthew Arnold's poetry will appeal to those who "like their pleasures rare" and who like to hear the poet "taking breath."

The mood of Arnold's poetry tends to be of plaintive 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 such poems as "Dover Beach" and in these lines from "Stanzas from the Grande Chartreuse":

Wandering between two worlds, one dead

The other powerless to be born,

With nowhere yet to rest my head

Like these, on earth I wait forlorn.

Arnold valued natural scenery for its peace and permanence in contrast with the ceaseless change of human things. His descriptions are often picturesque, and marked by striking similes. However, at the same time he liked subdued colours, mist and moonlight. He seems to prefer the 'spent lights' of the sea-depths in "The Forsaken Merman" to the village life preferred by the merman's lost wife.

In his poetry he derived not only the subject matter of his narrative poems from various traditional or literary sources but even much of the romantic melancholy of his earlier poems from Senancour's "Obermann".

Robert Browning:

Robert Browning (7 May 1812 – 12 December 1889) was an English poet and playwright whose mastery of dramatic verse, especially dramatic monologues, made him one of the foremost Victorian poets. In Florence, probably from early in 1853, Browning worked on the poems that eventually comprised his two-volume *Men and Women*, for which he is now well known; in 1855, however, when these were published, they made relatively little impact.

Elizabeth died in 1861: Robert Browning returned to London the following year with Pen, by then 12 years old, and made their home in 17 Warwick Crescent, Maida Vale. It was only when he returned to England and became part of the London literary scene—albeit while paying frequent visits to Italy (though never again to Florence)—that his reputation started to take off.

In 1868, after five years work, he completed and published the long blank-verse poem *The Ring and the Book*. Based on a convoluted murder-case from 1690s Rome, the poem is composed of twelve books, essentially ten lengthy dramatic monologues narrated by the various characters in the story, showing their individual perspectives on events, bookended by an introduction and conclusion by Browning himself. Long, even by Browning's own standards (over twenty thousand lines), *The Ring and the Book* was the poet's most ambitious project and arguably his greatest work; it has been praised as a tour de force of dramatic poetry. Published separately in four volumes from November 1868 through to February 1869, the poem was a success both commercially and critically, and finally brought Browning the renown he had sought for nearly forty years. The Robert Browning Society was formed in 1881 and his work was recognised as belonging within the British literary canon

Poetic style

Browning is popularly known by his shorter poems, such as *Porphyria's Lover*, *My Last Duchess*, *Rabbi Ben Ezra*, *How They Brought the Good News from Ghent to Aix*, and *The Pied Piper of Hamelin*.

His fame today rests mainly on his dramatic monologues, in which the words not only convey setting and action but also reveal the speaker's character. Unlike a soliloquy, the meaning in a Browning dramatic monologue is not what the speaker directly reveals but what he inadvertently "gives away" about himself in the process of rationalising past actions, or "special-pleading" his case to a silent auditor in the poem. .

The Ring and the Book is an epic-length poem in which he justifies the ways of God to humanity through twelve extended blank verse monologues spoken by the principals in a trial about a murder. These monologues greatly influenced many later poets, including T. S. Eliot and Ezra Pound. The work was a best-seller in its day, but a later critic, Anthony Burgess, commented "We all want to like Browning, but we find it very hard."

Thomas Hardy:

Thomas Hardy,(2 June 1840 – 11 January 1928) was an English novelist and poet. A Victorian realist in the tradition of George Eliot, he was influenced both in his novels and in his poetry by Romanticism, especially William Wordsworth Charles Dickens was another important influence. Like Dickens, he was highly critical of much in Victorian society, though Hardy focused more on a declining rural society.

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 novels, including *Far from the Madding Crowd*(1874), *The Mayor of Casterbridge* (1886), *Tess of the d'Urbervilles* (1891), and *Jude the Obscure* (1895). However, beginning in the 1950s Hardy has been recognised as a major poet; he had a significant influence on the Movement poets of the 1950s and 1960s, including Phillip Larkin.

Most of his fictional works – initially published as serials in magazines – were set in the semi-fictional region of Wessex. They explored tragic characters struggling against their passions and social circumstances. Hardy's Wessex is based on the medieval Anglo-Saxon kingdom and eventually came to include the counties of Dorset, Wiltshire, Somerset, Devon, Hampshire and much of Berkshire, in southwest and south central England.

Literary themes.

Hardy criticises certain social constraints that hindered the lives of those living in the 19th century. Considered a Victorian realist, Hardy examines the social constraints that are part of the Victorian status quo, suggesting these rules hinder the lives of all involved and ultimately lead to unhappiness.

Fellow British poet Philip Larkin in his essay "Wanted: Good Hardy Critic" describes Hardy's work:

"What is the intensely maturing experience of which Hardy's modern man is most sensible? In my view it is suffering, or sadness, and extended consideration of the centrality of suffering in Hardy's work should be the first duty of the true critic for which the work is still waiting . . . Any approach to his work, as to any writer's work, must seek first of all to determine what element is peculiarly his, which imaginative note he strikes most plangently, and to deny that in this case it is the sometimes gentle, sometimes ironic, sometimes bitter but always passive apprehension of suffering is, I think, wrong-headed."

In *Two on a Tower*, Hardy seeks to take a stand against these rules and sets up a story of love that crosses the boundaries of class. The reader is forced to consider disposing of the conventions set up for love. Nineteenth-century society enforces these conventions, and societal pressure ensures conformity. Swithin St Cleeve's idealism pits him against contemporary social constraints. He is a self-willed individual set up against the coercive strictures of social rules and mores.

“ In a novel structured around contrasts, the main opposition is between Swithin St Cleeve and Lady Viviette Constantine, who are presented as binary figures in a series of ways: aristocratic and lower class, youthful and mature, single and married, fair and dark, religious and agnostic...she [Lady Viviette Constantine] is also deeply conventional, absurdly wishing to conceal their marriage until Swithin has achieved social status through his scientific work, which gives rise to uncontrolled ironies and tragic-comic misunderstandings (Harvey 108). ”

Hardy's characters often encounter crossroads, which are symbolic of a point of opportunity and transition. But the hand of fate is an important part of many of Hardy's plots. *Far From the Madding Crowd* tells a tale of lives that are constructed by chance. "Had Bathsheba not sent the valentine, had Fanny not missed her wedding, for example, the story would have taken an entirely different path." Hardy's main characters often seem to be in the overwhelming and overpowering grip of fate.

In 1898 Hardy published his first volume of poetry, *Wessex Poems*, a collection of poems written over 30 years. Hardy claimed poetry as his first love, and after a great amount of negative

criticism erupted from the publication of his novel *Jude the Obscure*, Hardy decided to give up writing novels permanently and to focus his literary efforts on writing poetry. After giving up the novel form, Hardy continued to publish poetry collections until his death in 1928. Although he did publish one last novel in 1897, that novel, *The Well-Beloved*, had actually been written prior to *Jude the Obscure*.

Although his poems were not initially as well received by his contemporaries as his novels were, Hardy is now recognised as one of the greatest poets of the twentieth century. His verse had a profound influence on later writers, notably Philip Larkin, who included many of Hardy's poems in the edition of the *Oxford Book of Twentieth Century English Verse* that Larkin edited in 1973.

In a recent biography on Hardy, Claire Tomalin argues that Hardy became a truly great English poet after the death of his first wife, Emma, beginning with the elegies he wrote in her memory. Tomalin declares these poems among "the finest and strangest celebrations of the dead in English poetry."

Most of Hardy's poems, such as "Neutral Tones" and "A Broken Appointment", deal with themes of disappointment in love and life, and mankind's long struggle against indifference to human suffering. In poems such as "Ah, Are You Digging on My Grave", Hardy employed twist endings in the last few lines or in the last stanza to convey irony. Some, like "The Darkling Thrush" and "An August Midnight", appear as poems about writing poetry, because the nature mentioned in them gives Hardy the inspiration to write. His compositions range in style from the three-volume epic closet drama *The Dynasts* to shorter poems such as "A Broken Appointment". A particularly strong theme in the *Wessex Poems* is the long shadow that the Napoleonic Wars cast over the nineteenth century, for example, in "The Sergeant's Song" and "Leipzig".

A few of Hardy's poems, such as "The Blinded Bird" (a melancholy polemic against the sport of vinkenzetting), display his love of the natural world and his firm stance against animal cruelty, exhibited in his antivivisectionist views and his membership in the RSPCA.

A number of notable composers, including Gerald Finzi, Benjamin Britten, and Gustav Holst, have set poems by Hardy to music.

Hardy's family was Anglican, but not especially devout. He was baptised at the age of five weeks and attended church, where his father and uncle contributed to music. However, he did not attend the local Church of England school, instead being sent to Mr Last's school, three miles away. As a young adult, he befriended Henry R. Bastow (a Plymouth Brethren man), who also worked as a pupil architect, and who was preparing for adult baptism in the Baptist Church. Hardy flirted with conversion, but decided against it. Bastow went to Australia and maintained a long correspondence with Hardy, but eventually Hardy tired of these exchanges and the correspondence ceased. This concluded Hardy's links with the Baptists.

The irony and struggles of life and a curious mind led him to question the traditional Christian view of God:

“ The Christian god – the external personality – has been replaced by the intelligence of the First Cause...the replacement of the old concept of God as all-powerful by a new concept of universal consciousness. The 'tribal god, man-shaped, fiery-faced and tyrannous' is replaced by the 'unconscious will of the Universe' which progressively grows aware of itself and 'ultimately, it is to be hoped, sympathetic'. ”

Hardy's religious life seems to have mixed agnosticism, deism, and spiritism. Once, when asked in correspondence by a clergyman about the question of reconciling the horrors of pain with the goodness of a loving God, Hardy replied,

“ Mr. Hardy regrets that he is unable to offer any hypothesis which would reconcile the existence of such evils as Dr. Grosart describes with the idea of omnipotent goodness. Perhaps Dr. Grosart might be helped to a provisional view of the universe by the recently published Life of Darwin and the works of Herbert Spencer and other agnostics.

”

Nevertheless, Hardy frequently conceived of and wrote about supernatural forces that control the universe, more through indifference or caprice than any firm will. Also, Hardy showed in his writing some degree of fascination with ghosts and spirits. Despite these sentiments, Hardy retained a strong emotional attachment to the Christian liturgy and church rituals, particularly as

manifested in rural communities, that had been such a formative influence in his early years, and Biblical references can be found woven throughout many of Hardy's novels.

