PUNJABI UNIVERSITY PATIALA

M.A. (ENGLISH) Part-II **Course–X**

Semester–III **TWENTIETH CENTURY POETRY AND FICTION**

Unit – I

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M.A. (ENGLISH) PART -II **COURSE-X**
SEMESTER-III **TWENTIETH CENTURY POETRY AND FICTION**

LESSON NO. 1.1 **AUTHOR : DR. KUM KUM BAJAJ**

HISTORY OF TWENTIETH CENTURY LITERATURE (1890-1960) THE POLITICAL, ECONOMIC AND INTELLECTUAL BACKGROUND

STRUCTURE

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1.1.0 Objectives

1. To appraise the students with the History of Twentieth Century Literature.
2. To familiarize the students with major movements and trends of Twentieth Century Literature.
3. To acquaint the students with major literary influences in the Twentieth Century.

1.1.1 Introduction

Twentieth century literature is a subject bewilderingly complex in nature and vast in scope. Whosoever wishes to do full justice to it must be completely at home with the entire panorama of modern European art, thought and life in this century. One must be equipped with a deep understanding of the mind of modern Europe. The task becomes more difficult because the century is characterised by profound and marked changes in social structure and in psychic make up of man.

The Victorians stood for self-complacency, optimism, and dogmatic certainty. England with her ever expanding colonial empire, extension of franchise, internal peace, plenitude and prosperity, industrial advance, spread of education, sound financial position and scientific advance was regarded perfect and glorious. All her institutions both temporal and spiritual-the Home, the Constitution, the Empire, the Chirstian religion and the Bank of England were deemed unshakeable. The English edifice was compact and solid. But as the nineteenth century began to draw to close, discordant notes came to the struck and the so called monolithic, peerless, perfect Victorian edifice started showing chinks. The temper which the adjective 'Victorian' described, was virtually finished in 1880. To put the historical record straight, one has to keep in mind that from 1837 to 1901 is Queen Victoria's period, and from 1901 to 1914 is King Edward's period, and after that starts the Georgian period which continues till 1936. When an attempt is made to make a survey of the literary trends and movements from the year 1890 to 1960 one has to be acquainted with Victorian, Edwardian and Georgian temper. The race, the milieu, the moment (to borrow Taine's phrase) determine the mood and complexion of literature and make a given period, different from any other before or after.

By the last decade of the nineteenth century (the Edwardian period) there was a complete breakdown of the agrarian way of life and economy. It meant the end of rural England and the increasing urbanisation of the country. Signs of a relative decline vis-a-vis certain foreign nations, the exclusion from certain primary markets by the imposition of heavy duties, a decline in the birth rate, and an increase in migration induced unaccustomed uncertainties into the economic situation of England. The Third Reform Act of 1884 and the Country Councils Act of 1888, together with the development of universal education after the 1870 and the rise of grammar schools after 1902, implied a change in political balance. The old aristocracy of birth and inheritance was being replaced by one of wealth and economic power during

the Victorian period. The inherited wealth was considered vulgar. Acquired financial power came to wield authority. This change of fortunes also affected the personal relationships. There was no regard left for relationships. And this became a cause of concern for a sensitive and a serious writer.

The year 1900 stands out as a turning point. Besides being the last year of the century, it was also the last but one year of Queen Victoria's reign. Britain was engaged in the wars known as -The Boar wars. It was also the time when the middle classes and the middle class standards of thought and writing had started getting a set back. The agricultural depression from 1870 to 1920 hit hard the landed aristocracy and denoted the end of rural England. The breakdown of pre-industrial way of life and economy changed the social complexion. The altered social emphasis on urbanization extended the encroachment of a changed pattern in social relations. The enlarged role of money struck at the very heart of human relationships which gave rise to the ethics of competition. The entry of other European nations into the world markets challenged English industrial supremacy and reduced her margins of profit. G.H. Bantock has rightly said, "The effect of this had been to reduce man to the level of economic man: one, whose community relationships were at the mercy of cash nexus and whose psychological motivation were thought of mostly in terms of self-interest."

Industrialisation and urbanization brought in this wake their own problems, like the problem of over-crowding, housing shortage, a significant increase in vice and crime, fall in the standard of sexual morality and rapidly increasing ugliness. There had been a loosening in sex taboos and increase in sexual promiscuity. The middle class was criticizing itself furiously. The criticism stemmed from the increased social awareness. Robert Owen, Charles Dickens, Matthew Arnold, John Ruskin, William Morris had all, in their own way, pointed to the unsatisfactory human conditions. At the end of the century, a number of circumstances combined to bring this minority criticism into greater prominence.

The traumatic even which hastenened, though it did not initiate the dissolution of familiar boundaries, was the First World War of 1914-18. It left the writers in lurch. The writers were, during the four strenuous years of War, under the hope of a lasting peace which was mercilessly shattered and ruthlessly smashed by events following the War. There was utter disillusionment and a morbid and sordid state of helplessness and despair.

This unusual event had completely disintegrated the moral and social codes of society and distorted the life of imagination. It brought into society the

sense of urgency and a new tempo. It made for new consciousness of 'self' and of place. The presence of new anxieties and the thrusting forward of public issues combined to isolate man from man and group from group.

D.H. Lawrence has rightly observed that "It was 1915 the old world ended. In the winter of 1915-16, the spirit of the old London collapsed, the city in some way perished, from being the heart of the world and became a vortex of broken passions, lusts, hopes, fears and horrors. The integrity of London collapsed and the genuine debasement began..."

The exuberant vitality, self-confidence, and objectiveness, which were so evident in mid-Victorian literature, were already being undermined. Some of the important men of letters who were voicing their discontent with the industrialization of Victorian Britain, the ruthlessness of social changes, the prevailing mental unrest, and the complacency of the bourgeois class included Ruskin, William, Morris Richard, Jefferies, Samuel Butler, Mathew Arnold, and John Thomas Hardy. Matthew Arnold exposed the Philistinism of a society so much dominated by aristocrats "inaccessible to light and ideas." In his poem "The Scholar Gypsy", Arnold lamented the mental feverishness of the age. Thomas Hardy went further. In a series of great novels, he shows men and women who have outgrown the simpler models of life of primitive man and have become exposed through over-developed 'emotional perceptiveness' to the assaults of a civilization for which they are unfit. They are too the self-conscious victims of the social mound "civilization fits us into" of the "modern vice of unrest", the "ache of modernism". *The Tess of the Durbervilles,* Hardy is preoccupied with the forces of destruction. Tess symbolizes the destruction not only of an innocent girl but of the institution of peasantry. The developing forces of history are so strong as cannot be resisted by poor innocent peasantry.

As we move from the mid-Victorian literature to the works of the Edwardians, we become aware of a profound change. There is no doubt that William M. Thackeray, George Eliot and Charles Dickens, are all critical writers but they are not critical of the fundamental bases of human society and ethics as are Bernard Shaw, H.G. Wells and John Galsworthy. What constituted the firm basis for mid-Victorian literary men became the cause for the deviation for the Edwardians, thus paving a strong background for the opening up of new vistas for the twentieth century literature. Karl and Magalaner have rightly pointed out :"Disillusion with seemingly common place Victorian intentions, with its vulgar commercialism, with its bourgeoise disregard of artistic values and its self-satisfied complacency played a large role in the

development of both verse and prose fiction towards the close of the century." The work of the twentieth century writers was directed by mental attitudes, moral ideas and spiritual values which were almost at the opposite extreme to the attitudes ideals and values governing Victorian literature.

1.1.2 Major Influences :

Several voices in politics, religion, literature and art struck a strident note which was definitely and unequivocally anti-Victorian. The attitude of docile acceptance and submissive reverence was replaced by edullient, angry and insurgent mood. The sprit of enquiry was one of the chief characteristics of the new temper. There was an insistent and persistent role to challenge. The spirit of interrogation exposed the facile optimism of an age which consequently came to be looked upon as hypocritical, sanctimonious and stuffy. The enlightenment view of the world as constituting simply a part of the natural world to a large extent altered the hither to held assumptions of men, society and human relationships.

The establishment of the Fabian Society and the evolutionary theory of Charles Darwin initiated the change. **The Fabian Society** an organization of intellectuals preached doctrinaire socialism under the leadership of **Sidney Webb** and **Bernard Shaw**. The society became the symbol of social and factual datas. This new spirit not only manifested itself in a spate of social legislation and royal commissions but received theoretical justifications at the hands of many social reformers. The contact with the poor had aroused the feeling of bitterness and poignant suffering. The poor had become a challenge to the social conscience - the raw material of the realistic literature. This movement is popularly known as 'Fabianism'.

Charles Darwin's *The Origin of Species* published in 1859 threatened the citadels of orthodox Christianity and prepared the way for an attitude which was to be critical of the whole social and moral order. It also changed the artistic purposes of the late Victorians. Darwin upset man's egocentricity and made the individual merely a speck in the historical sweep of biological changes. No longer could man be considered even the highest mammal, but now, merely a transitional figure in an evolutionary process.

Several other scientific discoveries of the nineteenth century worked together to remake man's vision of himself. Three important influences which changed man's view of himself in relation to his own mind, in relation to society and in relation to the universe are **Sigmund Freud, Karl Marx and Albert Einstein.**

The enlightenment view of the world of man as constituting simply a part of the natural world and hence offering precisely similar opportunities for scientific investigation is nowhere better illustrated than in the rapidly developing study of psychology and particularly in the work of **Sigmund Freud** as elaborated in his Interpretations of Dreams (1900). Freud's theory of the psyche in terms of a duality ego and the id-transformed the idea of character and personality. Freud's theory that man is not what he appears to be, rather below the sane mind there lies a swamp of irrational motives involving sex, parental authority, fixations, repressions-the whole paraphernalia of the unconscious-gave freedom of the literary artist for new ways of describing human behaviour.

The old socio-economic order suffered a transformation with the spread of **Karl Marx's** dynamic theory of social change. Karl Marx was highly critical of capitalistic system and believed that a small number of capitalists appropriate the benefits of improved industrial methods, while the labouring class are left in increasing dependency and misery. Marx's revolutionary ideas exerted a considerable influence on literature, especially the literature of 1930s is highly saturated with the Marxian influence. **Alber Einstein** demonstrated how, the external universe was no less terrifying. Einstein also proved that man could no longer "see" the objective reality with any clarity because of the unsureness of his own senses. According to Einstein, man distorts reality in the very process of observing it. As man's perception of actual phenomena not reliable, he must recognize that his world is based on a mathematical system which is merely symbolic of things and cannot be visualized or observed. As a result of Einstein's theory of relatively all things hitherto seen as fixed and stable are now seen and observed in relation to other things. Further, the new physics, as demonstrated in part by Planck's quantum Theory (1900), merely fortified man's new role by shattering cause and effect (the basic of any rational view of the universe) and by emphasizing discontinuity and the seemingly irrational. These physical theories, both coming at the turn of the century and coinciding with Freud's most important work, demolished man's complacency by destroying his belief in causality and determinism. The fundamental idea that nature exhibits all inexorable sequence of cause and effect, was soon abandoned.

Another potent influence on the twentieth century literature was that of a Swiss psychiatrist **Carl Gustav Jung.** Jung developed his theory of the "Collective Unconscious" based upon the evidence provided by mythology and by the dreams and fantasies of his patients which seemed to derive from the

common experience of primitive society rather than from the personal experience of the individual. In this theory we can discover the origin of neurosis and myth.

Henri Bergson, the French philosopher, emphasized the merging of time, which was to influence the twentieth century fiction in a big way. According to Bergson, time is heterogeneous, always in motion, fluid, ever-shifting. Though his concept of time known as *La Duree* (duration or psychological time), Bergson asserted a disbelief in the surface reality of life and stressed a time in which the clock is artificial and mental time is natural. Bergson's idea of reality conceived the world as a flux of interpenetrated elements unseizable by the intellect. The antimechanical mode of thinking places all time all the past, as well as the present moment-in "one concentrated now". This time theory, in literary terms, signifies the relative nature of human experience. Most modern novelists, especially, Marcel Proust, James Joyece, Joseph Conrad, Virginia Woolf and William Faulkner, deny absolutes in human relationships, and the structural format of their work, in its emphasis on fluctuating time, mirrors this belief in the nonabsolute quality of experience and history.

Trends and Movements:

The concepts, definitions and theories mentioned under this title have been elaborated from Princentron Encyclopedia of Poetry and Poetics, the Concise Oxford Dictionary of Literary Terms and A Glossary of Literary Terms By M.H. Abrahams.

In the last decade of the nineteenth century, a two-fold reaction became manifest. One was the **Aesthetic Movement** and the other was the **Decadent Movement** which came in the form of an instinctive reaction. The central figure to voice this reaction was **Rudyard Kipling.**

The Aesthetic Movement became fashionable in the universities and in some intellectual circles in the eighties and early nineties. It was based on the principle of 'Art for Art's sake'. It had its philosophical headquarters in France. Its root lies in the German theory proposed by Kant that aesthetic contemplation is "disinterested", indifferent both to the reality and to the utility of the beautiful object. It was also influenced by the view of Edgar Allen Poe given in the Poetic Principle (1850) that the supreme work is a "poem per se", a "poem written solely for the poem's sake". The movement was brought to England by Whistler and expounded in its more extreme form by Oscar Wilde. Wilde and the other practitioners of this movement believed that the artist writes only to please himself and was not in any way concerned

to communicate his vision to others.

The student may keep in mind that the Victorian writers, while stressing the importance of subject matter, imagination and thought, had given very little attention to style and form. The attempts of the aesthetes like Walter Pater, Addington, Symonds and Arthur Symons brought in a kind of balance by emphasizing that both form and structure characterize good writing. However, the doctrine of art for art's sake stretched to the extreme by the aesthetes like Walter Pater resulted in artistic anarchy.

Some proponents of Aestheticism also espoused the views and values which developed into a movement called **Decadence.** Central to this movement was the view that art is totally opposed to "nature" both in the sense of biological nature and of the standard of "natural" norms of morality and sexual behaviour.