Hardy's friends during his apprenticeship to John Hicks included Horace Moule (one of the eight sons of Henry Moule), and the poet William Barnes, both ministers of religion. Moule remained a close friend of Hardy's for the rest of his life, and introduced him to new scientific findings that cast doubt on literal interpretations of the Bible, such as those of Gideon Mantell. Moule gave Hardy a copy of Mantell's book *The Wonders of Geology* (1848) in 1858, and Adelene Buckland has suggested that there are "compelling similarities" between the "cliffhanger" section from *A Pair of Blue Eyes* and Mantell's geological descriptions. It has also been suggested that the character of Henry Knight in *A Pair of Blue Eyes* was based on Horace Moule.

Major Themes

Poor treatment of soldiers

Kipling was a proud Briton and believed that it was an honor to serve in the country's military. He regretted that he was unable to serve due to poor eyesight and he encouraged his own son to enlist. He touted the virtues of courage and fighting prowess, but, unlike many other leading intellectuals and public figures of his day, excoriated the British government for not taking care of the soldiers once they returned from the front. Several of his poems depict cruel treatment of veterans, from mocking and jeering and refusals of service to poor food, housing, and care. The veterans of the charge of the light brigade bitterly lament that they are sung about in Tennyson's famous poem but do not have a bed to sleep in for the night. The young "Tommy" is treated poorly; what compounds his misery is that as soon as Britain is in trouble again, he and his fellow soldiers will be lauded as heroes. Kipling gives voice to these aggrieved soldiers and tries to shame his countrymen for the way they treat those who have made it possible for them to go on living in comfort.

Respect for the "other"

It is certainly no surprise to detect the racism and notions of cultural supremacy in Kipling's poems about colonial subjects and Eastern peoples, but Kipling's poems are more nuanced than many readers suspect. Several of the verses express outright respect and admiration for native peoples. In the famous "Ballad of East and West" Kipling argues that the geographic extremities may never touch but that when mighty, noble men of either ends of the earth meet in good faith that they can transcend race, family, and religion. In "The Mother-Lodge" Kipling expresses his fondness for the Masonic lodge where men of all backgrounds spoke freely of their religion without judgment. "Gunga Din" is a soldier's expression of respect for the Indian water-carrier who saves his life. "Fuzzy-Wuzzy" concerns the Beja warriors that the British tangled with in the Mahdist War. The soldier narrating the poem explains that he admires the Fuzzy-Wuzzies for their fighting skill and would be happy to encounter them again. All of these poems deviate from the standard depiction of the "other" as simple-minded, unknowable, and/or savage. While these poems are not wholly free from tinges of racism, they are still notable for their more accepting and open-minded view of different races.

Masculinity and manhood

Most of Kipling's poems, either explicitly or implicitly, put forth notions of ideal masculine behavior and sentiments. "If-" and "The Thousandth Man" are the most blatant, but the stories of soldiers contain elements of this theme as well. For Kipling, a true product of the Victorian era with its stringent gender binaries, manhood meant several key characteristics; these included honesty, humility, perseverance, courage, stoicism, and, in many cases, fighting prowess. His men are willing to endure toil and strife and surmount terrible odds. They find glory in the pursuit of the British Empire's goals, whether on the battlefield or in the bureaucracy. They are the strong and silent type with a stiff upper lip. Kipling did not believe, though, that violence or pride or rage were good characteristics for the ideal man to possess; he also believed that they could be men of feelings and emotions, as long as those did not get in the way of their endeavors, whatever they might be. Kipling's men rule over their inferiors - women, children, native peoples - with a firm but kind, albeit patronizing, hand.

The lure of the East

Kipling's entrancement with India, the country of his birth, comes through quite conspicuously in his poems, particularly "Mandalay". He finds the climate, the girls, the scents, the animals, and the ease of life appealing, especially in contrast with the cold, rainy, and coarse world of London. This was not an uncommon sentiment in his time, and one that is rather understandable even today. The East is an exotic and beguiling place that stirs up men's blood and provides them an exciting yet languid counterpart to their dreary London existence. However, there is always a tinge of racism in these expressions of longing for the East; the people are always enigmatic, always alluring. They are merely objects to gaze upon in wonder rather than real people, and they receive Britons' disgust, pity, and desire to civilize, even if it is subtly suggested.

The dangers of Empire

Although Kipling has a negative reputation for his promulgation of the British Empire and its imperialist ambitions, he was not naive about the difficulties of empire-building and was aware of the dangers of hubris and ignorance when it came to enforcing the laws of the British colonies. "The White Man's Burden" in particular warns about the problems faced by those who devoted themselves to the colonial cause: they might face scorn or criticism; they must watch out for

sloth and folly; they will face resistance from their "captive" peoples; they must realize that they may not garner the praise they expected; and they will be working extremely hard. "Recessional" also deals with this theme; in that poem Kipling warns not to forget about God when reaping the glory and treasures of Empire, and not to forget that all worldly possessions will fade into dust. These two poems are important warnings to those jingoistic politicians and adventurers blithely venturing into colonies without thought of the complexities of their endeavor.

G.M Hopkins:

Gerard Manley Hopkins was an English poet, Roman Catholic convert, and Jesuit priest, whose posthumous fame established him among the leading Victorian poets. His experimental explorations in prosody (especially sprung rhythm) and his use of imagery established him as a daring innovator in a period of largely traditional verse.

Some contemporary critics believe that Hopkins' suppressed erotic impulses played an important role in the tone, quality and even content of his works. These impulses seem to have taken on a degree of specificity after he met Robert Bridges's distant cousin, friend, and fellow Etonian Digby Mackworth Dolben, "a Christian Uranian". The Hopkins biographer Robert Bernard Martin asserts that when Hopkins first met Dolben, on Dolben's 17th birthday, in Oxford in February 1865, it "was, quite simply, the most momentous emotional event of [his] undergraduate years, probably of his entire life."

Hopkins was completely taken with Dolben, who was nearly four years his junior, and his private journal for confessions the following year proves how absorbed he was in imperfectly suppressed erotic thoughts of him

Hopkins kept up a correspondence with Dolben, wrote about him in his diary and composed two poems about him, "Where art thou friend" and "The Beginning of the End." Robert Bridges, who edited the first edition of Dolben's poems as well as Hopkins's, cautioned that the second poem "must never be printed," though Bridges himself included it in the first edition (1918). [Another indication of the nature of his feelings for Dolben is that Hopkins's High Anglican confessor seems to have forbidden him to have any contact with Dolben except by letter. Their relationship was abruptly ended by Dolben's drowning in June 1867, an event which greatly affected Hopkins, although his feeling for Dolben seems to have cooled a good deal by that time.

"Ironically, fate may have bestowed more through Dolben's death than it could ever have bestowed through longer life ... [for] many of Hopkins's best poems — impregnated with an elegiac longing for Dolben, his lost beloved and his muse — were the result."

Some of his poems, such as *The Bugler's First Communion* and *Epithalamion*, arguably embody homoerotic themes, although this second poem was arranged by Robert Bridges from extant fragments.[One contemporary literary critic, M.M. Kaylor, has argued for Hopkins's inclusion with the Uranian poets, a group whose writings derived, in many ways, from the prose works of Walter Pater, Hopkins's academic coach for his Greats exams, and later his lifelong friend.

Some critics have argued that homoerotic readings are either highly tendentious, or, that they can be classified under the broader category of "homosociality," over the gender, sexual-specific "homosexual" term. Hopkins's journal writings, they argue, offer a clear admiration for feminized beauty. In his book *Hopkins Reconstructed* (2000), Justus George Lawler critiques Robert Martin's controversial biography *Gerard Manley Hopkins: A Very Private Life* (1991) by suggesting that Martin "cannot see the heterosexual beam... for the homosexual biographical mote in his own eye... it amounts to a slanted eisegesis". The poems that elicit homoerotic readings can be read not merely as exercises in sublimation but as powerful renditions of religious conviction, a conviction that caused strain in his family and even led him to burn some of his poems that he felt were unnecessarily self-centered. Julia Saville's book *A Queer Chivalry* views the religious imagery in the poems as Hopkins's way of expressing the tension with homosexual identity and desire. The male figure of Christ allows him to safely express such feelings, which mitigates the political implications.

Christina Georgina Rossetti (5 December 1830 – 29 December 1894) was an English poet who wrote a variety of romantic, devotional, and children's poems. She is perhaps best known for her long poem *Goblin Market*, her love poem *Remember*, and for the words of the Christmas carol *In the Bleak Midwinter*. Rossetti began writing down and dating her poems from 1842, mostly imitating her favoured poets. From 1847 she began experimenting with verse forms such as sonnets, hymns and ballads; drawing narratives from the Bible, folk tales and the lives of the saints. Her early pieces often feature meditations on death and loss, in the Romantic tradition. She published her first two poems ("*Death's Chill Between*" and "*Heart's Chill Between*"), which appeared in the *Athenaeum*, in 1848 when she was 18. Under the pen-name "Ellen Alleyne", she

contributed to the literary magazine, *The Germ*, published by the Pre-Raphaelites from January – April 1850 and edited by her brother William. This marked the beginning of her public career.

Her most famous collection, *Goblin Market and Other Poems*, appeared in 1862, when she was 31. It received widespread critical praise, establishing her as the main female poet of the time. Hopkins, Swinburne and Tennyson lauded her work. and with the death of Elizabeth Barrett Browning in 1861 Rossetti was hailed as her natural successor. The title poem is one of Rossetti's best known works. Although it is ostensibly about two sisters' misadventures with goblins, critics have interpreted the piece in a variety of ways: seeing it as an allegory about temptation and salvation; a commentary on Victorian gender roles and female agency; and a work about erotic desire and social redemption. Rossetti was a volunteer worker from 1859 to 1870 at the St. Mary Magdalene "house of charity" in Highgate, a refuge for former prostitutes and it is suggested *Goblin Market* may have been inspired by the "fallen women" she came to know. There are parallels with Coleridge's *The Rime of the Ancient Mariner* given both poems' religious themes of temptation, sin and redemption by vicarious suffering. Swinburne in 1883 dedicated his collection *A Century of Roundels* to Rossetti as she had adopted his roundel form in a number of poems, as exemplified by her *Wife to Husband*. She was ambivalent about women's suffrage, but many scholars have identified feminist themes in her poetry. She was opposed to slavery (in the American South), cruelty to animals (in the prevalent practice of animal experimentation), and the exploitation of girls in under-age prostitution.

Rossetti maintained a very large circle of friends and correspondents and continued to write and publish for the rest of her life, primarily focusing on devotional writing and children's poetry. In 1892, Rossetti wrote *The Face of the Deep*, a book of devotional prose, and oversaw the production of a new and enlarged edition of *Sing-Song*, published in 1893.