Both the **Aesthetic** and **Decadent Movements** are represented by the writers of the 1890s such as Oscar Wilde. Arthur Symons, Earnest Dowson, Lionel Johnson and the artist Aubrey Beardsley. The representative literary works are Wilde's novel The Picture of Dorian Gray (1891) and his play Salome (1893).

The influence of certain aesthetic and decadent tendencies-such as the view of the "authonomy" (self-sufficiency) of art, the concept of the poem or novel as constructed object, the distrust of spontaneous "nature" as against art and artifice- have been important in the writings of the prominent recent authors like W.B. Yeats, T.E. Hulme and T.S. Eliot as well as in the theory of the New Critics.

Rudyard Kipling took poetry off the pedestal on which it had stood for so long, and wrote in a language which the common sense Englishman read with exhilaration. In contrast to the aesthetes, he took verse to the people and made it a living influence among them. Verse as written by him became the anti-thesis of that unsubstantial, dreamy, fretful poetry which had marked the aesthetes. It entered the domain of ordinary life and enlivened it with sensationalism. Kipling wrote novels and short stories also but it was through his verse that he exercised an influence on the national life in the last ten years of the nineteenth century such as no English poet probably had ever done before. "The nineteenth century ends with a flourish of trumpets on the kipling note" says R.A. Scott James.

Realism is an important literary movement of the nineteenth century especially in prose fiction beginning with Balzac in France, George Eliot in England and

William Dean Howells in America. The realist is deliberately selective in his material and prefers the average, the common place and the everyday over the rarer aspects of the contemporary scene. A thorough going realism involves not only a selection of subject matter but more importantly a special literary manner as well. The outstanding works of realism in the 19th century fiction include Balzac's Illusions Perduses (1837-43), Gustave Flaubert's Madame Bevary (1857), and George Eliot's Middle March (1871-72). Realism also established itself as an important tradition in the theatre in the late 19th and 20th centuries in the works of Henrik Ibsen, George Bernard Shaw and others. Despite the radical attempts of modernism to displace the realist emphasis on external reality, realism survived as a major current within 20th century fiction, sometimes under the label of neorealism.

In the works of some writers, realism passes over into the movement of Naturalism in which sociological investigation and determinist views of human behaviour predominate. It is sometimes claimed to be an even more accurate picture of life than is realism. But naturalism is not like realism. There is a special selection of subject-matter and a special literary manner in it. It is a mode of fiction that was developed by a school of writers in accordance with a special philosophical thesis. This thesis, a product of Post Darwinian biology in the mid-nineteenth century held that man belongs entirely to the order of nature and does not have a soul or any other connection with a religious or spiritual world beyond nature. Man is, therefore, merely a higher-order animal, whose character and fortunes are determined by two kinds of natural forces, heredity and environment. The French novelist, Emile Zola, beginning in the 1870s, did much to develop this theory in what he called Le Roman Experimental.

Aspects of the naturalistic selection and management of materials, and saustere or brutal frankeness of manner, are apparent in many modern novels and dramas such as Hardy's Jude, the Obscure, various plays of Eugene O'Neill and Norman Mailer's novel of World war II, The Naked and the Dead. Even Joyce's Ulysses combines aspects of these naturalistsic models. George Moore imitated Zola in his novels A Mummer's Wife (1885), A Drama in Muslin (1886), and Esthers Waters(1894).

By the time the century came to a close, Naturalists were undergoing attacks. The age of Experimentalism had started. **Experimentalism** has been an important characteristic of twentieth century literature and art in which successive avant-grade movements have arisen in continual reaction against what they regard as decayed or ossified forms of the experiment. **Modernism**

and **Humanism** these two terms recure repeatedly in any discussion of the twentieth century literature.

Modernism : The modernist revolution was the handiwork of an "international inter-arts alliance and it began in Paris and was international in character and multifaceted" in nature. Modernist literature rejects the 19th century traditions and the conventions of realism. It marked the avant-grade trends in literature. Avant-grade writers were dedicated to the idea of art as experiment and revolt against tradition. These writers made constant innovations in forms and subjects which were complex and difficult. They disengaged themselves from the form and subjects which were guided by the new discoveries in science, psychology and anthropology. They presented a view of man and society completely different from the one known till the mid of the Victorian period. **Symbolism, Futurism, Expressionism, Imagism, Vorticism. Dadaism** and **Surrealism** are some of the important modern movements.

Humanism primarily emphasizes the expansion of human capacities. In this 16th century, the term denoted the values and ideals of the European Renaissance. The Renaissance humanists developed an image of man more positive and hopeful than that of the medieval ascetic Christianity. Rather than being a miserable sinner awaiting redemption from a pit of fleshly corruption, man was a source of infinite possibilities, ideally developing towards physical, spiritual, moral and intellectual faculties. Most early humanists like Erasmus and Milton in the 16th and 17th centuries combined elements of Christian and Classical cultures in what has came to be known as Christian Humanism but the 18th century Enlightenment began to detach the ideal of human perfection from religious supernaturalism. By the 20th century, 'humanism' came to denote those moral philosophies that abandon theological dogma in favour of purely human concerns. From the mid 19th century onward, New Humanists like Matthew Arnold, Paul More and lrving Babbit opposed the claims of science with the ideal of balanced human perfection, self-cultivation and ethical self-resistant. This Liberal Humanism centres its view of the world upon the notion of the freely self-determining individual. But this view of humanism has been rejected by the Post-Structural Literary theory which does not accept the unitary concept of man, rather sees men de-centred and no longer self-determining.

1.1.3 Symbolism :

The Symbolist movement in literature began in France with Baudelaire's

Fleurs du Mal (1857) and was continued by such major poets as Rimbaud, Verlaine, Mallarme and Valerie. The movement became quite popular throughout Europe around 1890s and since World War-I, major writers-poets, novelists and dramatists extensively used symbols drawn from religious and esoteric traditions. They also made use of personal symbols. Some of the notable works of the age are symbolist throughout in their settings, their agents and their actions as well as in their diction.

The Symbolists insisted on a world of ideal beauty which they believed could be realized through art. They avoided the public and political themes dear to the Romantics and disdained the realistic or scientific view of art because it divided the ideal world which was to be the centre of their activity. "Poetry should not inform but suggest and evoke, not name things but create their atmosphere." said Mallarme. It was through Arthur Symons book The symbolist Movement in Literature (1899) that the French movement reached England.

The symbolists aimed for a poetry of suggestions rather than of direct statement evoking subjective moods through the use of private symbols, while avoiding the description of external reality or the expression of opinion. They wanted to bring poetry closer to music believing that sound had mysterious affinities with other sense. Among their influential innovations were free verse and the prose poem. Baudelaire's theory of the "Correspondence" between physical and spiritual realms and between the different senses, inspired much of the symbolic literature. EdgarAllan Poe's doctrine of "Pure" poetry was put into practice by many symbolists. The influence of symbolism on European and American literature of the early 20th century was extensive. It appeared in drains too, notably in the works of the Belgian playwright Maurice Materlinck in the 1890s. Some of its concerns were reflected in novels by J.K. Huysmans and Dujardin. Hardly any major figure of modernism was unaffected by it. Instance of a persistently symbolic procedure occur in many lyrics. Yeats "Byzantium" - poems, Dylan Thomas's series of sonnets Altarwise by Owl-Light and longer poems. Hart Crane's The Bridge, Eliot's The Waste Land, Stevens "Comedian as the Letter C' and in novels such as Joyce's Ulysses and Finnegans Wake, and Faulkner's The Sound and the Fury.

1.1.4 Impressionism

The term is commonly said to have been derived from Claude Monet's painting Impression : Soleit Levant, first exhibited in Paris in 1874. Scoring the use of local colour, the impressionist painters wanted to record the light as it is reflected from objects through the air surrounding them.

The impressionist poets, like their fellow painters, desired to capture the fleeting impression at the very moment in which sensations are transformed into feelings. On the whole, their art is strictly non-intellectual. It scorns logical progression and relies on the unpredictable movement which is effected by mental associations. Here too, outlines are blurred, forms dissolved and images stillborn. Instead of naming the things, an impression is created and the poet describes the effect which it produces.

In literature, it is neither a school nor a movement but a kind of subjective tendency manifested in descriptive techniques. It is found in symbolist and imagist poetry and in much modern verse, as also in many prose works of the late 19th century, as in the novels of Joseph Conrad and Virginia Woolf.

1.1.5 Imagism refers to a concept of poetry associated with a school or movement that flourished between 1912 and 1917. It was organised by a group of English and American Writers in London partly under the influence of the poetic theory of T.E. Hulme as a revolt against what Ezra Pound called the "rather slurry..... sentimentalistic mannerish poetry" at the turn of the century. Ezra Pound, the first leader of the movement, was soon succeeded by Amy Lowell. Amy Lowell's first two anthologies contained prefaces which constitute the most deliberate statements of Imagists theory and which stand as its manifestoes. Other leading participants in the movement were : Hilda Dolittle, D.H. Lawrence, William Carlos William, John Gould Fletcher and Richard Aldington. The Imagists claim, as voiced by Amy Lowell in her Preface to the first of three anthologies called Some Imagist Poets (1915-1917), a poetry which (abandoning conventional poetic materials and versification) is free to choose any subject and create its own rhythms. It is expressed in common speech and presents an image that is hard, clear and concentrated. The typical Imagist poem is written in free verse and undertakes to render as exactly and tersely as possible, without comment or generalisation. The writer's response to a visual object or scene, often the impression, is rendered by means of metaphor or by juxtaposing a description of one object. The following famed example by Ezra Pound exceeds all Imagist poems in the degree of its concentration.

In a station of the Metro

The apparition of these faces in the crowd,

Petels on a wet, black bough.

In this poem, Pound, like a number of other Imagists, was influenced by the Japanese haiku or hokku - a lyric hi that it represent the poet's impression of

a natural object or scene viewed at a particular season or month, in exactly seventeen syllables. Imagism proved to be the beginning of the modern poetry.

Almost every major poet of the twentieth century including W.B.Yeats, T.S. Eliot and Wallace Stevens, has strongly felt the influence of the Imagist experiments with precise, clear images, juxtaposed without expressed connection.

1.1.6 Expressionism is another movement of the twentieth century which was developed in Germany. Born as a reaction to the horrors of the First World War, the movement attempted to express as intensely and as inventively as possible the author's reaction, usually bitter to the world about him. Expressionistic art frequently depersonalised and dehumanised its subject to convey more strongly the shock, expressionistic artist felt at being alive in the modern world. Arthur Miller defines Expressionism as a form which manifestly seeks to dramatise "the conflict of either social, religious or moral forces per se."

The hallmarks of expressionism are its employment of symbolic character and its presentation of dreams-states in which hidden forces of every variety become transparently visible. It attempted to express the basic reality of its subjects rather than to reproduce the mere appearance or surface. In this respect, it was revolt not only against current art but against current civilisation, which was considered to be superficially prosperous and attractive, but rotten at the core. Strindberg, Dostoevsky, Bergson, and Freud influenced it. An expressionistic work relies heavily on distortion of salient features. It is exclamatory and dynamic and sometimes so cryptic as to be baffling and boggling. The most widely known Expressionists are Kafka and Franz Werfel. Other adherents of the movement include the dramatist Fritz Von Unruh and George Kaiser, and the Austrian poet, George Trakl. The influence of Expressionism is visible in a good deal in the works of James Joyce and T.S. Eliot.

1.1.7 Surrealism : Andre Breton, the chief spokesman of this movement, defined Surrealism in his first Manifesto (1924) as an attempt to give expression to the "real functioning of thought" through pure psychic automatism by means of the spoken or written word or by any other means available. The study of dreams or hallucinations, the practice of automatic writing under the dictations of the subconscious are considered by the surrealists as the true means of knowledge. They give a great importance to the analysis of the interpretation of the sleeping and waking states. It is primarily an instrument of knowledge which brings the poet to a clearer awareness of the world perceived by the senses. There is no attempt in this

poetry to adhere to the established rules to versification, nor even to create new ones. Very often the poem is indistinguishable from prose, a certain rhythm is however to be found in the works of the best surrealist poets such as Breton and Eluard. By considering words as images of widely removed species, the surrealist poet creates new images of remarkable quality. This, rather than use of metaphors or other figures, or rhetoric, is the basis of surrealist imagery.

Surrealism attempted to become an international revolutionary movement associated for a while with the Communist International. Although dissolved as a coherent movement by end of the 1930s, its traditions have survived in many forms of post-war experimental writing, from the Theatre of the Absurd to the songs of Bob-Dylan. The student may also note that the adjectives 'surreal' and 'surrealistic' are often used in a loose sense to refer to any bizarre imaginative effect.

1.1.8 Cubism is the name, that in mockery, Henri Matisse gave in 1908 to the new school of art in Paris which under the leadership of Braque was trying to represent modernism - a common denominator for art and poetry, at the dawn of the twentieth century. Guillaume Appollinaire's book, The Cubist Painters explained the united efforts of the poet and the painter to renew nature's appearances and to convey the inner sense rather than the outer forms of reality, thereby stretching the limits of human imagination. For poets of the pre-war epoch Cubism became the bridge from traditional techniques toward a more subtle and flexible comprehension of the subject-object relationship in arts.

1.1.9 Futurism was a short lived avant-garde movement, launched in 1909 by an Italian poet, Filipo Marinett. Futurism rejects all previous artistic traditions and conventions alongwith typographic experiments and the composition of poems made up of meaningless sounds. The student may keep in mind that the term Futuristic does not relate to this movement. Instead Futuristic is applied to fictional works that describe some imagined future society. Science fiction or utopian fantasy can be included in this.

1.1.10 Vorticism was a short-lived artistic movement that announced itself in London in 1914. It was led by the painter and writer Wyndham Lewis and attracted the support of the sculptors, Jacob Epstein and Henri Gaudier - Brzeska. Its literary significance is negligible except in that Ezra Pound regarded it as an advance upon his previous phase in **Imagism**. The Victicist manifestos that appeared in the two issues of Lewis's magazine Blast (1914-15) celebrated the dynamic energies of the machine age while accusing

Futurism of having romanticised the machine. Vortiticism called for an end to all sentimentality and asked for a new abstraction that would paradoxically be both dynamic and static. For Pound, the 'Vortex' was the concentrated energy of the 'avant-garde', which was to blast away the complacency of the established culture.