In the later decades of her life, Rossetti suffered from Graves Disease, diagnosed in 1872 suffering a nearly fatal attack in the early 1870s. In 1893, she developed breast cancer and though the tumour was removed, she suffered a recurrence in September 1894. She died in Bloomsbury on 29 December 1894 and was buried in Highgate Cemetery. The place where she died, in Torrington Square, is marked with a stone tablet

Although Rossetti's popularity during her lifetime did not approach that of Elizabeth Barrett Browning, her standing remained strong after her death. In the early 20th century Rossetti's popularity faded in the wake of Modernism. Scholars began to explore Freudian themes in her work, such as religious and sexual repression, reaching for personal, biographical interpretations of her poetry. In the 1970s academics began to critique her work again, looking beyond the lyrical Romantic sweetness to her mastery of prosody and versification. Feminists held her as symbol of constrained female genius, placed as a leader of 19th-century poets. Her work strongly influenced the work of such writers as Ford Madox Ford, Virginia Woolf, Gerard Manley Hopkins, Elizabeth Jennings, and Philip Larkin. Critic Basil de Selincourt stated that she was "all but our greatest woman poet ... incomparably our greatest craftswoman ... probably in the first twelve of the masters of English verse".

Rossetti's Christmas poem "In the Bleak Midwinter" became widely known after her death when set as a Christmas carol first by Gustav Holst, and then by Harold Darke. Her poem "Love Came Down at Christmas" (1885) has also been widely arranged as a carol. Rossetti is honoured with a feast day on the liturgical calendar of the Anglican Church on 27 April.

The title of J.K. Rowling's latest novel *The Cuckoo's Calling* is based on a line in Rossetti's poem *A Dirge*.

Robert Louis Balfour Stevenson (13 November 1850 – 3 December 1894) was a Scottish novelist, poet, essayist, and travel writer. His most famous works are *Treasure Island*, *Kidnapped*, and *Strange Case of Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde*.

A literary celebrity during his lifetime, Stevenson now ranks among the 26 most translated authors in the world. His works have been admired by many other writers, including Jorge Luis Borges, Bertolt Brecht, Arthur Conan Doyle, Cesare Pavese, Ernest Hemingway, Rudyard Kipling, Jack London, Vladimir Nabokov, J. M. Barrie, and G. K. Chesterton, who said of him that he "seemed to pick the right word up on the point of his pen, like a man playing spillokins."

Stevenson was a celebrity in his own time, but with the rise of modern literature after World War I, he was seen for much of the 20th century as a writer of the second class, relegated to children's literature and horror genres. Condemned by literary figures such as Virginia Woolf (daughter of his early mentor Leslie Stephen) and her husband Leonard, he was gradually excluded from the

canon of literature taught in schools. His exclusion reached a height when in the 1973 2,000-page Oxford Anthology of English Literature Stevenson was entirely unmentioned; and The Norton Anthology of English Literature excluded him from 1968 to 2000 (1st–7th editions), including him only in the 8th edition (2006). The late 20th century saw the start of a re-evaluation of Stevenson as an artist of great range and insight, a literary theorist, an essayist and social critic, a witness to the colonial history of the Pacific Islands, and a humanist. Even as early as 1965 the pendulum had begun to swing: he was praised by Roger Lancelyn Green, one of the Oxford Inklings, as a writer of a consistently high level of "literary skill or sheer imaginative power" and a co-originator with H. Rider Haggard of the Age of the Story Tellers. He is now being re-evaluated as a peer of authors such as Joseph Conrad (whom Stevenson influenced with his South Seas fiction), and Henry James, with new scholarly studies and organisations devoted to Stevenson. No matter what the scholarly reception, Stevenson remains popular worldwide. According to the Index Translationum, Stevenson is ranked the 26th most translated author in the world, ahead of fellow nineteenth-century writers Oscar Wilde and Edgar Allan Poe.

Alfred Tennyson, 1st Baron Tennyson, (6 August 1809 – 6 October 1892) was Poet Laureate of Great Britain and Ireland during much of Queen Victoria's reign and remains one of the most popular British poets.

Tennyson excelled at penning short lyrics, such as "Break, Break, Break", "The Charge of the Light Brigade", "Tears, Idle Tears" and "Crossing the Bar". Much of his verse was based on classical mythological themes, such as Ulysses, although *In Memoriam A.H.H.* was written to commemorate his best friend Arthur Hallam, a fellow poet and fellow student at Trinity College, Cambridge, who was engaged to Tennyson's sister, but died from a brain haemorrhage before they could marry. Tennyson also wrote some notable blank verse including *Idylls of the King*, "Ulysses", and "Tithonus". During his career, Tennyson attempted drama, but his plays enjoyed little success. A number of phrases from Tennyson's work have become commonplaces of the English language, including "Nature, red in tooth and claw", "'Tis better to have loved and lost / Than never to have loved at all", "Theirs not to reason why, / Theirs but to do and die", "My strength is as the strength of ten, / Because my heart is pure", "To strive, to seek, to find, and not to yield", "Knowledge comes, but Wisdom lingers", and "The old order changeth, yielding place to new". He is the ninth most frequently quoted writer in *The Oxford Dictionary of Quotations*

After William Wordsworth's death in 1850, and Samuel Rogers' refusal, Tennyson was appointed to the position of Poet Laureate; Elizabeth Barrett Browning and Leigh Hunt had also been considered. He held the position until his own death in 1892, by far the longest tenure of any laureate before or since. Tennyson fulfilled the requirements of this position by turning out appropriate but often uninspired verse, such as a poem of greeting to Princess Alexandra of Denmark when she arrived in Britain to marry the future King Edward VII. In 1855, Tennyson produced one of his best known works, "The Charge of the Light Brigade", a dramatic tribute to the British cavalymen involved in an ill-advised charge on 25 October 1854, during the Crimean War. Other esteemed works written in the post of Poet Laureate include Ode on the Death of the Duke of Wellington and Ode Sung at the Opening of the International Exhibition.

Tennyson initially declined a baronetcy in 1865 and 1868 (when tendered by Disraeli), finally accepting a peerage in 1883 at Gladstone's earnest solicitation. In 1884 Victoria created him Baron Tennyson, of Aldworth in the County of Sussex and of Freshwater in the Isle of Wight. He took his seat in the House of Lords on 11 March 1884.

Tennyson also wrote a substantial quantity of non-official political verse, from the bellicose "Form, Riflemen, Form", on the French crisis of 1859, to "Steersman, be not precipitate in thine act/of steering", deploring Gladstone's Home Rule Bill. In writing Tennyson used a wide range of subject matter, ranging from medieval legends to classical myths and from domestic situations to observations of nature, as source material for his poetry. The influence of John Keats and other Romantic poets published before and during his childhood is evident from the richness of his imagery and descriptive writing. He also handled rhythm masterfully. The insistent beat of Break, Break, Break emphasises the relentless sadness of the subject matter. Tennyson's use of the musical qualities of words to emphasise his rhythms and meanings is sensitive. The language of "I come from haunts of coot and hern" lilts and ripples like the brook in the poem and the last two lines of "Come down O maid from yonder mountain height" illustrate his telling combination of onomatopoeia, alliteration, and assonance:

The moan of doves in immemorial elms
And murmuring of innumerable bees.

Tennyson was a craftsman who polished and revised his manuscripts extensively. Few poets have used such a variety of styles with such an exact understanding of metre; like many

Victorian poets, he experimented in adapting the quantitative metres of Greek and Latin poetry to English. He reflects the Victorian period of his maturity in his feeling for order and his tendency towards moralising. He also reflects a concern common among Victorian writers in being troubled by the conflict between religious faith and expanding scientific knowledge. Like many writers who write a great deal over a long time, his poetry is occasionally uninspired, but his personality rings throughout all his works – work that reflects a grand and special variability in its quality. Tennyson possessed the strongest poetic power he put great length into many works, most famous of which are *Maud* and *Idylls of the King*, the latter arguably the most famous Victorian adaptation of the legend of King Arthur and the Knights of the Round Table. A common thread of grief, melancholy, and loss connects much of his poetry (e.g., *Mariana*, *The Lotos Eaters*, *Tears*, *Idle Tears*, *In Memoriam*), likely reflecting Tennyson's own lifelong struggle with debilitating depression. T. S. Eliot famously described Tennyson as "the saddest of all English poets", whose technical mastery of verse and language provided a "surface" to his poetry's "depths, to the abyss of sorrow"

Chapter 10

Modern age poetry

Modernist poetry in English started in the early years of the 20th century with the appearance of the Imagists. In common with many other modernists, these poets wrote in reaction to the perceived excesses of Victorian poetry, with its emphasis on traditional formalism and ornate diction. In many respects, their criticism echoes what William Wordsworth wrote in Preface to *Lyrical Ballads* to instigate the Romantic movement in British poetry over a century earlier, criticising the gauche and pompous school which then pervaded, and seeking to bring poetry to the layman.

Modernists saw themselves as looking back to the best practices of poets in earlier periods and other cultures. Their models included ancient Greek literature, Chinese and Japanese poetry, the troubadours, Dante and the medieval Italian philosophical poets (such as Guido Cavalcanti), and the English Metaphysical poets.

Much of early modernist poetry took the form of short, compact lyrics. As it developed, however, longer poems came to the foreground. These represent the of the modernist movement to the 20th-century English poetic canon.

The emergence of English-language modernism

The roots of English-language poetic modernism can be traced back to the works of a number of earlier writers, including Walt Whitman, whose long lines approached a type of free verse, the prose poetry of Oscar Wilde, Robert Browning's subversion of the poetic self, Emily Dickinson's compression and the writings of the early English Symbolists, especially. However, these poets essentially remained true to the basic tenets of the Romantic movement and the appearance of the Imagists marked the first emergence of a distinctly modernist poetic in the language. One anomalous figure of the early period of modernism also deserves mention: Gerard Manley Hopkins wrote in a radically experimental prosody about radically conservative ideals (not unlike a later Ezra Pound), and he believed that sound could drive poetry. Specifically, poetic sonic effects (selected for verbal and aural felicity, not just images selected for their visual evocativeness) would also, therefore, become an influential poetic device of modernism.

Imagism

The origins of Imagism and cubist poetry are to be found in two poems by T. E. Hulme that were published in 1909 by the Poets' Club in London. Hulme was a student of mathematics and philosophy who had established the Poets' Club to discuss his theories of poetry. The poet and critic F. S. Flint, who was a champion of free verse and modern French poetry, was highly critical of the club and its publications. From the ensuing debate, Hulme and Flint became close friends. They started meeting with other poets at the Eiffel Tower restaurant in Soho to discuss reform of contemporary poetry through free verse and the tanka and haiku and the removal of all unnecessary verbiage from poems.

The American poet Ezra Pound was introduced to this group and they found that their ideas resembled his. In 1911, Pound introduced two other poets, H.D. and Richard Aldington, to the Eiffel Tower group. Both of these poets were students of the early Greek lyric poetry, especially the works of Sappho. In October 1912, he submitted three poems each by H.D. and Aldington under the rubric Imagiste to Poetry magazine. That month Pound's book *Ripostes* was published with an appendix called *The Complete Poetical Works of T. E. Hulme*, which carried a note that saw the first appearance of the word Imagiste in print. Aldington's poems were in the November issue of *Poetry* and H.D.'s in January 1913 and Imagism as a movement was launched. The March issue contained Pound's *A Few Don'ts* by an Imagiste and Flint's *Imagisme*. The latter contained this succinct statement of the group's position:

1. Direct treatment of the "thing", whether subjective or objective.
2. To use absolutely no word that does not contribute to the presentation.
3. As regarding rhythm: to compose in sequence of the musical phrase, not in sequence of the metronome.
4. Complete freedom of subject matter.
5. Free verse was encouraged along with other new rhythms.
6. Common speech language was used, and the exact word was always to be used, as opposed to the almost exact word.

In setting these criteria for poetry, the Imagists saw themselves as looking backward to the best practices of pre-Romantic writing. Imagist poets used sharp language and embrace imagery. Their work, however, was to have a revolutionary impact on English-language writing for the rest of the 20th century.

Cathay title page

In 1913, Pound was contacted by the widow of the recently deceased Orientalist Ernest Fenollosa, who while in Japan had collected word-by-word translations and notes for 150 classical Chinese poems that fit in closely with this program. Chinese grammar offers different expressive possibilities from English grammar, a point that Pound subsequently made much of. For example, in Chinese, the first line of Li Po's (called "Rihaku" by Fenollosa's Japanese informants) poem *The River Merchant's Wife: A Letter* is a spare, direct juxtaposition of 5 characters that appear in Fenollosa's notes as

“mistress hair first cover brow

In his resulting 1915 *Cathay*, Pound rendered this in simple English as

While my hair was still cut straight across my forehead”

Between 1914 and 1917, four anthologies of Imagist poetry were published. In addition to Pound, Flint, H.D. and Aldington, these included work by Skipwith Cannell, Amy Lowell, William Carlos Williams, James Joyce, Ford Madox Ford, Allen Upward, John Cournos, D. H. Lawrence and Marianne Moore. With a few exceptions, this represents a roll-call of English-language modernist poets of the time. After the 1914 volume, Pound distanced himself from the group and the remaining anthologies appeared under the editorial control of Amy Lowell.

Henry Gore (1902–1956), whose work is undergoing something of a revival was also heavily influenced by the Imagist movement, although from a different generation from H.D., Flint etc.

World War I and after

The outbreak of World War I represented a setback for the budding modernist movement for a number of reasons: firstly, writers like Aldington found themselves in active service; secondly, paper shortages and related factors meant that publication of new work became increasingly

difficult; and, thirdly, public sentiment in time of war meant that war poets such as Wilfred Owen, who wrote more conventional verse, became increasingly popular. One poet who served in the war, the visual artist David Jones, later resisted this trend in his long experimental war poem "In Parenthesis", which was written directly out of his trench experiences but was not published until 1937.

The war also tended to undermine the optimism of the Imagists. This was reflected in a number of major poems written in its aftermath. Pound's "Homage to Sextus Propertius" (1919) uses the loose translations and transformations of the Latin poet Propertius to ridicule war propaganda and the idea of empire. His "Hugh Selwyn Mauberley" (1921) represents his farewell to Imagism and lyric poetry in general. The writing of these poems coincided with Pound's decision to abandon London permanently.

Sound poetry emerged in this period as a response to the war. For many Dadaists, including German writer Hugo Ball and New York poet and performer Baroness Elsa von Freytag-Loringhoven, sound poems were protestations against the sounds of war. As Irene Gammel and Suzanne Zelazo write, "Born as the trench warfare intensified, phonetic poetry was the language of trauma, a new language to counter the noise of the cannons". The Baroness's poem "Klink-Hratzvenge (Death-wail)", written in response to her husband's suicide after the war's end, was "a mourning song in nonsense sounds that transcended national boundaries". Working from a confrontational feminist and artistic agenda, the Baroness asserted a distinctly female subjectivity in the post-WWI era.

The most famous English-language modernist work arising out of this post-war disillusionment is T. S. Eliot's epic "The Waste Land" (1922). Eliot was an American poet who had been living in London for some time. Although he was never formally associated with the Imagist group, his work was admired by Pound, who, in 1915, helped him publish "The Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock", which brought him to prominence. When Eliot had completed his original draft of a long poem based on both the disintegration of his personal life and mental stability, and the culture around him, he gave the manuscript, provisionally titled "He Do the Police in Different Voices", to Pound for comment. After some heavy editing, "The Waste Land" in the form in which we now know it was published, and Eliot came to be seen as the voice of a generation. The addition of notes to the published poem served to highlight the use of collage as a literary

technique, paralleling similar practice by the cubists and other visual artists. From this point on, modernism in English tended towards a poetry of the fragment that rejected the idea that the poet could present a comfortingly coherent view of life.

T. S. Eliot's "The Waste Land" is a foundational text of modernism, representing the moment at which Imagism moves into modernism proper. Broken, fragmented and seemingly unrelated slices of imagery come together to form a disjunctive anti-narrative. The motif of sight and vision is as central to the poem as it is to modernism; the omni-present character Tiresias acting as a unifying theme. The reader is thrown into confusion, unable to see anything but a heap of broken images. The narrator, however (in "The Waste Land" as in other texts), promises to show the reader a different meaning; that is, how to make meaning from dislocation and fragmentation. This construction of an exclusive meaning is essential to modernism.

Others and others

Although London and Paris were key centres of activity for English-language modernists, much important activity took place elsewhere. When Mina Loy moved to New York in 1916, she became part of a circle of writers involved with *Others: A Magazine of the New Verse* which included William Carlos Williams and Marianne Moore, among others. This magazine, which ran from 1915 to 1919, was edited by Alfred Kreymborg. Contributors also included Pound, Eliot, H.D., Djuna Barnes, Amy Lowell, Conrad Aiken, Carl Sandburg and Wallace Stevens.

The U.S. modernist poets were concerned to create work in a distinctively American idiom. Williams, a doctor who worked in general practice in a working-class area of Rutherford, New Jersey, explained this approach by saying that he made his poems from 'the speech of Polish mothers'. In this, they were placing themselves in a tradition stretching back to Whitman.

After her initial association with the Imagists, Marianne Moore carved out a unique niche for herself among 20th-century poets. Much of her poetry is written in syllabic verse, repeating the number of syllables rather than stresses or beats, per line. She also experimented with stanza forms borrowed from troubadour poetry.

Wallace Stevens' work falls somewhat outside this mainstream of modernism. Indeed, he deprecated the work of both Eliot and Pound as "mannered." His poetry is a complex exploration

of the relationship between imagination and reality. Unlike many other modernists, but like the English Romantics, by whom he was influenced, Stevens thought that poetry was what all humans did; the poet was merely self-conscious about the activity.

In Scotland, the poet Hugh MacDiarmid formed something of a one-man modernist movement. An admirer of Joyce and Pound, MacDiarmid wrote much of his early poetry in anglicised Lowland Scots, a literary dialect which had also been used by Robert Burns. He served in the Royal Army Medical Corps during World War I and was invalided out in 1918. After the war, he set up a literary magazine, *Scottish Chapbook*, with 'Not traditions - Precedents!' as its motto. His later work reflected an increasing interest in found poetry and other formal innovations.

In Canada the Montreal Group of modernist poets, including A.M. Klein, A.J.M. Smith, and F.R. Scott, formed at that city's McGill University in the mid-1920s. Though the poets of the group made little headway for the next twenty years, they were ultimately successful in establishing a modernist hegemony and canon in that country that would endure until at least the end of the 20th century.

Wallace Stevens' Of Modern Poetry

Wallace Stevens' essential modernist poem, "Of Modern Poetry" (1942) sounds as if the verbs are left out. The verb 'to be' is omitted from the first and final lines. The poem itself opens and closes with the act of finding. The poem and the mind become synonymous: a collapse between the poem, the act, and the mind. During the poem the dyad becomes further collapsed into one: a spatial and a temporal collapse between the subject and the object; form and content equal each other; form becomes not simply expressive of, but constitutive of. The poem goes from being a static object to being an action. The poem of the mind has to be alternative and listening; it is experimental. The poem resists and refuses transcendentalism, but remains within the conceptual limits of the mind and the poem.

Maturity

With the publication of *The Waste Land*, modernist poetry appeared to have made a breakthrough into wider critical discourse and a broader readership. However, the economic collapse of the late 1920s and early 1930s had a serious negative impact on the new writing. For

American writers, living in Europe became more difficult as their incomes lost a great deal of their relative value. While Gertrude Stein, Barney and Joyce remained in the French city, much of the scene they had presided over scattered. Pound was in Italy, Eliot in London, H.D. moved between that city and Switzerland, and many of the other writers associated with the movement were now living in the States.

The economic depression, combined with the impact of the Spanish Civil War, also saw the emergence, in the Britain of the 1930s, of a more overtly political poetry, as represented by such writers as W. H. Auden and Stephen Spender. Although nominally admirers of Eliot, these poets tended towards a poetry of radical content but formal conservativeness. For example, they rarely wrote free verse, preferring rhyme and regular stanza patterns in much of their work.

1930s modernism

Consequently, modernism in English remained in the role of an avant garde movement, depending on little presses and magazines and a small but dedicated readership. The key group to emerge during this time were the Objectivist poets, consisting of Louis Zukofsky, George Oppen, Charles Reznikoff, Carl Rakosi, Basil Bunting and Lorine Niedecker. The Objectivists were admirers of Stein, Pound and Williams and Pound actively promoted their work. Thanks to his influence, Zukofsky was asked to edit a special Objectivist issue of the Chicago-based journal *Poetry* in 1931 to launch the group. The basic tenets of Objectivist poetics were to treat the poem as an object and to emphasise sincerity, intelligence, and the poet's ability to look clearly at the world, and in this they can be viewed as direct descendants of the Imagists. Continuing a tradition established in Paris, Zukofsky, Reznikoff, and Oppen went on to form the Objectivist Press to publish books by themselves and by Williams. In his later work, Zukofsky developed his view of the poem as object to include experimenting with mathematical models for creating poems, producing effects similar to the creation of a Bach fugue or a piece of serial music.

A number of Irish poets and writers moved to Paris in the early 1930s to join the circle around James Joyce. These included Samuel Beckett, Thomas MacGreevy, Brian Coffey and Denis Devlin. These writers were aware of Pound and Eliot, but they were also Francophone and took an interest in contemporary French poetry, especially the surrealists. Indeed, Coffey and Devlin

were amongst the first to translate the works of Paul Éluard into English. Around the same time, a number of British surrealist poets were beginning to emerge, among them David Gascoyne, George Barker and Hugh Sykes Davies. Like the Objectivists, these poets were relatively neglected by their native literary cultures and had to wait for a revival of interest in British and Irish modernism in the 1960s before their contributions to the development of this alternative tradition were properly assessed.