1.1.11 Dadaism, as avant-garde movement of anarchic protest against bourgeoise society, religion, and art was founded in 1916 in Switzerland by Tristan Tzara - a Rumanian born French poet. The Dadaist group experimented with anti-logical poetry and Collage picture and sculptures. This movement only ushered in the surrealism. Collage - a work assembled wholly or partly from the fragments of other writings, incorporating allusions, quotations and foreign phrases. Originally applied to paintings pasted on elements, the term has been extended to an important kind of modernist poetry, of which the most significant examples are *The Cantos of Ezra Pound* and T.S. Eliot's *The Waste Land*.

1.1.12 Existentialism emphasises lived human existence. Although it had an important precursor in the Danish theologian, Soren Kierkagaard in the 1840s, its German philosophers Martin Heideggar and Karl Jaspers prepared some of the ground in the 1920s and 1930s for the more influential work of Jean-Paul-Sartre. Its fundamental premise that 'existence precedes essence', implies that we as human beings have no given essence or nature but must forge our own, values and meaning in a inherently meaningless or absurd world of existence. Obliged to make our own choices, we can either confront the anguish of this responsibility, or evade it by claiming obedience to some determining convention or duty thus acting in 'bad faith'. Paradoxically we are 'condemned to be free'. The works of Sartre, Simon De Beauvior, Kafka, Camus and the dramatists of the Absurd Theatre are written under the influence of existential philosophy.

1.1.13 Myth and The Twentieth Century Literature

A student of literature has to be alert to the bewildering variety of applications of the term 'myth' in the twentieth century literature. The origin of neurosis and myth can be traced to Jung's theory of collective unconscious. A myth is one story in mythology - a system or hereditary stories which were once believed to be true by a particular cultural group and which served to explain (in terms of the intentions and actions of supernatural beings) why the world is as it is and why the things happen as they do and aimed to establish the rationale for social customs and observances, and the sanctions for the rules

by which men conduct their lives.

The term can be divided into 'rationalist' and 'romantic' versions. According to the rationalist version, a myth is a false or unreliable story of belief, while according to the romantic version, myth is a superior intuitive mode for the cosmic understanding. In most literary context, the romantic version prevails, and myths are regarded as fictional stories containing deeper truths, expressing collective attitude to fundamental matters of life, death, divinity and existence, sometimes deemed to be universal. The most famous myth maker was James Joyce, though in the works of D.H. Lawrence, E.M. Forster, and Aldous Huxley also, we see mythical elements.

Amongst writers whose reputation had been established well before 1945, Macaulay was far from alone in seeing the immediately post-war period as one which required the re-assembling of fragments of meaning. She makes it clear in the novel The Towers of Trebizonal in 1956. The second World War had provided an additional means of focus for the fiction of Anglo-Irish novelist, Elizabeth Bowen (1899-1973) Throughout in her earlier works notably in her novel The Last September (1929) and her memoir Bowen's Court (1942), she had explored the tensions implicit in the history of her landed family and the divided loyalties of the increasingly dispossessed Protestant Ascendancy in Ireland. The intense ideological and political distortions of the second World War were imaginatively explored in a series of articles on the Nviemberg trials of 1946 and William Joyce in the The Meaning of Treason When the Second World war ended in Europe in the summer of 1945, much of Britain was in ruin. Quite literally in ruins," observes Andrew Sanders. The broken London of bricks, facades and dangerously exposed basements can now be only recognized from paintings and photographs and from the cinematic exploitation of bombsites in films such as the two early comedies made at the famous Earling Studios, Charles Crictitions rowdy He and Cry (1947) and Harry Corrielius's Force Passport to Pimlico (1949). This landscape of ruins must also be recognized as forming an integral past of much of the literature of the late 1940's and the early 1950's. It was a landscape which provided a metaphor for broken lives and spirits, and in some remoter sense for the ruin of Great Britain itself. (1949). The Birds Fall Down (1966) written by Rececca West, remains one of the most stimulating novels of the latter half of the century. It is a book which seeks to respond to the political issues raised variously by Dostoevsky, Conrad, Kropottix and Levin.

Dear Student, All the important literary movements and trends have been discussed. It is against these manifold currents and cross-currents of science,

skepticism sex, obsession, intellectual curiosity, love of revolt and innovation that the content and well as the form of a great part of the twentieth century literature has to be studied and appreciated. The multitudinous experiments in literary forms, diction, meter and phraseology too are to be understood properly.

A fundamental change in the nature of experience has been recorded in the modern times. The experience, which was once shareable with other members of society, is no longer so. There is greater isolationism and individualism. Any change in the nature and range of experience puts new stresses and strains on the framework of medium, technique and form of expression. Consequently, further potentialities of the medium technique and form are explored and utilized. So the two basic themes of most of the twentieth century literature are those of 'isolation' and 'relationship'. The British writer and soldier, C.E. Montague wrote in this book Disenchantment (1922) that the nation was in the throes of a goodly literature of disenchantment. Nevertheless, it is a literature throbbing with a life of its own, speaking its own voice and clothed in an idiom, imagery, and ideology which is indubitably, a product of the age in which this literature has been created.

LESSON NO. 1.2 **AUTHOR : Dr. KUM HUM BAJAJ**

HISTORY OF TWENTIETH CENTURY LITERATURE : MAJOR TRENDS IN POETRY

STRUCTURE

1.2.1 Trends in Twentieth Century Poetry
1.2.2 Poetry after the First World War
1.2.3 Poetry of the 1930s

One of the major problems facing the twentieth century writer was the inability to arrive at a commonly accepted metaphysical picture of man. To Freud, man is a biological phenomenon, a prey to instinctual desires and their redirection in the face of harsh reality. He is, therefore, in the Darwinian tradition simply a part of nature. To Marxists, he is the outcome of economic and social force, the product of an evolutionary necessity as rigid as any to be found in the natural world. The Christian notion of man as the child of sin was no longer acceptable. Moreover, the empirical accounts of experience were not sufficient to explain the ultimate mystery of human existence. Consequently, the original despair of the twentieth century man and the artist becomes acute. The artist had to search for devices to come to terms with the 'much-divided' civilisation and the consequent, spiritual loss. The great urge of experimentation was in rare measures caused by the artist's search for devices. In every field, poetry, drama and novel, we come across a rejection of the old techniques and themes.

1.2.1 Trends in Twentieth Century Poetry: By 1890 the Victorian traditions had broken down, their assumptions had collapsed, and there was no grand current of thought or feeling to carry poets along or for them to crystalise. The later poets of the Victorian traditions even while rebelling against these had been carried forward by their momentum but in the Edwardian period it was a dead weight.

The Victorian giants are Alfred Tennyson (1809-92), Robert Browning (1812-91), Matthew Arnold (1822-88) and Thomas Hardy (1840-1928). Tennyson died

in the year 1892. The new poetry started making an impact after the First World War. The in between period is the period of transition.

Poets of Transition: Among the important poets of the transition period are **W.E. Henley, William Watson** and **Rudyard Kipling. W.E. Henley** (1849-1903) wrote on patriotic themes. His art is represented by two anthologies Lyra Heroiea and For England's Sake. He is at his best while writing in the free verse stanza, **William Watson's** (1858-1935) best poetry echoes the stately accents of the past-as in the elegies Wordsworth's Grave and LGciirymae Musarum (on the death of Tennyson). His patriotic lyric and some other occasional poems show a sense of order and-proportion.

Rudyard Kipling is an impressive writer more known for his prose than his poetry. His love of England pours out in his poems which are marked by restraint, first-hand imagery and varied music. **Alfred Noyes's** (1880-1958) poetry has the tunefulness and pictorial emphasis that give immediate pleasure.

Three poets of this transition period stand apart from the rest. These are **Francis Thompson, A.E. Houseman** and **Robert Bridges.** Between 1893 to 1897 Thompson (1859-1936) published three collections of verse, The Hound of Heaven, An Ode to the Setting Sun and a group of poems on children which ensure for him a place among the English poets.

Robert Bridges (1844-1930) brought into the twentieth century the aroma and aura of the nineteenth century. He was made the poet laureate in 1913 in succession to Austin. As the poet laureate he did not say much on the occasions of national importance and thus earned the title "Dumb laureate".

Although a good part of Bridges was published in the nineteenth century such as The Growth of Love (1833), a series of sonnets on the Elizabethan model and Prometheus- the Fire Giver, Eros, and Psyche (1885) and a play Hero (1885), Feast and Bacchus (1889) besides a very large number of exquisite lyrics on love, nature and man, yet his greatest and abiding work, The Testament of Beauty was published in 1929. Bridges's metrical experiments were not radical as were those of Hopkins and his interest in language was in favour of 'purity rather than in new kinds of excitement.' New Poems (1889) Poems in Classical prosody (1913) and Later Poems (1914) do little credit to Bridges's genius. However, October and New Verse (1925) and October and Other Poems (1928) have some very good lyrical pieces. "The beauties of nature, the charm of landscape in particular, the joy of romance, of love, memories of an almost idyllic childhood these are the themes, which he treated with the good breeding and absence of passion demanded of a gentleman." (E. Albert)

In the poems of 1914, he made attempts to bring politics and war in the field of poetry but later on he gave up the idea of harnessing the sterner issues of life and instead turned to subjects comparatively lighter in vein. He is the poet of sprawling joy and spilling optimism. In the words of Robert Lynd, he is 'the poet of nine o'clock in the morning'. English love poetry was enriched by Bridges, who voiced deep feeling in poetic forms that approach perfection.

Albert Edward Houseman (1858-1936) - Houseman's poems show a disciplined sense which gives to his lyrics a peculiar quality. His anthologies include A Shropshire Lad (1896), Last Poems (1922), More Poems (1936). The perfection of his technique, his achievement of his technique, his achievement of beauty without ornament and without exhortation, and the adamantine fortitude of his philosophic pessimism made him much admired by the younger poets. His art consisted in ruthless pruning. His philosophy encouraged the utter abandonment of hope and self pity, substituting nothing but endurance. Houseman's hopeless world, as seen through his poems, is a marvelously, clean and invigorating place, and his is the distinction of being the first English poet of importance to shed religious belief without being either sorry for himself or proud of himself.

Here, special mention has to be made of **Thomas Hardy**. Though a Victorian, he comes closest to the mood and sensibility which was to follow the Victorian tradition. His tragic irony, his colloquial and technical vocabulary and his metrical harshness and indecorum make him stand apart from the other Victorians. Hardy himself claimed that his poems were, "a series of fugitive impressions" and not the expression of anything like a systematised view of life. Hardy had an intimate knowledge of village and small town life and he rendered it in his poetry with a deep regard for its value, simply as life and thus it becomes one of the positives in his poetry. There is enough in his poetry: church and churchyard, and music, gallery, ball room and pub lovers, walks, seaports, watering places, tea under the trees, fields and woods and barns. Places are important to him. His general view is gloomy and pessimistic but the places and rural settings seem to elevate him.

The middle range of Hardy's poetry - lying between, on the one hand patriotic themes and simplified love idylls and heavy statements of his 'Philosophy' and on the other, small number of his wonderful best poems - displays in general his stoicism and truthfulness in the face of uncomforting experience. The important poems of Hardy include : The Curate's Kindness, The Sleep Worker, Late Lyrics and Earlier, Old Furniture, Friend Beyond Afterwards, An Ancient to Ancient, His Visitor, Benny Cliff, Five Students, Neutral Tones, The Voice, The Self Unseeing, After a Journey, During Wind and Rain. The Dynasts (1903-1928), an epic drama has been claimed by some admirers to

be Hardy's greatest work. Some of his best work is pessimistic, full of his fatal acceptance, but sometimes with extraordinary simplicity he gives a twist to a moment of human experience, which conveys just that queer sense of super-reality which such moments in real life actually have Moments of Vision, the title of one of his poems, would be an apt description of his poems as a whole, visions of emotional moments charged with the inheritance of past ages of emotion bringing into play irrational half conscious feelings which the contemplative mind much experience. Scott James opines. "There are three elements which Hardy is supremely qualified to show, which are found separately or in combination in his best work : Nature in her sweeter or wilder moods, Humanity, breathing and passionate, and Destiny, presiding over all, cruel in its blindness."

After Hardy, the poetic scene, was not very bright. There were political agitations and change in the constitution. The monarchy collapsed. After 1910, there were series of strikes, the suffragettes broke windows in the Regent street, chained themselves to the gallery in the House of Commons. The tension over Ireland was so great that in the beginning of 1914, there was grave danger of civil war, and actually a military rebellion there was indeed a sense of rebellion in the air against convention, against accepted codes of morals. And in this format a new kind of poetry came to be written which has been collected in the anthologies known as **Georgian Poetry.**

Flourishing in the reign of George V, a group of poets writing at that time came to be known as **Georgian Group.** Their work is exemplified in five volumes of Georgian Poetry dated respectively, 1911-12, 1913-15, 1916-17, 1918-19 and 1920-22 edited by E.M. 'E.M.' is **Sir Edward Marsh.** In the Preparatory Note to the first volume it was stated that 'this volume is issued in the belief that English poetry is now once again putting on a new strength and beauty'. There is a long list of poets whose work was included in five volumes of Georgian poetry. Some of the notable names include : Robert Brooke, Walter De La Mare, D. H. Lawrence, Robert Graves. In this long list, the first thing one is compelled to notice is that because several of poets included might well have been disengaged from the group so little they belong to it. For example, D.H. Lawerence can have nothing to do with Georgian Poetry.