Long poems

Pound's *Homage to Sextus Propertius* and Hugh Selwyn Mauberley and Eliot's *The Waste Land* marked a transition from the short imagistic poems that were typical of earlier modernist writing towards the writing of longer poems or poem-sequences. A number of long poems were also written during the 1920s, including Mina Loy's 'auto-mythology', *Anglo-Mongrels and the Rose* and Hugh MacDiarmid's satire on Scottish society, *A Drunk Man Looks At The Thistle*. MacDiarmid wrote a number of long poems, including *On a Raised Beach*, *Three Hymns to Lenin* and *In Memoriam James Joyce*, in which he incorporated materials from science, linguistics, history and even found poems based on texts from the *Times Literary Supplement*. David Jones' war poem *In Parenthesis* was a book-length work that drew on the matter of Britain to illuminate his experiences in the trenches, and his later epic *The Anthemata*, itself hewn from a much longer manuscript, is a meditation on empire and resistance, the local and the global, which uses materials from Christian, Roman and Celtic history and mythology.

One of the most influential of all the modernist long poems was Pound's *The Cantos*, a 'poem containing history' that he started in 1915 and continued to work on for the rest of his writing life. From a starting point that combines Homer's *Odyssey* and Dante's *Divine Comedy* to create a personal epic of 20th century life, the poem uses materials from history, politics, literature, art, music, economics, philosophy, mythology, ecology and the poet's personal experiences and ranges across European, American, African and Asian cultures. Pound coined the term 'ideogrammatic method' to describe his technique of placing these materials in relation to each other so as to open up new and unexpected relationships. This can be seen as paralleling techniques used by modernist artists and composers to similar ends.

Other Imagist-associated poets also went on to write long poems. William Carlos Williams' Paterson applied the techniques developed by Pound to a specific location and in a specific, American, dialect. H.D. wrote Trilogy out of her experiences in London during World War II and Helen in Egypt, a reworking of the Helen of Troy story from the perspective of the female protagonist, as a kind of feminist response to the masculine mind-set behind Pound's epic. Eliot's experiences of war-torn London also underpinned his Four Quartets. A number of Objectivists also wrote long poems, including Zukofsky's A, Charles Reznikoff's Testimony, and Basil Bunting's Brigflatts. Brian Coffey's Advent is the key long poem by an Irish modernist. All these poems, to one extent or another, use a range of techniques to blend personal experience with materials from a wide range of cultural and intellectual activities to create collage-like texts on an epic scale.

A long poem that is often overlooked, because it first appeared in the commercially unsuccessful 1936 anthology New Provinces, is Canadian poet A.M. Klein's meditation on Spinoza, "Out of the Pulver and the Polished Lens."

Politics

Poetic modernism was an overtly revolutionary literary movement, a 'revolution of the word', and, for a number of its practitioners, this interest in radical change spilled over into politics. A number of the leading early modernists became known for their right-wing views; these included Eliot, who once described himself as a Royalist, Stein, who supported the Vichy government for a time at least, and, most notoriously, Pound, who, after moving to Italy in the early 1930s, openly admired Benito Mussolini and began to include anti-Semitic sentiments in his writings. He was arrested towards the end of World War II on charges of treason arising out of broadcasts he made on Italian radio during the war but never faced trial because of his mental health.

A number of leading modernists took a more left-wing political view. Hugh MacDiarmid helped found the National Party of Scotland and was also a member of the Communist Party of Great Britain. During the 1930s, he was expelled from the former for being a communist and from the latter for being a nationalist although he rejoined the Communist Party in 1956. The Objectivists Louis Zukofsky, George Oppen and Carl Rakosi were all, at one time or another, committed Marxists and Oppen spent a number of years in Mexico to escape the attention of Joseph

McCarthy's United States Senate committee. A number of the British surrealists, especially David Gascoyne, also supported communism.

Other modernists took up political positions that did not fit neatly into the left/right model. H.D., Mina Loy and Nathalie Barney, for instance, are now seen as proto-feminists and their openness about their various sexualities can be read as foreshadowing the 1970s view that the personal is political. H.D., especially after World War I, came to view the goal of modernism as being the bringing about of world peace. However, she also displayed anti-Semitic views in the notebooks for her book *Tribute to Freud*. Basil Bunting, who came from a Quaker background, was a conscientious objector during World War I, but because of his opposition to Fascism, served in British Military Intelligence in Persia (Iran) during World War II. William Carlos Williams' political views arose from his daily contact with the poor who attended his surgery. He was another for whom the personal and political blended, an approach best summed up in his statement that 'A new world is only a new mind'.

As can be seen from this brief survey, although many modernist poets were politically engaged, there is no single political position that can be said to be closely allied to the modernist movement in English-language poetry. These poets came from a wide range of backgrounds and had a wide range of personal experiences and their political stances reflect these facts.

Legacy

The modernist 'revolution of the word' was not universally welcomed, either by readers or writers. Certainly by the 1930s, a new generation of poets had emerged who looked to more formally conservative poets like Thomas Hardy and W.B. Yeats as models and these writers struck a chord with a readership who were uncomfortable with the experimentation and uncertainty preferred by the modernists. Notwithstanding, modernist poetry cannot be positively characterised, there being no mainstream or dominant mode.

However, the 1950s saw the emergence, particularly in the United States, of a new generation of poets who looked to the modernists for inspiration. The influence of modernism can be seen in these poetic groups and movements, especially those associated with the San Francisco Renaissance, the Beat generation, the Black Mountain poets, and the deep image group. Charles Olson, the theorist of the Black Mountain group, wrote in his 1950 essay, *Projectivist Verse*

'ONE PERCEPTION MUST IMMEDIATELY AND DIRECTLY LEAD TO A FURTHER PERCEPTION', a statement that links back directly to the Imagists. Robert Duncan, another Black Mountain poet admired H.D. while a third member of the group, Robert Creeley did much to help revive interest in Zukofsky and other Objectivists.

Among the Beats, Gary Snyder and Allen Ginsberg studied Pound closely and were heavily influenced by his interest in Chinese and Japanese poetry and the ecological concerns evident in the later Cantos. William Carlos Williams was another who had a strong impact on the Beat poets, encouraging poets like Lew Welch and writing an introduction for the book publication of Ginsberg's seminal poem, Howl. Many of these writers found a major platform for their work in Cid Corman's Origin magazine and press. Origin also published work by Louis Zukofsky, Lorine Niedecker and Wallace Stevens, helping to revive interest in these early modernist writers. The Objectivists, especially the strict formal experimentation of Zukofsky's later works, were also formative for the L=A=N=G=U=A=G=E poets.

As the Beats and other American poets began to find readers in the UK and Ireland, a new generation of British poets with an interest in modernist experimentation began to appear. These poets, who included Tom Raworth, Bob Cobbing, Gael Turnbull and others formed the nucleus of the British Poetry Revival. This new generation helped bring about a renewed interest in the writings of Bunting, MacDiarmid, David Jones and David Gascoyne. Current practice includes the enormously influential canon of Roy Fisher (also a major player in the Revival).

Contemporary poets associated with Irish modernism include those associated with New Writers Press and The Beau magazine; these include Trevor Joyce, Michael Smith, Geoffrey Squires, Randolph Healy, Billy Mills, Catherine Walsh, and Maurice Scully. New Writers Press also published work by Thomas MacGreevy, Brian Coffey and Denis Devlin, introducing them to a new audience, and, in Coffey's case, facilitating a late flowering of new work.

Thus Modernist poetry refers to poetry written, mainly in Europe and North America, between 1890 and 1950 in the tradition of modernist literature, but the dates of the term depend upon a number of factors, including the nation of origin, the particular school in question, and the biases of the critic setting the dates. The critic/poet C. H. Sisson observing in his essay Poetry and Sincerity 'Modernity has been going on for a long time. Not within living memory has there ever

been a day when young writers were not coming up, in a threat of iconoclasm Evidence of the truth of Sisson's comment is Arthur Hallam's 'On Some of the Characteristics of Modern poetry, published in 1830 in Moxon's English Magazine. Notwithstanding it is usually said to have begun with the French Symbolist movement and it artificially ends with the beginning and ending of the modernist period are of course arbitrary. Poets like W. B. Yeats (1865–1939) and Rainer Maria Rilke (1875–1926) started in a post-Romantic, Symbolist vein and modernised their poetic idiom after being affected by political and literary developments. Imagism proved radical and important, marking a new point of departure for poetry. Some consider 'it began in the works of Hardy and Pound, Eliot and Yeats, Williams and Stevens. English language poets, like T.S. Eliot, Ezra Pound, Basil Bunting ('a born modernist') , Wallace Stevens and E.E. Cummings also went on to produce work after World War II.

Chapter 11

Modern age Poetry

The last chapter was a detailed discussion about the modern age in poetry. The present chapter is tend to focus on the important poets of the age and their different writing styles and themes. Beginning with the earlier poets and moving towards the last poets of the modernist.

W.H Auden:

Wystan Hugh Auden who published as W. H. Auden, was an Anglo-American poet, born in England, later an American citizen, and is regarded by many critics as one of the greatest writers of the 20th century. His work is noted for its stylistic and technical achievement, its engagement with moral and political issues, and its variety in tone, form and content. The central themes of his poetry are love, politics and citizenship, religion and morals, and the relationship between unique human beings and the anonymous, impersonal world of nature.

Auden grew up in and near Birmingham in a professional middle-class family and read English literature at Christ Church, Oxford. His early poems from the late 1920s and early 1930s, written in an intense and dramatic tone and in a style that alternated between telegraphic modern and fluent traditional, established his reputation as a left-wing political poet and prophet. In the late 1930s he became uncomfortable in this role and abandoned it after he moved to the United States in 1939, where in 1946 he became an American citizen. In his poems from the 1940s he explored religious and ethical themes in a less dramatic manner than in his earlier works, and combined traditional forms and styles with new, original forms. The focus of many of his poems from the 1950s and 1960s was on the ways in which words revealed and concealed emotions. Auden took a particular interest in writing opera librettos, a form ideally suited to direct expression of strong feelings.

He was also a prolific writer of prose essays and reviews on literary, political, psychological and religious subjects, and he worked at various times on documentary films, poetic plays and other forms of performance. Throughout his career he was both controversial and influential. After his death, some of his poems, notably "Funeral Blues" ("Stop all the clocks"), "Musée des Beaux

Arts", "Refugee Blues", "The Unknown Citizen", and "September 1, 1939", became known to a much wider public than during his lifetime through films, broadcasts, and popular media

Auden published about four hundred poems, including seven long poems (two of them book-length). His poetry was encyclopaedic in scope and method, ranging in style from obscure twentieth-century modernism to the lucid traditional forms such as ballads and limericks, from doggerel through haiku and villanelles to a "Christmas Oratorio" and a baroque eclogue in Anglo-Saxon meters. The tone and content of his poems ranged from pop-song clichés to complex philosophical meditations, from the corns on his toes to atoms and stars, from contemporary crises to the evolution of society.