The technique of Georgian Poetry derives from early and later Nineteenth Century Romantic Poetry. Poetry written during this time displays a limited range of feelings and mostly stereotyped techniques. But the First World War gave it an impetus. Among the notable poets **Robert Brooke** has an important place. **Robert Brooke** (1837- 1915) judged , by his Rugby and Cambridge verse

fits into the Georgian Poetry. His poetry displayed precocious talent and brilliant facility. His verse is light. There is rarely any profundity of emotion. Though there is little complexity of experience, yet there is a certain curious wonder. His poetry is melodious, refreshing and pleasant, Robert Brooke's sequence of sonnets entitled 1914 deal with the theme of war. But Brooke's war poetry is typically pre-war poetry and lacks the intensity of feeling which characterised the war poems of Siegfried Sasson and Wilfred Owen. The Great Lover, The Old Vicarge, Grant Chester are some of his other memorable pieces. **Wilfred Owen** (1893-1918) is another poet writing on the theme of war. He began to write poetry at an early age. His poetry shows Keatsian influence. He himself was a victim of First World War. He was one of the first poets who, under the urge of his bitter personal experiences, discarded the usual romantic notions and fripperies about war and struck a new realistic note in his war poetry. War-a mass-scale devastation of human lives is not calculated to evoke the romantic glamour and glitz of past : a soldier enlisted to such a cause cannot flatter himself about his calling and motives. In 'Insensibility' Owen describes with a noble melancholy that how human values have been mechanised in war, how men are treated, merely as cannon fodder. Blunden quotes a friend's description of Owen." an intense pity for suffering humanity a need to alleviate it, wherever possible, and an inability to shirk, the sharing of it even when this seemed useless. This was the keynote of Wilfred's character."

The book of poetry he had planned, of which he said in the "Preface"." My subject is war and the pity of war". The Draft Preface to this volume is the best commentary on the work he left.

"This book is not about heroes. English poetry is not yet fit to speak of them. Nor is it about, deeds or lands, nor anything about glory, honour, might, majesty, dominion or power except war. Above all I am not concerned with Poetry. My subject is war, and the pity of war. The poetry is in the pity.

Yet these elegies are to this generation in no sense consolation. They may be to the next. All a poet can do today is to warn. That is why the true poets must be truthful."

His collected poems were published in 1920 by his friend, Siegfried Sasoon. A new edition by Edmund Blunden appeared in 1931 and a third in 1963 by C. Lewis with a memoir by Blunden. Owen's poetry had a significant influence on the young poets of 1930s. **Walter De La Mare and Edward Thomas** both considered Georgians stand out because of the individuality of their poetic gift. **Walter De La Mare's** (1873-1956) themes: include happy childhood, harsh adult world, happy recollections of childhood, pleasure and profit in dreaming, beauty and transcendtal worth of nature and the duty of love.

There is validity in the common view of De La Mare's poetry as 'making the actual magical and the magical actual'. At times De La Mare has been, accused of writing poetry in nature of nursery poems but 'beneath the murmur of childish voice we hear a more ancient and wiser tongue, the language of myth and fairy tale, dream and symbol *'Nod the Tailor, At the Keyhole, Never-to-be* are characterised by the atmosphere idyllic or foreboding. *"In the Dwelling-Place", "Off the Ground", Nicholas Nye display* the aptness of his rhythms in various kinds of narrative and situation. *Sam, The Quartette,* are full of humourous fancies. *The Silver Penny, AH But Blind, Fare Well* are pathetic pieces. But all his poems show his Verbal magic' and his dexterous use of vowels and consonants. *Old Shell Over, The Witch, Johan Mouldy, The Ghost, The Song of the mad Prince* are some of his mature poems both in the context of theme and technique. However, despite his many poetic qualities, some of the shortcomings, which the critics point out in his poetry are-repetition, and a melodramatic treatment of some real subjects and the over elaboration of the idyllic and the eerie. Nevertheless, it can be safely said that in the context of his total achievement he has ensured for himself a permanent place among the twentieth century poets.

Edward Thomas (1878-1917) is an original poet who welcomed departure from some of the aspects of nineteenth century poetry. He is different from typical Georgia poets. His poetic output is small but his is a voice that is contemporary in the middle of the twentieth century. Nature and the countryside are an occasion for exploring and presenting his mood and character and a whole mode of experiencing. The presentation is quiet, delicate and strong. *A Tale, The Hollow Wood, The Gypsy, Rain Lights Out, Ambition, The Brook, Maech, Old Man, The Glory. The Other*'s are some of his finest poems. His poetry is marked with delicate richness and minute particularity.

John Masefield (1878-1967) is famous for *Whose Salt Water Ballads (1902).* The poem caused considerable hubub and fuss because of the self-conscious realism of the language. The poem bears the influence of Chaucer and Crabbe. In 1903 appeared his second volume called *Ballads* which was followed by *Ballads and Poems in 1910.* In 1911, he published the *Everlasting Mercy* which put him in the list of the renowned poets of the day. In 1923 he printed an addition of his Collected poems which was followed at regular intervals by other poems. In one of his reputed poems captioned *'A Consecration,* Masefield consecrates his muse to the service of the under-dog and the down trodden, the dregs and the down and outs, the lowly and the despised :

Other may sing of the wine and the wealth and mirth.

The portly presence of potentates goodly in girth,

Mine be the dirt and dross, the dust and scum of the earth.

Masefield is a prolific writer and has published a number of essays, novels and plays in addition to several volumes of poetry. But despite his bitter, corrosive, abrasive experience of life, Masefield shows no rancour, venom, vituperation or cynicism in his writing. He is a perennial and perpetual seeker after beauty. This union of stark realism and romance makes Masefield a unique figure among modern poets. He is head over heels in love with the myriad phases of sea and the scenes of countryside.

When Thomas Hardy died in 1928, the world appeared to be recovering from the consequences of the First World War. The League of Nations had failed to bring about the state of international harmony hoped for by its founders, and poverty and social unrest persisted in many places. The result was that there was a rebellion in the air, against convention, against accepted code of morals, against every accepted idea.

1.2.2 Poetry after the First World War :

The first half of the twentieth century saw a revolution in poetic taste in England, comparable to that which occurred at the end of the seventeenth or at the end of the eighteenth century and beginning of the nineteenth century. A group of young poets gathered round. T.E. Hulme and were forging out new conceptions of the way in which poetry should be written. The result was the outstanding view of poetry represented by Palgrave's Golden Treasury in favour of a poetic Practice and a critical theory which exalted cerebral complexity, allusive suggestion and the precision of a poetic practice of the individual image. "The poet was no longer the sweet singer whose function was to render in mellifluous verse and more or less conventional romantic imagery, a self indulged personal emotion. He was the explorer of experience who used language in order to build up rich patterns of meaning which however, impressive, their immediate impact required repeated close attention before they communicated themselves fully to the reader" says David Daiches. T.E. Hulme wanted discipline, precision, 'dry hardness', classicism. As a result of Hulme's war on romantic view of life and of art, The Imagist Movement emerged, which was to influence the modern poets to a great extent. One poet, whose influence upon the younger generation was so much that the aspect of modern poetry was changed right up to the present time and his influence is still unexhausted, was **Gerald Manley Hopkins.**

Gerald Manley Hopkins (1844-89) though a Victorian is a modern poet. He is a poet endowed with religious penchant and verse. He was bred as an Anglican, but turned a Roman Catholic in 1866 and two years later entered the society of Jesus. 'Bridges publication of Hopkins' poems in 1918 showed a

poet eschewing the conventions of Victorian poetic statement and striving after a kind of poetry both precise and passionate, both profoundly felt and desperately accurate. Some of the qualities of Hopkins' poetry such as clarity of words and rhythms, with no dependence at all on a general aura of poetic feeling, attracted new poets to him after 1918. His poetry is characterized by the fusion of thought and emotion. In 1875, he completed the wreck of the Deutschland, his longest and most difficult poem is drenched in tragic pathos. In the last few years, Hopkins felt that God had forsaken him. In his distress and despondency, he wrote sonnets of personal character. But before the end, he outsoared the benighted in Heraclitean Fire, and of the Comfort of the Resurrection. He continued to write verses in which he expressed his glorification of God, and his Creation, but his critics suggest that 'the poet in Hopkins was strangled by the priest'.

However, Hopkin's rhythmic achievement was primarily the work not of theory but of extremely keen air aided by a singularly open and objective mind. So it was made possible by the unusually true and consistent sensibility reflected in Hopkin's under standing that a 'perfect style must be of its age'.

Hopkins's achievement in reviving sense-stress rhythms is largely traceable to his understanding. On the strength of it, he turned in his poetry to language which is the normal tenor for emotion-a currency heavy with the Anglo-Saxon small change of the English tongue. "Hopkins's preference for the short word is apparent in every line of this verse", observes Walter J. Wug in his article 'Sprung Rhythm And English Tradition', "I do not claim to have invented Sprung Rhythm but Sprung Rhythms", Hopkins told Bridges.

Beyond the shadow of a doubt, Hopkins' diction does make the characteristic movements of his verse more unmistakable. By and large, the number of sense stresses in English decreases as words become longer, since each word, no matter how long ordinarily is ready to receive no more than one sense stress. Filled with short words and thus adaptable to a high propositions of sense stresses, Hopkins' verse moves so as to underline heavily the principles on which it is based, Stresses are packed close together to form a kind of condenser which gives each stress a higher charge than other diction might do. It is stress verse all the more because of Hopkins's revivification of the alliteration and other sound echoes which make the verse of high stress live. Hopkin succeeded in reaching to the very 'inscape' of his medium. His achievement is its 'clearest-solved spark'.

Hopkins's technical innovations are unparalleled in the history of English poetry, He did so much that was totally new that he was obliged to invent a new terminology to describe his creative principles and technical procedures. Hopkins used the term **inscape** to describe the unified qualities in an object which

inseparably belong to it so that through familiarity with these qualities we may grasp the individual essence of the object. See the sonnet. That Nature is a Hariclitean Fire where man is seen as Nature's 'bonniest, dearest to her, her clearest solved spark. For Hopkins, each thing had its own inscape, its marked individuality on selfhood which expressed itself in some design of patterns. Sometimes inscape of a thing can be expressed in a single word, e.g. "the fell of dark" in the Sonnet, 'I wake to feel the fell of dark not day'.

A term related to inscape is **instress**, which for Hopkins means "the force or energy which keeps a thing in existence and makes it strive after continued existence. Since instress is a force, it must be expressed in terms of the impression an object make on a person". In The Windhover, we have the association of activity with the flames of fire and the pealing of bells to express the instress of distinctive force animating the falcon.

Hopkins's career epitomizes the history of English poetry in his lifetime. In fifty creative years, he evolved from a dreamer to a realist, and from a realist to a passionate metaphysical seer. Thought and passion drove him all his life. "He was a poet all the time and a great poet", observes Dr. A.S. Collins, Hopkins died in 1889 but he is invariably included in the list of the twentieth century poets. His work, though written in Victorian times, was published in 1918. He was a poet who eschewed the connections of Victorian poetic traditions and strove after a kind of poetic statement both precise and passionate, both profoundly felt and desperately accurate. His poetry is marked by the intellectual complexity and spiritual probing- both these qualities were at variance with the Victorian poetic taste. The war of 1914 had ruffled the safe bottom of life. While the older generation still clung hopefully to their memories of a stable world, younger people were more conscious of a troubled present and a perplexing future. It was into this prospect that Hopkins poems were thrown, and before long they were recognised as the work of a spiritual explorer whose vision had penetrated below life's surface and whose poetic craft was appropriate to the needs of new generation.

Complex, allusive, drawing on a great variety of both accidental and oriental myths and symbols, using abrupt and shifting counter-suggestions to help unfold a meaning, eliminating all conjuctive phrases or overt statement that might indicate the relation of one scene or situation to another, The Waste Land was both demonstration and manifesto of what the new poetry wanted to do or could do and the man who was at the centre of English poetry from 1920 to 1930 was **T.S. Eliot** (1885-1965). Eliot had his own generation in his bones and the poets of the past in the background. In his earlier period, it is the poetry of the disillusion, irony, disgust, the contemplation of the trival, sordid, empty world. But in The Waste Land (1922) his imagination takes a

higher flight surveying the desolate scene with searching gaze, relentlessly uncovering its baffling contrasts, looking in vain for a meaning where there is only.

A heap of broken images, where the sun heats

And the dead tree gives no shelter, the cricket no relief.

And the dry stone no sound of water.

Later poetry of Eliot became philosophic. But there is no doubt that he gave to the language of poetry a new idiom, employing images which are fresh and vigorous, and a metrical form which discards the banality of the over-familiar, the second-hand, the outworn. His poetry makes us aware of all mankind, all history behind the horror of the human soul alone in the wasteland unless it is redeemed by courage and faith. He brought into poetry something which in this generation was needed : a language, sparse, sinewy, modern, combined with a fresh and a springy metrical form, and a thought that was adult, and an imagination aware of what is bewildering and terrifying in modern life and in all life. "He has dine more than any other living English poet to make this age conscious of itself and in being conscious, apprehensive", says Scott James.

Eliot's poetry shows the influence of French Masters Laforgue, Rimbaud and Verlaine. His sustained use of complex-symbolic method and weaving of mythological and anthropological patterns help him to project a complete view of modern civilization, desolate and empty. But the way he uses his material, his poetry becomes obscure. Quite often it had been alleged that Eliot's poetry is not for a common reader. But the obscurity was self-chosen. In final assessment it can be said that his introduction into English poetry of wit and irony, his renovation of the English poetic dialect, and his restoration of intelligence to poetry came at a time when the genre actually needed to be rejuvenated. His work, both as a poet and a critic, remains of utmost significance to the literary historian.

W.B. Yeats (1865-1939) was the giant of the first half of the twentieth century. No other poet in English during his time had his stature. His total achievement remains astonishing. Though the twentieth century poetic revolution had its effect on him and helped to change him from a belated romantic to an original metaphysical poet, his own poetic genius stands strangely solitary. His use of language was magical. He gave new meaning to things by the way he named them.