He also wrote more than four hundred essays and reviews about literature, history, politics, music, religion, and many other subjects. He collaborated on plays with Christopher Isherwood and on opera libretti with Chester Kallman, worked with a group of artists and filmmakers on documentary films in the 1930s and with the New York Pro Musica early music group in the 1950s and 1960s. About collaboration he wrote in 1964: "collaboration has brought me greater erotic joy . . . than any sexual relations I have had."

Auden controversially rewrote or discarded some of his most famous poems when he prepared his later collected editions. He wrote that he rejected poems that he found "boring" or "dishonest" in the sense that they expressed views that he had never held but had used only because he felt they would be rhetorically effective. His rejected poems include "Spain" and "September 1, 1939". His literary executor, Edward Mendelson, argues in his introduction to Auden's Selected Poems that Auden's practice reflected his sense of the persuasive power of poetry and his reluctance to misuse it. (Selected Poems includes some poems that Auden rejected and early texts of poems that he revised.)

Emily Dickinson

From the daguerreotype taken at Mount Holyoke, December 1846 or early 1847. The only authenticated portrait of Emily Dickinson later than childhood, the original is held by the Archives and Special Collections at Amherst College.

Emily Elizabeth Dickinson (December 10, 1830 – May 15, 1886) was an American poet. Born in Amherst, Massachusetts, to a successful family with strong community ties, she lived a mostly introverted and reclusive life. After she studied at the Amherst Academy for seven years in her youth, she spent a short time at Mount Holyoke Female Seminary before returning to her family's house in Amherst. Thought of as an eccentric by the locals, she became known for her penchant for white clothing and her reluctance to greet guests or, later in life, even leave her room. Most of her friendships were therefore carried out by correspondence.

While Dickinson was a prolific private poet, fewer than a dozen of her nearly eighteen hundred poems were published during her lifetime. The work that was published during her lifetime was usually altered significantly by the publishers to fit the conventional poetic rules of the time. Dickinson's poems are unique for the era in which she wrote; they contain short lines, typically lack titles, and often use slant rhyme as well as unconventional capitalization and punctuation. Many of her poems deal with themes of death and immortality, two recurring topics in letters to her friends.

Although most of her acquaintances were probably aware of Dickinson's writing, it was not until after her death in 1886—when Lavinia, Dickinson's younger sister, discovered her cache of poems—that the breadth of Dickinson's work became apparent. Her first collection of poetry was published in 1890 by personal acquaintances Thomas Wentworth Higginson and Mabel Loomis Todd, both of whom heavily edited the content. A complete and mostly unaltered collection of her poetry became available for the first time in 1955 when *The Poems of Emily Dickinson* was published by scholar Thomas H. Johnson. Despite some unfavorable reviews and some skepticism during the late 19th and early 20th century as to Dickinson's literary prowess, she is now almost universally considered to be one of the most important American poets.

Dickinson's poems generally fall into three distinct periods, the works in each period having certain general characters in common.

- Pre-1861. These are often conventional and sentimental in nature. Thomas H. Johnson, who later published *The Poems of Emily Dickinson*, was able to date only five of Dickinson's poems before 1858. Two of these are mock valentines done in an ornate and humorous style, and two others are conventional lyrics, one of which is about missing her brother Austin. The fifth poem, which begins "I have a Bird in spring", conveys her grief over the feared loss of friendship and was sent to her friend Sue Gilbert.
- 1861–1865. This was her most creative period—these poems are more vigorous and emotional. Johnson estimated that she composed 86 poems in 1861, 366 in 1862, 141 in 1863, and 174 in 1864. He also believed that this is when she fully developed her themes of life and death.
- Post-1866. It is estimated that two-thirds of the entire body of her poetry was written before this year.

Structure and syntax

Dickinson's handwritten manuscript of her poem "Wild Nights – Wild Nights!"

The extensive use of dashes and unconventional capitalization in Dickinson's manuscripts, and the idiosyncratic vocabulary and imagery, combine to create a body of work that is "far more various in its styles and forms than is commonly supposed". Dickinson avoids pentameter, opting more generally for trimeter, tetrameter and, less often, dimeter. Sometimes her use of these meters is regular, but oftentimes it is irregular. The regular form that she most often employs is the ballad stanza, a traditional form that is divided into quatrains, using tetrameter for the first and third lines and trimeter for the second and fourth, while rhyming the second and fourth lines (ABCB). Though Dickinson often uses perfect rhymes for lines two and four, she also makes frequent use of slant rhyme. In some of her poems, she varies the meter from the traditional ballad stanza by using trimeter for lines one, two and four, while only using tetrameter for line three.

Since many of her poems were written in traditional ballad stanzas with ABCB rhyme schemes, some of these poems can be sung to fit the melodies of popular folk songs and hymns that also

use the common meter, employing alternating lines of iambic tetrameter and iambic trimeter. Familiar examples of such songs are "O Little Town of Bethlehem" and "Amazing Grace".

Dickinson scholar and poet Anthony Hecht finds resonances in Dickinson's poetry not only with hymns and song-forms but also with psalms and riddles, citing the following example: "Who is the East? / The Yellow Man / Who may be Purple if he can / That carries the Sun. / Who is the West? / The Purple Man / Who may be Yellow if He can / That lets Him out again."

Late 20th-century scholars are "deeply interested" by Dickinson's highly individual use of punctuation and lineation (line lengths and line breaks). Following the publication of one of the few poems that appeared in her lifetime – "A narrow Fellow in the Grass", published as "The Snake" in the *Republican* – Dickinson complained that the edited punctuation (an added comma and a full stop substitution for the original dash) altered the meaning of the entire poem

T. S. Eliot

Thomas Stearns Eliot (26 September 1888 – 4 January 1965) was an essayist, publisher, playwright, literary and social critic and "one of the twentieth century's major poets." Born in St. Louis, Missouri in the United States, he moved to the United Kingdom in 1914 (at age 25) and was naturalised as a British subject in 1927 at age 39.

Eliot attracted widespread attention for his poem *The Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock* (1915), which is seen as a masterpiece of the Modernist movement. It was followed by some of the best-known poems in the English language, including *The Waste Land* (1922), *The Hollow Men* (1925), *Ash Wednesday* (1930) and *Four Quartets* (1945). He is also known for his seven plays, particularly *Murder in the Cathedral* (1935). He was awarded the Nobel Prize in Literature in 1948, "for his outstanding, pioneer contribution to present-day poetry.

For a poet of his stature, Eliot produced a relatively small number of poems. He was aware of this even early in his career. He wrote to J.H. Woods, one of his former Harvard professors, "My reputation in London is built upon one small volume of verse, and is kept up by printing two or three more poems in a year. The only thing that matters is that these should be perfect in their kind, so that each should be an event."

Typically, Eliot first published his poems individually in periodicals or in small books or pamphlets, and then collected them in books. His first collection was *Prufrock and Other Observations* (1917). In 1920, he published more poems in *Ara Vos Prec* (London) and *Poems: 1920* (New York). These had the same poems (in a different order) except that "Ode" in the British edition was replaced with "Hysteria" in the American edition. In 1925, he collected *The Waste Land* and the poems in *Prufrock and Poems* into one volume and added *The Hollow Men* to form *Poems: 1909–1925*. From then on, he updated this work as *Collected Poems*. Exceptions are *Old Possum's Book of Practical Cats* (1939), a collection of light verse; *Poems Written in Early Youth*, posthumously published in 1967 and consisting mainly of poems published between 1907 and 1910 in *The Harvard Advocate*, and *Inventions of the March Hare: Poems 1909–1917*, material Eliot never intended to have published, which appeared posthumously in 1997.

During an interview in 1959, Eliot said of his nationality and its role in his work: "I'd say that my poetry has obviously more in common with my distinguished contemporaries in America than with anything written in my generation in England. That I'm sure of. ... It wouldn't be what it is, and I imagine it wouldn't be so good; putting it as modestly as I can, it wouldn't be what it is if I'd been born in England, and it wouldn't be what it is if I'd stayed in America. It's a combination of things. But in its sources, in its emotional springs, it comes from America.

It must also be acknowledged, as Chinmoy Guha showed in his book *Where the Dreams Cross: T S Eliot and French Poetry* (Macmillan, 2011), that he was deeply influenced by French poets from Baudelaire to Paul Valéry. He himself wrote in his 1940 essay on W.B. Yeats: "The kind of poetry that I needed to teach me the use of my own voice did not exist in English at all; it was only to be found in French." (*On Poetry and Poets*, 1948)

The Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock

In 1915, Ezra Pound, overseas editor of *Poetry* magazine, recommended to Harriet Monroe, the magazine's founder, that she publish "The Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock". Although the character Prufrock seems to be middle-aged, Eliot wrote most of the poem when he was only twenty-two. Its now-famous opening lines, comparing the evening sky to "a patient etherised

upon a table", were considered shocking and offensive, especially at a time when Georgian Poetry was hailed for its derivations of the nineteenth century Romantic Poets.

The poem follows the conscious experience of a man, Prufrock (relayed in the "stream of consciousness" form characteristic of the Modernists), lamenting his physical and intellectual inertia, the lost opportunities in his life and lack of spiritual progress, with the recurrent theme of carnal love unattained. Critical opinion is divided as to whether the narrator leaves his residence during the course of the narration. The locations described can be interpreted either as actual physical experiences, mental recollections, or as symbolic images from the unconscious mind, as, for example, in the refrain "In the room the women come and go".

The poem's structure was heavily influenced by Eliot's extensive reading of Dante and refers to a number of literary works, including Hamlet and those of the French Symbolists. Its reception in London can be gauged from an unsigned review in *The Times Literary Supplement* on 21 June 1917. "The fact that these things occurred to the mind of Mr. Eliot is surely of the very smallest importance to anyone, even to himself. They certainly have no relation to poetry."

The Waste Land

T. S. Eliot in 1923 by Lady Ottoline Morrell.

In October 1922, Eliot published *The Waste Land* in *The Criterion*. Eliot's dedication to *il miglior fabbro* ("the better craftsman") refers to Ezra Pound's significant hand in editing and reshaping the poem from a longer Eliot manuscript to the shortened version that appears in publication.

It was composed during a period of personal difficulty for Eliot—his marriage was failing, and both he and Vivienne were suffering from nervous disorders. The poem is often read as a representation of the disillusionment of the post-war generation. Before the poem's publication as a book in December 1922, Eliot distanced himself from its vision of despair. On 15 November 1922, he wrote to Richard Aldington, saying, "As for *The Waste Land*, that is a thing of the past so far as I am concerned and I am now feeling toward a new form and style."

The poem is known for its obscure nature—its slippage between satire and prophesy; its abrupt changes of speaker, location, and time. This structural complexity is one of the reasons that the

poem has become a touchstone of modern literature, a poetic counterpart to a novel published in the same year, James Joyce's *Ulysses*.

Among its best-known phrases are "April is the cruellest month", "I will show you fear in a handful of dust" and "Shantih shantih shantih". The Sanskrit mantra ends the poem.

The Hollow Men

The *Hollow Men* appeared in 1925. For the critic Edmund Wilson, it marked "The nadir of the phase of despair and desolation given such effective expression in *The Waste Land*." It is Eliot's major poem of the late 1920s. Similar to Eliot's other works, its themes are overlapping and fragmentary. Post-war Europe under the Treaty of Versailles (which Eliot despised), the difficulty of hope and religious conversion, Eliot's failed marriage.

Allen Tate perceived a shift in Eliot's method, writing that, "The mythologies disappear altogether in *The Hollow Men*." This is a striking claim for a poem as indebted to Dante as anything else in Eliot's early work, to say little of the modern English mythology—the "Old Guy Fawkes" of the Gunpowder Plot—or the colonial and agrarian mythos of Joseph Conrad and James George Frazer, which, at least for reasons of textual history, echo in *The Waste Land*. The "continuous parallel between contemporaneity and antiquity" that is so characteristic of his mythical method remained in fine form. *The Hollow Men* contains some of Eliot's most famous lines, notably its conclusion:

This is the way the world ends

Not with a bang but a whimper.

Ash-Wednesday

Ash-Wednesday is the first long poem written by Eliot after his 1927 conversion to Anglicanism. Published in 1930, it deals with the struggle that ensues when one who has lacked faith acquires it. Sometimes referred to as Eliot's "conversion poem", it is richly but ambiguously allusive, and deals with the aspiration to move from spiritual barrenness to hope for human salvation. Eliot's style of writing in *Ash-Wednesday* showed a marked shift from the poetry he had written prior to his 1927 conversion, and his post-conversion style would continue in a similar vein. His style

was to become less ironic, and the poems would no longer be populated by multiple characters in dialogue. His subject matter would also become more focused on Eliot's spiritual concerns and his Christian faith.

Many critics were particularly enthusiastic about Ash-Wednesday. Edwin Muir maintained that it is one of the most moving poems Eliot wrote, and perhaps the "most perfect", though it was not well received by everyone. The poem's groundwork of orthodox Christianity discomfited many of the more secular literati

Robert Lee Frost (March 26, 1874 – January 29, 1963) was an American poet. His work was initially published in England before it was published in America. He is highly regarded for his realistic depictions of rural life and his command of American colloquial speech. His work frequently employed settings from rural life in New England in the early twentieth century, using them to examine complex social and philosophical themes. One of the most popular and critically respected American poets of the twentieth century, Frost was honored frequently during his lifetime, receiving four Pulitzer Prizes for Poetry. He became one of America's rare "public literary figures, almost an artistic institution." He was awarded the Congressional Gold Medal in 1960 for his poetical works.

The poet/critic Randall Jarrell often praised Frost's poetry and wrote, "Robert Frost, along with Stevens and Eliot, seems to me the greatest of the American poets of this century. Frost's virtues are extraordinary. No other living poet has written so well about the actions of ordinary men; his wonderful dramatic monologues or dramatic scenes come out of a knowledge of people that few poets have had, and they are written in a verse that uses, sometimes with absolute mastery, the rhythms of actual speech." He also praised "Frost's seriousness and honesty," stating that Frost was particularly skilled at representing a wide range of human experience in his poems.

Jarrell's notable and influential essays on Frost include the essays "Robert Frost's 'Home Burial'" (1962), which consisted of an extended close reading of that particular poem, and "To The Laodiceans" (1952) in which Jarrell defended Frost against critics who had accused Frost of being too "traditional" and out of touch with Modern or Modernist poetry.

In *Contemporary Literary Criticism*, the editors state that "Frost's best work explores fundamental questions of existence, depicting with chilling starkness the loneliness of the

individual in an indifferent universe." The critic T. K. Whipple focused in on this bleakness in Frost's work, stating that "in much of his work, particularly in *North of Boston*, his harshest book, he emphasizes the dark background of life in rural New England, with its degeneration often sinking into total madness."

In sharp contrast, the founding publisher and editor of *Poetry*, Harriet Monroe, emphasized the folksy New England persona and characters in Frost's work, writing that "perhaps no other poet in our history has put the best of the Yankee spirit into a book so completely." [24] She notes his frequent use of rural settings and farm life, and she likes that in these poems, Frost is most interested in "showing the human reaction to nature's processes." She also notes that while Frost's narrative, character-based poems are often satirical, Frost always has a "sympathetic humor" towards his subjects.

Chapter 12

Modern Age Women Poets versus Men Poets

David Herbert Lawrence (11 September 1885 – 2 March 1930) was an English novelist, poet, playwright, essayist, literary critic and painter who published as D. H. Lawrence. His collected works represent an extended reflection upon the dehumanising effects of modernity and industrialisation. In them, Lawrence confronts issues relating to emotional health and vitality, spontaneity, and instinct.

Lawrence's opinions earned him many enemies and he endured official persecution, censorship, and misrepresentation of his creative work throughout the second half of his life, much of which he spent in a voluntary exile which he called his "savage pilgrimage." At the time of his death, his public reputation was that of a pornographer who had wasted his considerable talents. E. M. Forster, in an obituary notice, challenged this widely held view, describing him as, "The greatest imaginative novelist of our generation." Later, the influential Cambridge critic F. R. Leavis championed both his artistic integrity and his moral seriousness, placing much of Lawrence's fiction within the canonical "great tradition" of the English novel. Lawrence is now valued by many as a visionary thinker and significant representative of modernism in English literature.

Although best known for his novels, Lawrence wrote almost 800 poems, most of them relatively short. His first poems were written in 1904 and two of his poems, *Dreams Old* and *Dreams Nascent*, were among his earliest published works in *The English Review*. His early works clearly place him in the school of Georgian poets, a group not only named after the reigning monarch but also to the romantic poets of the previous Georgian period whose work they were trying to emulate. What typified the entire movement, and Lawrence's poems of the time, were well-worn poetic tropes and deliberately archaic language. Many of these poems displayed what John Ruskin referred to as the pathetic fallacy, the tendency to ascribe human emotions to animals and even inanimate objects.

Just as the First World War dramatically changed the work of many of the poets who saw service in the trenches, Lawrence's own work saw a dramatic change, during his years in Cornwall.

During this time, he wrote free verse influenced by Walt Whitman. He set forth his manifesto for much of his later verse in the introduction to *New Poems*. "We can get rid of the stereotyped movements and the old hackneyed associations of sound or sense. We can break down those artificial conduits and canals through which we do so love to force our utterance. We can break the stiff neck of habit...But we cannot positively prescribe any motion, any rhythm."

Lawrence rewrote many of his novels several times to perfect them and similarly he returned to some of his early poems when they were collected in 1928. This was in part to fictionalise them, but also to remove some of the artifice of his first works. As he put in himself: "A young man is afraid of his demon and puts his hand over the demon's mouth sometimes and speaks for him." His best known poems are probably those dealing with nature such as those in *Birds Beasts and Flowers* and *Tortoises*. *Snake*, one of his most frequently anthologised, displays some of his most frequent concerns; those of man's modern distance from nature and subtle hints at religious themes.

In the deep, strange-scented shade of the great dark carob tree

I came down the steps with my pitcher

And must wait, must stand and wait, for there he was at the trough before me.

(Excerpt, "Snake")

Look! We have come through! is his other work from the period of the end of the war and it reveals another important element common to much of his writings; his inclination to lay himself bare in his writings. Although Lawrence could be regarded as a writer of love poems, his usually deal in the less romantic aspects of love such as sexual frustration or the sex act itself. Ezra Pound in his *Literary Essays* complained of Lawrence's interest in his own "disagreeable sensations" but praised him for his "low-life narrative." This is a reference to Lawrence's dialect poems akin to the Scots poems of Robert Burns, in which he reproduced the language and concerns of the people of Nottinghamshire from his youth.

Tha thought tha wanted ter be rid o' me.

'Appen tha did, an' a'.

Tha thought tha wanted ter marry an' se
If ter couldna be master an' th' woman's boss,
Tha'd need a woman different from me,
An' tha knowed it; ay, yet tha comes across
Ter say goodbye! an' a'.

(Excerpt, "The Drained Cup")

Although Lawrence's works after his Georgian period are clearly in the modernist tradition, they were often very different from those of many other modernist writers, such as Pound. His modernist works were often austere, where every word was carefully worked on. Lawrence felt all poems had to be personal sentiments and that a sense of spontaneity was vital for any work. He called one collection of poems *Pansies*, partly for the simple ephemeral nature of the verse but also as a pun on the French word *panser*, to dress or bandage a wound. "Pansies", as Lawrence himself made explicit in the introduction to *New Poems*, is also a pun on Blaise Pascal's *Pensées*. "The Noble Englishman" and "Don't Look at Me" were removed from the official edition of *Pansies* on the grounds of obscenity, which wounded him. Even though he lived most of the last ten years of his life abroad, his thoughts were often still on England. Published in 1930, just eleven days after his death, his last work *Nettles* was a series of bitter, nettling but often wry attacks on the moral climate of England.

O the stale old dogs who pretend to guard
the morals of the masses,
how smelly they make the great back-yard
wetting after everyone that passes.

(Excerpt, "The Young and Their Moral Guardians")

Two notebooks of Lawrence's unprinted verse were posthumously published as *Last Poems and More Pansies*. These contain two of Lawrence's most famous poems about death, *Bavarian Gentians* and *The Ship of Death*.

Sylvia Plath (October 27, 1932 – February 11, 1963) was an American poet, novelist and short story writer. Born in Boston, Massachusetts, she studied at Smith College and Newnham College, Cambridge, before receiving acclaim as a professional poet and writer. She married fellow poet Ted Hughes in 1956 and they lived together first in the United States and then England, having two children together, Frieda and Nicholas. Plath suffered from depression for much of her adult life, and in 1963 she committed suicide. Controversy continues to surround the events of her life and death, as well as her writing and legacy.