When we consider the early and later phase of Yeats's poetry, we find that there is a vast difference between the two. In later poetry we find a sea-change of difference. The early poems are remarkable for their sweetness

and song like rhythm. There is the mellifluent Song of Wandering Aenques and the more haunting curiously modulated cadence of The Lake Isle Of Innisfree. He accepted the thinned out romantic tradition which demanded that poetry should be concerned with a beautiful world of dream, employing of language chosen for the vague emotional suggestiveness, and the conventional poetic associations. His purpose is not to interpret life, but to compensate for it. Spenser, Shelley, Rossetti and Blake shaped his adolescense, and he struck Byronic poses of his reflecting in shop windows.

In his later years Yeats cultivates subtler, more varied, no more dramatically balanced cadences. The metaphors are fresher and taken from a vastly wider range of references. The imaginative structure is both more firmly wrought and more spontaneous and natural in effect. He wants to be gathered into the 'artifice of eternity'. It is there, with 'sages standing in God's hold fire' that the soul of the old man would 'clap its hand and sing and louder sing' . His later poetry is elevated without pomposity, refined without mawkishness, and intense without violence.

Winds from many quarters blew. Arthur Symons' book The Symbolist Movement in Literature (1899) cut a deep impression on Yeats's mind. Edmund Wilson regards Yeats as an offshoot of the French symbolist movement. Yeats was chiefly impressed by the symbolic technique of Mallarme. He was influenced by Plotinus than Plato. The idea of Plotinus that the earth itself is sacred, entranced Yeats. It is no wonder that Plotinus becomes the hero of some of the later poems and is usually contrasted with Plato, as in the two related poems, The Delphic Oracle', Upon Plotinus and News for the Delphic Oracle. It was Ezra Pound's intention to convert Yeats to the Modern Movement which implies a pre-direction for the intellectual, for the deliberately aritifical, and for the esoteric. Yeats was already a believer in mask. He found in Pound the confirmation of his own conviction. In his new-found enthusiasm, Yeats decided to rewrite his past life. This he did in his Reverise of Childhood and Youth (1914).

Some women also influenced the poetry of Yeats. Lady Gregory taught him the power of living speech. Maud Gonne, the stern woman, the haven and heaven of his dreams, influenced him directly. Maud Gonne's adopted daughter, Iseult also gave him some themes.

In The Winds Among the Reeds (1899), the influence of the various mystical speculations is in evidence. There is the tapestry in many of the poems of the Rose. In the Seven Woods (1904) Yeats experiments with colloquial and flexible rhythms. Adam's Curse shows the beginning of the species of discursive reminiscent kind of poetry. *The Green Helmet and Other Poems* (1910) show further development. In No Second Troy there is the lending of

mythological material and terse expression. *The Wild Swans at Coole* (1917) appeared in 1919 and Michael Robartes and *The Dancer* in 1912. *A vision* (1925) was written as a reaction against the growing materialism and the demon science which shattered the poet's faith in religion. With the help of his wife it was revised in 1937.

There is a mystical dream like quality in the *Wanderings of Oisin* (1899), *Poems* (1895) and *The Shadowy Water* (1900). T*he Winding Stair and Other Poems* (1933), *New Poems* (1938), *Last Poems* (1939), revealed tension between the dreamer and the man of affairs, between the poetic and the practical life.

His poetry is full of miracles, for the miracle is the point at which reality and the dream meet. The miracles with which he deals are miracles of possessions, sometimes sexual possession, sometimes divine or artistic possession. He turns out to be a modern man though his names be Cuchulian, Oisin or Nais.

1.2.3 Poetry of the 1930s : Around 1930s, there was an expansion of higher education. Literature after 1930 was coming to be written and read by those with a new out-look and new interest that were more earnest and more straight-forward than what had gone before. That literature should be intelligent and common-sensical became an accepted view.

Although the best known poets of the 1930s followed Pound and Eliot in their satire and terse colloquialism for the most part they did not continue the symbolist side of the work. This partial lack of continuity was an indication of the new social and political conditions that were being reflected in the writing of the period before World War II. Some of the most moving poetry of the decade was written, in fact, by poets who were weighing and questioning the demands of their political belief and their capacity to respond to them. One of the most recurrently discussed topics in the thirties was the relationship of the poet and poetry to politics. Auden's "Summer Night" and Bernar Spencer's "A cold Night" are two striking examples wherein the contending demands of the personal and the public concerns of the poet are sometimes associated with the conflict between the middle class liberal cultural heritage in which the poet has been educated and the political beliefs he has embraced. This conflict is a frequent theme as in Bell's "By pass to Utopia", Allott's "Men walk upright". Day Lewis's "In the Heart of contemplation" and Swingler's "Sussex in Winter".

W.H. Auden, Stephen Spender, Cecil Day Lewis, Louis Mac Neice, received the largest share of attention among the poets of 1930s. These poets were known after one of Spender's more popular poems as the "Pylon Poets"-the poets who had introduced the imagery and landscape of industrialism into English Poetry. Their work with that of numerous others is illustrated in low representative

anthologies, New Signature (1932) and The Faber Book of the Twentieth Century Verse (1936). The generation to which these writers belonged came to maturity in the years of disillusionment and the poetry had its origin in the desire for change that was felt by young intellectuals after the collapse of the Labour government in 1931. The poetry of this period might be called apocalyptic. It was a poetry of change and renewal. The imagery of this early apocalyptic poetry is that of the new technology which the poets evidently associated with the transformation of life they had longed for. But when there was no overt attempt to come to terms with educated middle classes, the new technology became suspect as a tool for the exploitation or deception of the working class. The desire for change was in the beginning, potentially rightwing as well as left-wing as the admiration of D.H. Lawrence and the hero-worship of the shows. But soon these writers were writing verse with a markedly left-wing political involvement -a reflection of the period of the Spanish Civil war, idealism about the Soviet Union before the "Purges" and the political popular front in France.

It was a time when even the most retiring of private citizens was compelled by the spectacle of the poverty on all sides of him and by the obvious and ever-increasing danger of war, to consider the nature of economic power, to commit himself to political action, and in the end to take sides. In such an age it would have been remarkable if the main theme in literature among the younger writers particularly had not been the social and economic malaise of the time. W.H. Auden once quipped, "What do you think about England, the country of our where no body is well". So, what lay behind the literature of the age was not any view of it that could be intellectually formulated but rather a general sense of its malaise. Consequently there emerged a literature of protest at the spectacle of human misery that seemed intolerable in the light of the technological progress the century had made.

Though *New Signatures* as a volume may not appear overtly political, but is contained in the contribution of Spender, Lehmann and Day Lewis, poems that were decidedly political when presented in other contexts. *New Country* is seen as the volume that marks the emergence of left-wing poetry in England in the thirties. Certainly it marks the beginning of public awareness of this poetry.

It came to be believed that the political poets of the 1930s were more interested in content and wide readership than in form. There was certainly a significant break with the past. Almost imperceptibly new writing came to be coloured by something more popular in quality. It seemed as if it was written for an audience both larger and at the same time more limited and insular in outlook. A.C. Ward writes in *The Twentieth Century English Literature* (1964), "The poetry

of the 1930s was saturated in the bloody sweat of that decade. This fact gives it a documentary importance which may seem, as time passes, to outweigh its poetic merit. It was symptomatic rather than prophylactic. The poet turned politician may serve his age as politician, but he may in so doing abrogate his more important function as visionary. While no poet can be unaware of temporalities, he is poet only in so far as he is in constant touch also with eternities applying to policy the measure of truth". Charles Tomlinson was still more forthright in his criticism when he remarked, "But what one misses in the literary scene is the presence of that poet who can provide us, as in the past Eliot and Lawrence have provided us, with the conclusive image of our condition and the prophetic image of that which were may attain to. Unless the art of the poet can give us the true measure of ourselves, we cannot know ourselves. What we are awarded is the poet whose individuality is strong enough to stamp itself on the process of our living and by the keenness of whose insight those processes may be changed." It was alleged that the verse of the poets of 1930s sacrificed depth of vision and particularity of a language for a too journalistic or too doctrinaire engagement with politics.

However, it may be remarked that this turn to the left on the part of the younger British Intellectuals, especially the literary ones, took place during the period when the official Communist policy was one of "United front". Though Communist in sympathy, it was only vaguely doctrinaire, before the end of 1932. The theme of social renewal-a recurrent theme in the poems of this decade-was frequently associated with sexual freedom, lust as the old moribund society was associated for these writers with Puritanism. For Spender and Warner, social renewal had a Lawrentian tone. Day Lewis took the setting and the imagery of Auden's early poetry-the frontier, the feund, the glaciers, the moribund society-and, clothing it in the conventional rhetoric of change and renewal, gave it a political meaning though once again, the demand for political renewal is embedded in a longing for a ague, general revitalization. Auden himself abandoned the setting and imagery of his early poetry, though he retained the notion of a moribund society that fears change, giving it a Marxist and a Freudian interpretation. Lehmann also wrote of renewal but he did not develop a Romantic quasi-mythology, to embody his vision. His frontiers are the actual frontiers of the Europe he knew. However the movement for a popular front had got going. In the late thirties these poets were writing less enthusiastically and less frequently on overtly political themes. Spender and Lehmann had written their best political poetry by the end of 1932. Auden and Day Lewis as well as Spender and Lehmann wrote little political poetry after the end of 1932. However the Spanish Civil war and the period of the Popular Front seemed to stir the old fire. As already pointed out the vexed questions was the extent to which the poet was to be

committed to Marxism in the actual writing of his poetry. Stephen Spender in the essay he contributed to New Country in 1933, stood out for the independence of the poet and the autonomy of the poem. The young Communist poet, John Cornford, writing about that essay in Cambridge Left (for winter), "Spender adheres to the doctrine that has become fundamental to the bourgeois writers of our epoch- the contradiction between the life of the artist and the life of society."

Prof. A.T. Tolley contends, "..... it can hardly be maintained that the political concern provided a basis for what was best in the poetry as a whole". As a matter of fact, a fair appraisal of the poetry of this decade is possible only when it is viewed without any bias or prejudice. It cannot be doubted that the poets of the thirties developed under the influence of the great makers of modern thought and literature -of Eliot, of Lawrence, Freud and Marx. From Hardy they inculcated plainness of diction and lyricism. From Lawrence they inherited revolting spirit against the Puritanism of the society in which they were born as much as against its economic system. Their verse also revealed the influence of Gerard Manley Hopkins (written in 1884-89 Published in 1918). Hopkin's influence was seen mainly in a rhythmic fluency derived from a use of irregular metrical patterns called "Sprung rhythm". Their own use of language reveals their virtuosity in the handling of it. They also use language in an overtly figurative way.

The most striking common quality of the poetry that gives the immediate feeling that it could have been produced at no other time-the work of Auden, Mac Neice, Spender Day Lewis, Lehmann, and to a lesser degree, of Betjeman and grigson-is a capacity to give the quality of English life and to elucidate the English experience of the decade.

One respect in which the poetry of the thirties continued the revolution of the great poets of the previous generation was in the preoccupation with imagery as a central device in poetry. Some of the poetry of the thirties has the same startling visual impact as that of Eliot and Pound even though the approach to the poem is different. However as has been seen, the conceptions of the role of the image associated with this effect varied widely. Dylan Thomas and William Empson tended to use imagery in the way in which it was used by Eliot, Pound and the Imagists-as a sensory translation of general statements. As far as the use of language s concerned it has come to be seen that these poets use the language and rhythm of ordinary speech, in other formal characteristics it differed from that of the early modern period. Traditional forms, such as the Sonnet and Lyric were reintroduced by Auden, Empson, Day Lewis and several others and rhyme was the common practice. Most of the poets of the period used regular syntax, whereas bogus, distorted

or fragmented syntax was one of the stylistic devices of Eliot and Pound-a device exploited by Stephen Spender and George Barker at times. In the work of William Empson and Dylan Thomas, the syntax is contorted, but usually logical and grammatically complete.

Of the intellectual poets of 1930s W.H. Auden became the leading poet. He seems to have found a personal language in the modern idiom and to be capable of accepting its restrictive conventions without loss of poetic stature. It has to be borne in mind that Auden appeared on the literary scene when T.S. Eliot and Sitwells were in the race. Auden was influenced by them both yet Hardy, Edward Thomas and Frost proved to be lasting influences. Auden himself admitted of being influenced by Hardy "all the more because his directness was in phrasing and Syntax, not in imagery" On this basis, he has evolved a medium that could capture the essential poetry of the physical and social features of modern English life. At a poetry reading just after the war Louis Mac Neice introduced Auden as the poet who made the work of this generation possible. The firmness and resilience of diction one comes across in Auden's poetry is perhaps due to their influence. This is also enabled him to develop an idiom that could deal practically with the England of his day and provide a model for others to do the same.

Another important influence on Auden has been that of Freud. Auden's contribution of Geoffrey Grigson's Symposium The Arts Today in 1935, is called "Psychology and Art Today". Auden accepts Freud's view that art has its origin in neurosis and in awareness and attendant neuroses as marks of the Fallen state, of the animals existing in an unfallan condition of where there is no gap between thought and action, were to be dominant in Auden's work in the later thirties and recur throughout his career.

Auden settled in the United states after the beginning of the Second world War and became as much a poet of the American literary scene as T.S. Eliot did of the English. Some of the best poetry of Auden's early period is in the plays written in collaboration with Christopher Isherwood: *The Dog Beneath the Skin* (1935), t*he Ascent of F6*; and on *The Frontier* (1938)

Auden's first published poem was "Woods in Rain". Auden's dictum in those days was that "Poetry should be classical, clinical and austere" Poems and Orators were seen Marxist works. In these Auden was attacking generally embodiments almost of the codified lists of symptoms. 'Look Stranger' constitutes the high-work marks of Auden's political poetry. However, the overtly political poems were nearly all written well before the appearance of the book in 1936. Except for Spain (1937) and the poems in *A Journey to a war* (1939) and the small amount of verse in the pot-boiling *On the Frontier* (1938) Auden wrote little political and wider ranging in its social commentary. Yet

its very congeniality and wit suggest a lessening of political engagement and leave one disinclined to speak of it as "political poetry".