Plath is credited with advancing the genre of confessional poetry and is best known for her two published collections, *The Colossus and Other Poems* and *Ariel*. In 1982, she won a posthumous Pulitzer Prize for *The Collected Poems*. She also wrote *The Bell Jar*, a semi-autobiographical novel published shortly before her death

As Hughes and Plath were legally married at the time of her death, Hughes inherited the Plath estate, including all her written work. Hughes has been condemned from some quarters for burning Plath's last journal, saying he "did not want her children to have to read it. He lost another journal and an unfinished novel and instructed that a collection of Plath's papers and journals should not be released until 2013. In the realms of literary criticism and biography published after their deaths, after the release of new material, biopics, or any old-new controversy, the debate over Plath's literary estate is very often reduced to black and white, that is, whose story the readers choose. Hughes has been accused of attempting to control the estate for his own ends, although royalties from Plath's poetry were placed into a trust account for their two children, Frieda and Nicholas.

Still the subject of speculation and opprobrium, Hughes published *Birthday Letters* in 1998, his own collection of 88 poems about his relationship with Plath. Hughes had published very little about his experience of the marriage and subsequent suicide and the book caused a sensation, being taken as his first explicit disclosure, topping best seller charts. It was not known at the volume's release that Hughes was suffering from terminal cancer and would die later that year. It

went on to win the Forward Poetry Prize, the T. S. Eliot Prize for Poetry and the Whitbread Poetry Prize. The poems, written after her death, in some cases long after, are an account of a failure; they circle around a missing centre, trying to find a reason why Plath took her own life.

Plath was portrayed by Gwyneth Paltrow in the 2003 film *Sylvia*. Frieda Hughes, now a poet and painter, who was two years old when her mother died, was angered by the making of entertainment featuring her parents' lives. She accused the "peanut crunching" public of wanting to be titillated by the family's tragedies. In 2003 she published the poem "My Mother" in *Tatler*:

Now they want to make a film

For anyone lacking the ability

To imagine the body, head in oven,

Orphaning children

they think

I should give them my mother's words

To fill the mouth of their monster,

Their *Sylvia* Suicide Doll

Ezra Weston Loomis Pound (30 October 1885 – 1 November 1972) was an American expatriate modernist poet and critic. His contribution to literature began with his co-establishment of the Imagism movement, which marked a call for a return to classical values that stressed clarity, precision and economy of language, and was influenced by the Japanese Haiku tradition. He was a temperamental and extremely complicated man whose formidable reputation was ruined by his pro-Fascist radio broadcasts and anti-semitic outbursts in the early 1940s. Pound's political views have ensured that his work remains controversial; yet he retains his position as a major poet. Ernest Hemingway wrote that "the best of Pound's writing – and it is in the *Cantos* – will last as long as there is any literature." Yet his poetic innovations preceded him, his best-known works

include *Ripostes* (1912), *Hugh Selwyn Mauberley* (1920) and his unfinished 120-section epic, *The Cantos* (1917–69).

His career began after he moved to London and then to Paris as foreign editor of several American literary magazines. He was instrumental in shaping the poetic outlook of contemporaries such as T. S. Eliot, James Joyce, H.D., Robert Frost and Ernest Hemingway. He was responsible for the publication of Eliot's "The Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock" and for the serialization from 1918 of Joyce's *Ulysses*. Outraged by the carnage of the First World War, he lost faith in England, blaming the conflict on usury and international capitalism. He moved to Italy in 1924, where throughout the 1930s and 1940s, to his friends' dismay, he embraced Benito Mussolini's fascism, expressed support for Adolf Hitler and wrote pro-Fascist and antisemitic articles for publications owned by British Fascist organizer Oswald Mosley.

During the Second World War Pound acted as a paid radio propagandist for Italian government and made hundreds of broadcasts criticizing the United States. He was indicted for treason in absentia in 1943, and arrested by American forces in Italy in 1945. He spent months in detention in a US military camp in Pisa, including 25 days in a six-by-six-foot outdoor steel cage which Pound claimed triggered a mental breakdown, "when the raft broke and the waters went over me." While medical records indicate that psychiatrists who examined Pound considered him sane, his lawyer and numerous prominent supporters succeeded in having him declared unfit to stand trial. Instead, he was committed to St. Elizabeths psychiatric hospital in Washington, DC. Pound spent the succeeding 12 years at St. Elizabeths, writing and entertaining visitors, until 1958 when supporters succeeded in having his 1945 indictment for treason dismissed and his commitment ended.

While in custody in Italy, he began work on sections of *The Cantos* that became known as *The Pisan Cantos* (1948), for which he was awarded the Bollingen Prize in 1949 by the Library of Congress. However the event caused enormous controversy due to his antisemitism, pro-Fascist activism and wartime activities. He was imprisoned, and only released in 1958 after which he returned to Italy to finish out his life with his mistress, Olga Rudge. He died in Venice on November 1st, 1972.

Walter "Walt" Whitman was an American poet, essayist and journalist. A humanist, he was a part of the transition between transcendentalism and realism, incorporating both views in his works. Whitman is among the most influential poets in the American canon, often called the father of free verse. His work was very controversial in its time, particularly his poetry collection *Leaves of Grass*, which was described as obscene for its overt sexuality.

Born on Long Island, Whitman worked as a journalist, a teacher, a government clerk, and—in addition to publishing his poetry—was a volunteer nurse during the American Civil War. Early in his career, he also produced a temperance novel, *Franklin Evans* (1842). Whitman's major work, *Leaves of Grass*, was first published in 1855 with his own money. The work was an attempt at reaching out to the common person with an American epic. He continued expanding and revising it until his death in 1892. After a stroke towards the end of his life, he moved to Camden, New Jersey, where his health further declined. He died at age 72 and his funeral became a public spectacle.

Whitman's sexuality is often discussed alongside his poetry. Though biographers continue to debate his sexuality, he is usually described as either homosexual or bisexual in his feelings and attractions. However, there is disagreement among biographers as to whether Whitman had actual sexual experiences with men.

Whitman was concerned with politics throughout his life. He supported the Wilmot Proviso and opposed the extension of slavery generally. His poetry presented an egalitarian view of the races, though his attitude in life reflected many of the racial prejudices common to nineteenth-century America and his opposition to slavery was not necessarily based on belief in the equality of races per se. At one point he called for the abolition of slavery, but later he saw the abolitionist movement as a threat to democracy.

Poetic theory

Whitman wrote in the preface to the 1855 edition of *Leaves of Grass*, "The proof of a poet is that his country absorbs him as affectionately as he has absorbed it." He believed there was a vital, symbiotic relationship between the poet and society. This connection was emphasized especially in "Song of Myself" by using an all-powerful first-person narration. As an American epic, it deviated from the historic use of an elevated hero and instead assumed the identity of the

common people. Leaves of Grass also responded to the impact that recent urbanization in the United States had on the masses

William Butler Yeats was an Irish poet and one of the foremost figures of 20th century literature. A pillar of both the Irish and British literary establishments, in his later years he served as an Irish Senator for two terms. Yeats was a driving force behind the Irish Literary Revival and, along with Lady Gregory, Edward Martyn, and others, founded the Abbey Theatre, where he served as its chief during its early years. In 1923 he was awarded the Nobel Prize in Literature as the first Irishman so honoured for what the Nobel Committee described as "inspired poetry, which in a highly artistic form gives expression to the spirit of a whole nation." Yeats is generally considered one of the few writers who completed their greatest works after being awarded the Nobel Prize; such works include *The Tower* (1928) and *The Winding Stair and Other Poems* (1929). Yeats was a very good friend of American expatriate poet and Bollingen Prize laureate Ezra Pound. Yeats wrote the introduction for Tagore's *Gitanjali*, which was about to be published by the India Society.

He was born in Dublin and educated there and in London; he spent his childhood holidays in County Sligo. He studied poetry in his youth and from an early age was fascinated by both Irish legends and the occult. Those topics feature in the first phase of his work, which lasted roughly until the turn of the 20th century. His earliest volume of verse was published in 1889, and its slow-paced and lyrical poems display Yeats's debts to Edmund Spenser, Percy Bysshe Shelley, and the poets of the Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood. From 1900, Yeats's poetry grew more physical and realistic. He largely renounced the transcendental beliefs of his youth, though he remained preoccupied with physical and spiritual masks, as well as with cyclical theories of life.

William Carlos Williams (September 17, 1883 – March 4, 1963) was an American poet closely associated with modernism and imagism. He was also a pediatrician and general practitioner of medicine with a medical degree from the University of Pennsylvania School of Medicine. Williams "worked harder at being a writer than he did at being a physician," but excelled at both.

The poet and critic Randall Jarrell said of his poetry, "William Carlos Williams is as magically observant and mimetic as a good novelist. He reproduces the details of what he sees with surprising freshness, clarity, and economy; and he sees just as extraordinarily, sometimes, the

forms of this earth, the spirit moving behind the letters. His quick transparent lines have the nervous and contracted strength, move as jerkily and intently as a bird."] R. P. Blackmur said of Williams poetry "the Imagism of 1912 , self-transcended."

Williams' major collections are *Spring and All* (1923), *The Desert Music and Other Poems* (1954), *Pictures from Brueghel and Other Poems* (1962), and *Paterson*(1963, repr. 1992). His most anthologized poem is "The Red Wheelbarrow", an example of the Imagist movement's style and principles (see also "This Is Just To Say"). 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 is strongly associated with the American modernist movement in literature and saw his poetic project as a distinctly American one; he sought to renew language through the fresh, raw idiom that grew out of America's cultural and social heterogeneity, at the same time freeing it from what he saw as the worn-out language of British and European culture. In 1920, this project took shape in *Contact*, a periodical launched by Williams and fellow writer Robert McAlmon: "The two editors sought American cultural renewal in the local condition in clear opposition to the internationalists—Pound, *The Little Review*, and the *Baroness*." Yvor Winters, the poet/critic, judged that Williams' verse bears a certain resemblance to the best lyric poets of the 13th century.

Williams tried 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' method of determining line breaks. *The Paris Review* called it "a metrical device to resolve the conflict between form and freedom in verse."

One of Williams' aims, in experimenting with his "variable foot", was to show the American (opposed to European) rhythm that he claimed was present in everyday American language. Stylistically, Williams also worked with variations on a line-break pattern that he labeled "triadic-line poetry" in which he broke a long line into three free-verse segments. A well-known example of the "triadic line [break]" can be found in Williams' love-poem "Asphodel, That Greeny Flower."

In a review of Herbert Leibowitz's biography of William Carlos Williams, "Something Urgent I Have to Say to You": The Life and Works of William Carlos Williams, book critic Christopher Benfey wrote of Williams' poetry: "Early and late, Williams held the conviction that poetry was in his friend Kenneth Burke's phrase, 'equipment for living, a necessary guide amid the bewilderments of life.' The American ground was wild and new, a place where a blooming foreigner needed all the help he could get. Poems were as essential to a full life as physical health or the love of men and women." Williams expressed this viewpoint most famously in a line from his poem "Asphodel, That Greeny Flower" in which he wrote:

It is difficult

to get the news from poems

yet men die miserably every day
for lack

of what is found there.

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