Auden makes an apt use of the traditional forms and he does so with a feel for their historical associations. There are poems in lyric form, ballads and sonnets. Auden's use of the sonnet is unencumbered by literary echoes. In his early poetry one comes across the use of fantasy also. The change to these traditional forms had begun in 1932. After this, Auden abandoned the fantasies of his early poetry and his poetic stance became anti-romantic. During 1933 and 1934, politics was strongly emphasized and in 1935 and 1936 Freud became a great influence. On the outbreak of war, Auden said good-bye to the thirties in "September I, 1939".

The poem was evidently intended to contain an important exploration of one of Auden's recurrent themes- the conflict between the demands of the public and the private lives. Auden's later poetry like that of T.S. Eliot was partly religious in inspiration and showed a highly individual interest in historical learning and linguistic virtuosity. It maintained a continuity with his earlier poetry by its development of a certain lyrical quality.

The changing attitudes of Auden have to be viewed in the general framework of the disillusionment of the literary intellectuals in Britain at the time. Auden told Stephen Spender after the war, that he had gone along with the left because he saw in it a hope of defeating fascism. When that hope was gone, he abandoned the left; and this is true enough, despite the fact that something more profound and more disturbing seems to have been happening to Auden at the same time.

Another important poet of the thirties is Stephen Spender. He was Auden's protégée. He found himself in the position of a pupil learning from a school-master. However, Spender's first book Nine Experiments (1928) does not show much of Auden's influence.

It may be remarked that if Auden is most (though not only) a poet of intellect Spender is most obviously (and more nearly only) a poet of feeling. Professor Pinto neatly captures his essential quality : "Although he adopted the fashionable Marxism of the 'Thirties', Spender has always been a liberal romantic in the tradition of Shelley" where Auden expounds, Spender explores. His poetry is characterized more powerful feelings than consistent thought. Like Shelley he prefers to arose moral and sympathetic feelings, through rhetorical sweep and suggestion, rather than to argue in verse or to let the feelings arise from the facts given. In short he is much nearest to the "personal" poets. Spender's own remarks in World Within World, where in he contrasted his own art with that of Auden, need to be quoted. Spender said, "When Auden said at one of our earliest meetings, "The subject of a poem is a

peg to hand the poetry on", he had indicated what I gradually realized to be another basic difference between our attitudes. For I could not accept the idea that the poetic experience in reality which led into a poem was then, as it were, left behind, while the poem developed according to verbal needs of its own which had no relation to the experience. My poems were all attempts to record, as truthfully as I could experience which, within reality seemed to be poetry".

Spender's first book Nine Experiments came out in 1928. The poems are rather characterless and conventionally poetic. The big step forward poetically came after 1928. His second book of poems, Twenty Poems (privately printed in 1930) include well-known pieces like "Acts passed beyond the boundary of mere wishing" and "He will watch the hawk with an indifferent eye." In the truthful recording of his personal experiences in Twenty Poems Spender's introspection begins to get into his poetry-an anticipation of poems like "The Double Shame" that were to be among the best of his later works. In 1931, in Germany he developed the intensely lyrical poem of political concern that was his peculiar invention. From the evidence of periodical publication and from the order of poems in the manuscript book in which he made his drafts, it is clear that the first of these poems "The Prisoners" was written about the middle of 1931 and that in the next twelve months or so he wrote a dozen of his best poems which include "I think continually..."

Run on "After they have tried....", "The Funeral", "The Express", "The Landscape near an Aerodrome", "In Railway halls, on pavements" "The Pylons" and "Not Palaces, an era's Crown". This group of poems includes most of the poems by which Spender is represented in anthologies.

Spender's poems written after 1933 lack the brilliance of his early poetry. Vienna which he wrote in 1934, is intended to project the tension that the poet feels between his personal feelings in a love affair, and his feelings concerning the putting down of the Viennese socialists by Dollfus. But the feelings of tension are neither effectively evoked nor resolved in Vienna. The poem is a collection of stylistic mannerism attempting to grapple with a subject. Indeed Spenser's poetry seems to lack the intensity of the best poems of the previous years.

Spender along with Auden and other came to be categorized as a political poet However, it may be marked that the poems referred above come to mind when one thinks of the political poetry of the thirties but many of them are very lacking in any direct political reference. "Written whilst walking Down the Rhine" (In 1939) was the only poem of anything like political theme in Twenty Poems. "Oh Young men, Young Comrades" disturbed Virginia Woolf when it appeared in New Signatures but it is also a very Lawrentian Poem.

The point then to be noted is that his best poetry has a suffused and burning intensity reminiscent of Lawrence's poems of the natural world.

After the second edition of Poems in 1934 came out The Still Centre in May, 1939. Its foreword is quite significant in making Spender's change of style clear : "I think that there is certain pressure of external events on poets today making them to write about what is outside their own limited experience. The violence of the times we are living in, the necessity of sweeping and general and immediate action tend to dwarf the experience of the individual, and to make his immediate environment and occupations perhaps something that he is even ashamed of. For this reason, in my most recent poems, I have deliberately turned back to a kind of writing which is more personal and I have included within my subjects weakness and fantasy and illusion".

As a poet, Spender is seldom attracted to set forms. He said that he "wasted time by paying heed to criticism that I had no skill in applying rhyme." Spender evidently worked by compression. He does not begin like Eliot and Valery with a rhythm that slowly builds into a phrase than a poem. He is more like Yeats who begins with images. Spender, like Yeats had a learning towards painting rather than music. " — the thing I wanted to be almost more than to be a poet was to be a painter when I was young and painting is tremendous interest to me. I think, I'm really too visual as a writer because I always tend to think of things in terms of painting". In "After they have tried of the brilliance of Cities", this visual gift is what makes it one of Spender's finest poems. Not only does it has the sweep and intensity of some of its companion poems, but it gets both life and unity from the use that is made of images of "Whiteness".

The age when Auden, Day Lewis, Mac Neice and Spender wrote demanded that poetry should have social reference but the poetry of Dylan Thomas had no social reference. The age was acquiring the habit of considering and judging poetry in terms of the tradition that had given rise to it. The poetry of Dylan Thomas was apparently unrelated to any tradition. It is important to remember that Dylan Thomas grew up in an atmosphere of war and the threat of further war. Industrial ugliness and mass unemployment were familiar signs. His experience of these things however, and his reaction to that experience, were very different from those of most of the English writers of that generation. For him there was nothing of shocked reaction on the dismal condition that prevailed. And the reason lies in his heritage and his environment as well as in his individual temperament. He was not at all what came to be known in the nineteen-thirties as a working-class writer. He belonged to a community, not a class; and this in itself was enough to set him apart from the English "public-school' poets of the nineteen thirties. To say so is not to imply that he was ignorant of or indifferent to the ugly social reality of the world around him. If we look closely at the early poems, we can

find in them some evidence for Thomas's awareness of social reality. In his political opinions he was decidedly left, but these opinions did not find their way into his poetry.

Dylan Thomas's first book of Poems Eighteen Poems was published by David Archer in 1934, and he achieved one of the notable publishing successes of the poetry of the decade with his Twenty-Five Poems two years later. His verse has an exuberant poetic fervour and an abundant responsiveness to natural beauty.

In a letter to Charles Fisher written in 1935. Dylan Thomas wrote, "You asked me to tell you about my theory of poetry. Really I haven't got me. I like things that are difficult to write and difficult to understand; I like "redeeming the contraries" with secretive image : I like contradicting my images, saying two things at once in one word, four in two and one in six —— Poetry heavy in tone though nimble should be as orgiastic and organic as copulation dividing and unifying personal but not private, propagating the individual in the mass and the mass in the individual. I think it should work from words, from the substance of words and the rhythm of substantial words set together, not towards words. Poetry is a medium, not a stigma on Paper. Men should be two tooled and a poet's middle leg is his pencil".

The contents of this letter reflect Thomas's mixed confused stance concerning the writing of poetry witty, perceptive, sentimental and truculent. The real difficulty in reading or discussing his poetry is that of forming a sure sense of idiom in which it was written. Donal Davie has accused him of abandoning the task of articulation, so that the objects to which he refers, tumbled pell-mell together, can no longer be identified. Richard Church, suggested that Thomas's poems were indebted to surrealism. However, his reply refuted Church's observation. He seems to have "built up" his poems out of phrases. In so doing he appears not merely to have been working towards "meaning' but also towards a maxmising of intensity. Thomas insisted that simplicity was a virtue in poetry yet obscurity might be unavoidable Obscurity in his own poetry is not that of someone who is trying to use language in consciously non literal manner. He felt his own obscurity to be unavoidable. Just because it was necessary to the literal presentation of what he wanted to present. He told Verno Watkins that working on Twenty-Five Poems was "very much like plumbing : getting things the right position so that they function properly".

What was remarkable about the poetry of Thomas was that it had its effect even before it was understood and sometimes even when it was misunderstood. The reader usually had an impression that the poet was saying something important and meaningful with a remarkable hold on language and rhythm, at the very worst he had somehow botched his statement by his violence and obscurity. There was a further characteristic which distinguished Thomas

work from that of other poets. It was unclassifiable. Its "themes" in so far as they could be grasped at all were the age-old ones of birth, sex and death, but they were conceived and treated in a way that was anything but familiar. In an age which was beginning to discuss myth and symbol as universalizing all human experience, this poetry used myth so private and symbol so special that it had the effect of recording unique experiences. His imagination is no doubt strange but it has enourmous range and power. In a reply to a question in New Years, questionnaire in 1934. "As a poet what distinguishes you, do you think, form an ordinary man?" His reply was "only the use of the medium of poetry to express the causes and forces which are the same in all men". His poetic creed explicitly reflects in the Note prefixed to his Collected Poems" "These poems, with all their crudities, doubts and confusions are written for the love of Man and in praise of God, and I'd be a damn' fool if the weren't."

In terms of its "modernism" as well as in terms of its emphasis on political ideology (though not in other respects) the thirties may be regarded as something of a diversion in the development of English poetry. The apparent unity of concern of many of the older poets disappeared with the end of the decade and the dramatic changes in political and economic climates. Some of them ceased to publishd poetry. This was true of nearly all the poets who appeared at the end of the decade. Some of the other poets survived the decade as poets for careers very different from what might have predicted in the thirties. Auden remained an outstanding literary figure though he became a Christian and Left England. Cecil Day Lewis, after abandoning his political activities seemed to find himself as a poet of personal themes in World Over All (1943) only to become increasingly conventional ending as Poet Laureate. Stephen Spender, after writing some moving introspective poems in the forties, wrote less poetry. For Empson, Warner, Cameron, Allott and Madge, the decade saw a decline or a virtual cessation in their publication of poetry.

An aspect of English poetry in the 1930s is the decline in subtlety of rhythm.

Undoubtedly Auden's poetry started with the newness and firmness of its rhythms : and in so far as the poets of the period used traditional forms, they did better than in free verse. However, there is a decided monotony in the rhythm of Dylan Thomas' early poetry to which he admitted, and in the work of Stephen Spender, there is a growing lack of rhythmic tautness as the decade proceeds. George Barker, David Gascoyne; and others of the younger poets, show a frequent insensitivity in their rhythms. The rhythm of poetry is a manifestation of the deepest impulses behind it, and this insensitivity can be seen as another symptom of a vulgarization of sensibility that became more manifest in forties because stylistically the poetry of the forties was very much a continuation of the previous decade, except for some rejection of

political themes, and in spite of a favouring of more traditional diction and imagery. Tomlinson maintains, "Incoherence of style and incoherence of moral content are concomitants inherited from Barker and Thomas by the poetry of 1940s. If the age is violent, poetry must be violent. This seems to be the conclusion of new-romanticism in general and of New Apocalyptics in particular whose work was anthologized in The White Horse Man (1941)".

The first important new manifestation of poetic style after New Signatures is New Lines a fact recognized both in the title and in the introduction to the newer anthology. There are important debts of the poetry of the fifties to that of the thirties-particularly in its Englishness and its poetic conservatism. The accommodation of everyday life to poetry owes a lot to the work of Auden, Mac Neice and Betjeman-a debt recognized by Philip Larkin.

Later poets were influenced more by Empson's criticism *Seven Types of Ambiguity* (1930), The Structure of Complex Words (1951) as well as by his poetry, but they adopted his laconic wit and non-chalant tone rather than his cramped intense feeling and intellectual ingenuity. Many who seemed to have learned something from Empson, such as John Wain, Donald Davie and D.J. Enright drew as much or more from the poet, novelist and Critic Robert Graves also. Graves especially in poetry preserved a continuity with an earlier tradition of English Writing. In the years following the Second World War this continuity is seen in the work of the new-romantics of the 1940s as well as in the works of those poets who have since reacted against these. This led many critics to declare that poetry had been relegated to a minor art. Fraser went to the extent of saying that "We are thrown back on the erratic judgements and uncertain impulses of a few intimate friends".

During the post war years writers were as intelligent a diversity as Anne Ridler, FT Prince, Ronald Botrall; Norman Maceaig, William Soutar, Patrick Kavanagh, Donald Davie, have written individual poems of distinction but as such no single poet has been able to bring English poetry back in line with the European tradition. Some of these writers chose to combine traditional forms with a relaxed and a highly colloquial diction. The urbanity, wit and readiness to deal directly with ideas found in New Lines also is in line with the traditional poetry of the thirties. It may be worth while to note that the writers of the fifties were also dissatisfied with what Britain had become and were in revolt against false traditionalism-snobbery and the establishment. As with the poets of the thirties, many of them were university men, and a number had known one another at Oxford-Larkin, Amis, Wain. Left, wing in inclination, they were perhaps more effective enemies of the bogus than were the poets of the thirties, from whom they were separated by the social revolution of World War-II-something that made it much easier for them to dissociate themselves from the stance of the class in which they had been brought up or educated. Deflation was the stock-in-trade of much of the

writing of the fifties and was the acknowledged stance of the anthology New Lines (1956); but it did not go along with hopes concerning revolutionary change, as it had in the thirties. In New Lines the apocalyptic was one of the targets for deflation. The difference between the two groups is a measure of the social and political changes in Britain and its positioning the world that had taken place in the forties.

By the 1960s shrewd common sense, carefully calculated tone, disciplined crafts-manship and sharp intelligence had become dominant in New English verse particularly that included by A. Alverez in a collection The New Poetry (1957) which contained work of important British poets of the period after world war-II. Three of these Thom Gunn, Fighting Terms (1954) My Sad Captains (1961), Touch (1967), among others Ted Hughes The Hawk in the Rain (1957) Wodwo (1967), Crow (1971) and Davie (Essek Poems 1969) were generally ranked with Larkin as being outstanding poets of this period, although writing in very different styles. Hughes showed the influences of D.H. Lawrence's early verse in much of his poetry while Gunn showed the influence of continental and American writing. The work of Charles Tomlinson *A peopled Landscape* (1963): *The Way of a World (1969), showed* the influence of the U.S. Poet Wallace Stevens, but without the latter's flamboyance and philosophizing. Tomlinson's best work was notable for its scrupulous precision of work manship and delicate integrity of vision. Elizabeth Jennings shared with other poets of the period a quality of plainness, clarity and directness in such collections as A Way of Looking (1955) and collected Poems (1967). Another widely admired poet of the 1950s and 1960s was a Welsh Clergyman, R. S. Thomas *Song at the Year's Turning* (1955) Pieta (1966), who resembled Wordsworth in technique but whose abrupt and tight-lipped utterance placed him in the main stream of the poetry of the time. Later judgements rated American born Sylvia Plath, no less highly as an outstanding poet writing in England during this period. The wife of Ted Hughes, she achieved in her delicate work the Colossus (1960), distinction that foreshadowed the achievements of the posthumously published Ariel (1965) and Crossing the Water (1971) in which she confronted the most painful and terrifying possibilities of death and oblivion with skill and intelligence.

Given the extraordinary situations in which a modern poet works, it was not surprising as, the last quarter of the century was about to open, that reputations were difficult to judge. After the initial hostility to experimentation, it came to be seen that all fields of literature once again witnessed radical experimentation and traditional forms of writing started losing their definition. In poetry, experimentation with typography gave poems an appearance of verbal paintings. Yet one can make bold to say that formal experimentation was only part of the picture and to say that writing new is primarily experimental would tantamount to ignore other characteristics that writing acquired earlier

in the century and that still continued to be the issues. Most good critics felt that there was no lack of major reputations and despite the possibly transitional nature of much of the periods' work in its variety of styles and subjects, it had some enduring qualities.

M.A. (English) Part -II **COURSE-X**

Semester-III **TWENTIETH CENTURY POETRY AND FICTION**

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TWENTIETH CENTURY LITERATURE : TRENDS IN DRAMA AND NOVEL

STRUCTURE

1.3.1 Trends in English Drama

1.3.2 Trends in English Novel

1.3.3 The Novel after The First War

1.3.1 Trends in English Drama : Development in English drama in the early years of the twentieth century showed a complex interaction of indigenous forces and continental influences. A vogue for **Henrik Ibsen's** drama of social comment came to dominate the English theatre in the 1890s. Here it may be appropriate to mention that from the time Shakespeare the staging of the plays was the monopoly of London Theatre only. The **Irish Theatre movement** established in the year 1901 and **The Repertory Theatre** in England brought about the decentralization of the drama which became the most important development in English Theatrical history since the Sixteenth Century, Five or Six individuals were responsible for launching the new theatre movement in Ireland, namely **W.B. Yeats, Edward Martyn, George Moore, Lady Gregory and Faw brothers-** William and Frank. **The Irish National Theatre Society** had Yeats as its president. The **Abbey Theatre Company** came into being with Yeats, Lady Gregory and later Synge as dramatists.

From the start, the **Abbey Theatre** aroused intense interest and controversy at home. But it was the acclaim and financial success of visits to London, Cambridge, Oxford, Manchester, Glasgow and other British cities which kept the company solvent. Plays were invariably by "Irish authors on Irish subjects but it was the style of acting which took English audience by storm. "The

essential of this style were realism in scenery, company dress, and language. At times the scenic realism of the Abbey appeared overdone but the news purity of diction was to be a lasting innovation which cleared the ways for later development on the English Stage. It was perhaps the **Abbey Theatre** dramatists who first patterened each speech of prose with something near to poetry. With **Lady Gregory**, the medium was still an endlessly repeated balanced line. Lady Gregory experimented extensively in her dramatic works, which ranged from Irish historical plays to versions of Moliere in Irish dialect. In addition, she did much to preserve the folk-Iore of her country. It was also through the efforts of **J.T. Grein's** independent theatre experiment, which launched **Bernard Shaw**, and of **Miss A. E. Horniman** who put Abbey Theatre on its feet, that brought the decentralization of drama. This movement was much influenced by Ibsen and aimed to make drama a vehicle for meaningful and reserved discussion of modern problems. The chief contribution of the **Repertory Movement** in England was that it made attempts to free the theatre from the dictatorship of the financier and the actor-manager. It also inspired the theories of dramatic art. The most fruitful early Repertory experiment in London was conducted at the Court Theatre from 1904-1907 by **J.F. Vedrenne** and **Granville Barker,** who himself was a playwright of fair repute.

Besides the Abbey Theatre and the Court theatre, **Manchester school** of dramatists also contributed a lot to the development of British Drama. The leading playwrights of the Manchester group were **Allan Monkhouse, Harold Bridhouse** and **Stanley Houghton**.

Under the Repertory Theatre system drama flourished in the English provinces as it had not since the days of the medieval craft guilds. Their religious plays had numerous successful dramatic performances in the larger towns. Amateur groups also showed skill and enthusiasm the skill allow the country in villages, towns and cities in Scotland and Wales as well as in England.

Meanwhile, the influence of **Henrik Ibsen** had been making itself felt in English drama. **William Archer** translated and propagated Ibsen's work. **George Bernard Shaw** helped to spread his influence. **Shaw's** study of Ibsen, The Quintesseence of Ibsenism (1891), presented him as the exponent of a reforming Naturalism with emphasis on the prose "social plays", such as A Doll's House and Ghosts. Ibsen's great contribution was the presentation on the stage of life as it is really lived in contemporary society and the introduction of the discussion into drama. Ibsen had exposed sentimentality, romanticism, make-believe and made it his business to show men and women

in society as they really are, thus evoking the tragedy that may be inherent in ordinary humdrum of life.

George Bernard Shaw (1856-1950) was a writer of forceful plays. He got to know the stage through and through. He also knew what one could do with scenery, with moving people about dramatically. He also knew how one could make effective entrances and exits, how to build up expectation and create effects by startling surprises.

Bernard Shaw has written a number of plays. The following are the prominent plays of the celebrated dramatist:

Widower's House (1892), Arms and the Man (1894), Candida (1895), The Devil's Disciple (1897), Mrs. Warren's Profession (1898), You Never Can Tell (1899), Caesar and Cleopatra (1899), Captain Brass-Bound's Conversion (1900), Man and Superman (1903), John Bull's Other Island (1904), Major Barbara (1905), The Doctor's Dilemma (1906), Androcels and the Lion (1913), Pygmalion (1913), Heart-Break House (1919), Back to Methuselah (1921), Saint Joan (1923), The Apple Cart (1928), On the Rocks (1933).

The Philanderer is a telling satire on physical science, though enlivened with fine strokes a comedy. It is a sharp exposure of the dangers of 'idealism' the sacrifice of people to principles. The scientist seems to be more concerned about sickness than about the sickman. The Apple Cart is woven around monarchy in England. He comes to the conclusion that the attempt to do away with the institution of monarchy will ultimately spell doom and devastation, havoc and holocaust in society. The king is necessary to exercise a check on the activities of democratic leaders. His diatribes are directed against Breakages and Company that stands in the way of all social and economic progress.

Candida is, in some ways, Shaw's magnum opus. It takes a domestic problem and shows that it is not sentimentalism, but intelligence that governs life.

John Bull's Other Island is a dig at the conventional Englishman, who is never so silly or sentimental as when he sees silliness and sentimentalism in the Irishman.

Saint Joan is one of the greatest works of Shaw. *Saint Joan* is captured and is burnt as a witch. Later on, she is canonized in the Christian Church.

Shaw is considered next to Shakespeare in the hierarchy of English dramatists. At the time when Shaw made his debut on the English Stage, drama was slowly struggling to rise from the torpor into which it was bogged down. Shaw revolutionised the whole concept of drama. He made it essentially a medium

of discussion and reform rather than pure relaxation and fun. His dialogues are bright, brilliant, flashy, sparkling and spontaneous. He has invented the dialogues of disquisition and can make an argument as thrilling and throbbing as to stand-up right. Thoughts can hit like bullets, emotions can explode like shells and words can be cracking and sizzling. He has the devastating wit of an Irishman with the penetrating logic of a Frenchman. His fun is effervescing, bubbling up eternally, perennially exuberant and joyous. With his prodigious wit he has transferred conflict of modern drama from the physical to the mental plane. He set himself fiercely against the romantic Victorian stereotypes of human behaviour.

John Galsworthy (1867-1933) was a novelist, an essayist, a short writer, a critic and a dramatist of repute. His purpose as a playwright was to throw light on the dark places, the evils and abuses of life for the guidance of others and to do so impartially, showing at the same time the food and the bad.

Of Galsworthy's plays the most notable are : The Silver Box (1909), Strife (1909), Justice 1910), The Pigeon (1912), The Eldest Son (1912), The Fugitive (1913), The Mob (1914), The Skin Game (1920), and Loyalties (1922). When it is remembered that these are among the most unquestioned literary successes of the twentieth century, we realize that he was a dominant force in the theatre of his day.

"All his plays exhibits the same features-the omnipresence of fundamental social problem expressed in a severely natural manner, without straining of situations or exaggeration of final issues : a corresponding naturalism of dialogue, leading at times of an apparent ordinariness, native kindliness of heart added to the sternness of the true tragic artists ; and a complete absence of sentimentalism, even when pitiful scenes are introduced." The very titles of his dramas give a clue to the problems discussed threadbare therein. It is not of Macbeths and Hamlets that Galsworthy writes: his characters are all ordinary, humdrum men and women such as we might meet with every day. Sometimes, indeed, instead of being above they seem to be below the general average of human intellect and human power. As no great heroes are presented to us in these plays, our highest passions are not called out as they are summoned irresistibly forth by King Lear and Othello. This view is rebutted and refuted by critics who take up cudgels on behalf of Galsworthy. Instead of taking as his heroes the men of individualized and peculiarly great qualities, he has adopted the faiths, ideals and forces of modern social life. In one respect, he has anticipated the methods on which

Toller's expressionistic style is based. When G.B. Shaw reduced that old Victorian ideal, Napoleon Bonaparte, to a rather ordinary human being, and displayed Cleopatra as a kittenish young, scapegrace, he was but doing cynically what Galsworthy would do seriously.

Galsworthy possesses, despite his kindliness of heart, a genuine tragic firmness. We do not feel pity for the fate of Falder (the tragic hero of 'Justice') so much as we feel awe in contemplating the might, milestones of justice, grinding exceedingly small, ruthless and fateful in their silent power. The 'drama' of idea' or thesis drama; as it came to be popularly known is a product of the crisis of modern civilization. The thesis of a modern dramatist is that the evil is traceable to the socio-economic institution of society, that the purified values need rejuvenation. The raison d'etre of dramatist, then becomes too excite in the mind of the audience a sort of mental and moral ferment, where by vision may be enlarged, imagination enlivened and understanding promoted as Galsworthy writes. He amplifies his point of view as such:

"A drama must be shaped so as to have a spire of meaning. Every grouping of life and character has its inherent moral and the business of dramatist is to pose the group as to bring that moral poignantly to the light of the day"

In Galsworthy's tragedies, society is in the dock, for society is the villain. Tragedy in Galsworthy is the outcome not so much of human frailties of character or divine dispensation, as the result of mal-socal-adjustment and gigantic social forces working against a weak human character.

Granville-Barker (1877-1946) belonged to the group of dramatists like Galsworthy who dealt with Domestic Tragedy and Problem Plays. His first play "The Weather Hen" written in collaboration with Berte Thomas was produced in 1899. His dramatic works include some delightfully fantastic pieces such as Prunella (1904) written with Laurence Houseman and *The Harleguinode* (1913) written with Dion Clayson Calthrop but he takes his place here by reason of four realistic plays - Marrying of Ann Leete (written 1899, acted (1901). The Voysey Inheritance (1905), Waste (1907), and The Madras House 1910). Each of these concretizes a dominant problem of social life. In the Marrying of Ann Leete, Harley Granvile Barker's insistence is on the Life-Force theory propounded by Shaw. In contrast, the marriage of convenience has brought nothing but misery and soul-barrenness. The Voysey Inheritance deals with the problem of tainted money-Edward prefers poverty and bankruptcy to the tainted money left behind by his affluent and prosperous father. In Waste (1907) Barker deals with problem of the sex antagonism.

The play fundamentally is a Domestic tragedy. The tragedy as a whole is full of the most impenetrable gloom: despondency and despair is writ large everywhere. In the madras House, we are shown six nubile girls living futile lives unless some eligible bachelor or widower takes them off their father's hands. Barker and Galsworthy are both of the same kind. Each had a gospel to proclaim : Barker the doctrine of self-realization, Galsworthy the doctrine of tolerance.

Oscar Wilde (1856-1900) :Another dramatist who took an important part in the revival of drama in the nineteenth century was Oscar Wilde. He had style. He could take easy attitudes on other men's thoughts. No writer, who has written in English, had floated upon his age as has Wilde. The action of three plays : Lady Windermere's Fan (1892), A Woman of No Importance (1893) and An Ideal Husband follow the model of the French plays. In the importance of being Earnest (1895), Wilde threw away his melodramatic themes. His play Salome (in French) was published in 1893.

Somerset Maugham: (1874-1965) : Somerset Maugham bridges twenty five years between Oscar Wilde and Neol Coward. Free, on the one hand, from Victorian readymade morality; on the other hand, from neo-Georgian licentiousness and cynicism, Maugham is an accomplished professional writer who, without any original vision of humanity or any great distinction of style, has cultivated an uncommitted sardonic observation of the human scene. His plays, comedies or farces, which derive their humour from the amusing manipulation of somewhat ephemeral social and psychological situations, are perhaps rather more dated : Caesar's Life is among his best plays-while The Circle and Our Betters have been praised for their craftsmanship and acute social criticism.

Neol Coward became popular for his plays Hay Fever Fallen Angels, Private Lives and Design for Living. His chief contribution lies in the smartness of his dialogue.

After Dublin and Manchester, Brimingham produced a Repertory dramatist of distinction, **John Drink Water,** who produced Abraham Lincoln (1918), which attracted large audience for a long period.

In the year before the war of 1914-1918 it had been assumed that the English theatre was at the beginning of an epoch of activity unequalled since the decline of Elizabethan drama. With some half-dozen men of letters writing for the London stage and with chain of Reportory theatres outside London, this spirit of optimism seemed well founded but the catastrophe of War brought

a radical change. John Masefield's plays were staged with moderate success before the War but after the War his plays got little farther than the private theatre in his home at Boar Hill near Oxford. However, his play Tragedy of Man (1909) displays his ability as a playwright.

Another name which earned some reputation was that of the **Arnold Bennett** One of the most interesting occasions in the London theatre in the early nineteen-twenties was on 14 March, 1921 when **Clamence Dane's** A Bill of Divorcement had its first performance.

W.B. Yeats (1865-1939) : *The work of W.B. Yeats as a dramatist belongs to the Irish literary movement and the Abbey Theatre. Years' early study of Irish Iore and legends resulted in Faire and Fold Tales of Irish Peasantry (1888), The Celtic Twilight (1893), The Secret Rose (1897). The plays of this group are The Countess Cathleen (1892), The Land of Heart's Desire (1894), The Shadow Waters (1900), Cathleen in Houlihan (1902), The King's Threshold (1904), The Hour Gia's (1904), Deridre (1907), At the Hawk's Well (1917), and The Cat And the Moon (1926). In the second group can be placed Yeats' mystical and philosophical plays like Covalry (1902). The Resurrection (1931), Purgatory (1939), The Death of Cuchulain (1939). These plays are pregnant with symbolism.*

Yeats' poetic plays posed a serious challenges to the products of all realistic prose schools. They were poetic not only in form. But in spirit. Yeats deprecated the conversion of theatre since Jacobean days that really related to human impulse and expression was not a mere embellishment.

John Millington Synge (1871-1909) was educated at Trinity College, Dublin. He spend his early manhood in Paris. There in 1899 he met W.B. Yeats, who persuaded him to play his talents to the description of Irish peasant life. The main plays of Synge are :

The Shadow of the Glen (1903), Riders to the Sea (1904), The Tinker's Wedding (1917), Diedre of the Sorrows (1910), the Playboy of the Weston World (1907).

Synge turned to the speech and imagination of Irish Country people to restore vitality to English drama. He said, "In a good play every speech should be as fully flavored as a nut or apple". Synge's poetic prose, based on the speech rhythm of the Irish peasantry, provided him some of the resources of poetic drama. Riders To The Sea is a profound tragic piece. Having suffered pain and horror to the full and known the hitch of agony, Maurya gets beyond the world since she no longer has any claims upon it nor it upon her. She is no longer ordinary woman but a matter dolourous when she utters; "They are all gone now and there is not anything more the sea can do to me."

Abercrombie (1881-1938) is known for his plays such as Deborah (1918), The Adder (1913), The End of the World (1914), Straircase (1920), The Deserter (1922), Phoneix (1923). He struck a note of departure from the fanciful and symbolic plays of Yeats.

Dr. Gorden Bottomley turned to the drama of Japan and the Classical drama of Greece in his search for a new poetic medium. His pleasing inventiveness is his forte. King Lear's Wife and Gruach are two remarkable plays of this period.

Sean O' Casey is another promising Irish dramatist Sean O' Casey's three farces Juno and the Peycock (1925). The shadow of a gunman (1925), and The Plough and The Stars (1926), written during the twenties display marvelous prose poetry. His plays are poetic in their total effect, but in detail they are sharply realistic. When he enlarges his theme he loses his touch. In his later plays The Silver Tassie (1928), The Star Turns Red (1949) Within the Gates (1933), Red Roses or Me (1946), and Oak leaves and Leavender (1946), he deserts the poetic realism of his wonderful early Irish play for a kind of symbolic expressionism. His character talks in a florid rhetorical language.

Sir John Ervine was, for a time, manager of the Abbey Theatre and his two Irish domestic tragedies Mixed Marriage (1911) and John Ferugson (1915) had fair success. In these plays, we have the picture of the invincible and devastating stubbornness of men in the grid of religious and political convictions. He had a notable run of success with such agreeable comedies as the First Mrs. Fraser (1929), Anothony and Amma (1925) and Robert's Wife (1937).

Lennox Robinson wrote The Last Leader dealing with parnel in 1919. The White Boy (1920) is an extremely laughable comedy. In this experimental play The Round Table (1924). Lennox Robinson loses himself in the metaphysical mist.

Unlike the Irish Theatre, the Manchester and the other English theatres were not intended to arouse or revive local nationalism nor were they inspired by the poetic and symbolic aspects of life. Their drama was highly realistic and intellectual - in line with the work of Ibsen and Shaw. It did much to popularize the drama of ideas and represent the social life both of the rich and the poor.

Poetic Drama :

The Iconoclastic mood of the 1920s, with its problem plays and 'frank' discussion

of social and moral problems, with a fashionable smartness that is very different from true wit had not worn well. The plays it produced were not substantially different from the old well-made theatrical entertainments. Nor did the ingenious and in their way highly artful plays of **Somerset Maugham** or the Compassionate social fables of **Ibsen** and of **Galsworthy** seriously threaten the established theatrical pattern. Nor again did the influence of Ibsen and of the version of Ibsenism presented to the British public by **Bernard Shaw** produce as big a revolution in the theatre as is sometimes believed. The significant attempts to reclaim drama for literature came from other quarters such as Poetic Drama. That this genre also did not leave much impact is besides the point here in England **Poetic Drama** found its exponents in a number of playwrights whose blank verse plays enjoyed considerable popularity.

The revival of poetic drama in the twentieth century in the hands of W.B. Yeats and T.S. Eliot remains one of the most significant achievements of the twentieth century dramatic literature. These two dramatists brought in a kind of "renaissance of imagination". However in the early year of the twentieth century Stephen Phillips (1864-1915) wrote verse drama as a reaction against Naturalism.

Paolo and francessica, Herod, Ulysses, The Sin of David and Mero are some of his poetic plays.

Lascelles Abercrombie and **Dr. Gordon Bottanley** also have made use of verse in drama but their contribution remains insignificant. **W.H. Auden** in collaboration with **Christopher Isherwood** wrote some good poetic plays titled the Dog Beneath The Skin, The Ascent of F6, and On The Frontier. **Stephen Spender** with The Trial of a Judge earned for himself a place as a poetic dramatist.

Christopher Fry in his poetic play gives important some mystical suggestions and philosophical speculations.

W.B. Yeats (1865-1939) began by writing dreamy plays on Irish mythological themes. The Countess Cathleen and The Land of the Heart's. Desire contain some of the most musical, moving and characteristic poetry of the period.

However, It is in the hands of T.S. Eliot that we have an elaborate form of poetic drama in which lack of action is replaced by the incantatory power of words. His plays represent an attempt to restore ritual of drama. Eliot developed a theory of the nature and function of poetic drama before he composed his well acclaimed poetic plays. In his "Three Voices of Poetry"

(1953) Eliot takes up the problem of poetic communication in detail.

T.S. Eliot (1888-1965) commenced his career as a practical dramatist by writing a pageant play to encourage the collection of funds for the building of new London churches. The pageant play was called The Rock. Frazer comments; "The outline of this play, and many of the details of it, were suggested to Mr. Eliot by other persons, and it is scarcely either a play in the proper sense or typical anywhere of Mr. Eliot's second play Murder in the Cathedral, written to be commemorated in Canterbury Cathedral at the yearly Canterbury Festival, commemorating the death of St. Thomas Becker, Canterbury's famous martyr who had been murdered in the very Cathedral where Mr. Eliot's play was first performed. So the impulse behind this play too was a religious rather than a properly theatrical one."

Murder in the Cathedral makes a particularly effective use of the chorus. The characters in the play are personifications of various simple abstract attitudes. The real 'action' of the play, in fact, lies not really in the violent killing of St. Thomas at the end, but rather in his confrontation with and his triumphing over various temptations. The drama is thus strictly 'interior', and the outward value of the play is rather that of a spectacle and a commemorative ritual.

In his third play, *The Family Reunion* (1939), Eliot is at last beginning to acquire a proper sense of the stage. This is no longer an overtly religious work with edification or commemoration as the be-all and end-all of its being. Underlying the writing of this play there were shaping purposes: (1) to restore poetry as the natural language of drama (2) to renew through drama a sense of our involvement with Good and Evil (3) and to do these things in terms of conventional contemporary world of drawing room manners and conversation which had so long dominated the London Stage.

In attempting these three things Eliot was assaulting audiences mainly agnostic in attitude and habituated to naturalistic prose dialogue, who went to the theatre for entertainment rather than for a creative experience. "the tragedy, as with *Mater Cheklov"*, observed Eliot, "is much for the people who have to go on living as for those who die". The play was designed to be a Christian play, with unfamiliar spiritual symbols and pagan overtones to convey his veiled Christian message that could not be discounted as Christian in advance. To use a Greek model (Oresteia trilogy) in composing a play was then an *avant-garde idea*.

Harry the main character of the play is (to quote an expression of William Jones a twice-born' soul), a sick-soul: he passes through a paroxysm of

instantaneous conversion : certainly he has mysterious nervous inheritance from his father's run-on-love for, and attempts to murder his wife; certainly he sees the world and himself saturated with moral evil and certainly he departs at the end of the play to seek out some form of asceticism, where the broken stones lie. Agatha is also something of a twice born herself. Agatha is the sister of Amy-mother of Harry.

Another leading idea of Sweeney Agonists re-echoed in *The Family Reunion* is the inevitability of a man's wish to murder his woman:

Any man has to, needs to, wants to

Once in a life-time do a girl in.

Harry's father had sought to murder Amy, his wife. Harry could not rid himself of the obsession that he has pushed her over. "Perhaps I only dreamt I pushed her". We see Harry hounded, haunted and hunted by guilt. Eliot wrote in a letter : "There is hope for Harry-the hope of learning to want something different, rather than of getting anything he wanted."

Mr. Eliot's play The Cocktail Party (1950) is a success at all levels, including that accessibility in the ordinary commercial theatre. It is comedy, and in the light and gay texture of its witty conversations, it beats, on his own ground, such a dramatist as Mr. Noel Coward at his best. In his play, the run of the dialogue, especially in the lighter passages, if often almost though never quite indistinguishable from the run of conversational pose. Eliot is certainly sparing of flowers and purple patches. Here is surely genuine poetry; an austere and mature poetry : its beauty is that of structure, not of ornament. One should look, in fact, nor for sudden flaring rockets of language, but for the sustained steady glow. The Confidential Clerk appeared in 1954. Here is the depiction of the inner world as contrasted with the outer world. Lucasta says to Colby:

But it's only the outer that you've lost :

You've still got you inner world - a world that's moral real.

That's why you're different from the rest of us:

You have your secret garden to which you can retire.

And lock the garden behind you.

The last play *The Elder Statesman* (1958) was not wholly a successful attempt to clothe profound emotions in the grab of the conventional West End play.

A group of religious poets and verse dramatists wrote some good plays under the influence of T.S. Eliot. Significant among these are Ronald Duncan's

This Way is the Tomb (1945) Norman Nicholson's The Old Man of the Mountains (1946). Another important name was that of Christopher Fry. Fry, influenced by Charles Williams, a Christian apologist with unusual power to present theological ideas symbolically in an everyday setting such as The Place of the Lion (1931) developed a colourful if somewhat precious style of his own in his best plays, notably The Lady's Not for Burning (1948).

It becomes essential to point out that the "revival" of verse drama was an 'oddity'. By and large for ten years or more after the Second World War, British theatre lived quietly. Most directors, actors and authors were content to maintain a much narrower theatrical tradition without brand names or manifestoes. The 'Composure' was first shaken by Samuel Beckett's Waiting for Godot (produced in original French in 1953 and is translated form in London in 1955). Another strong influence on English drama has been that of Bertott Brecht a German Playwright.

As pointed out earlier, in England drama had been far away from what was happening in Germany, France and America. In America bold and passionate plays were written by dramatists such as Arthur Miller, Tennesse Williams, Eugene O 'Neill. Whereas in these countries, with the outbreak of the war, the emphasis shifted to the individual, in England the dramatists sought to bring back the earlier insistence on personal relations. In the plays of Anouilh, Sartre or Camus, the individual is the focus of attention, his moral dilemma and predicament become the subject matter of the play. But the playwrights in England during the fifties moved out of pointlessness and despair. These new playwrights such as John Osborne, Robert Bold and Arnold Wesker, John Arden come as a refuge from the despair and futility. Emotional involvement, depth of feeling, integrity-these are the values they have tried to protect in their plays.

The new plays which came up within five years of Beckett's Waiting for Godot have been given all sorts of labels : "kitchen sink drama", neo realist, drama of non-communication, absurd drama, comedy of menace; dark comedy, drama of cruelty. But no label has stuck for more than two years.

However, the most interesting theatrical development happened to be in prose, and to some extent went parallel with those in the novel. A number of young dramatists, for example encouraged by the English stage company at the Royal Court and West London and several provincial theatres, rejected the middle class interests and values of drawing-room comedy and depicted everyday attitudes and values in the Post-war life of the common people. With the publication of John Osborne's Look Back in Anger (1956) a new life

and excitement has entered the London theatre, which had been in a state of hibernation since Shaw and Glasworthy. In fifties it had reached an extreme of literary playfulness in the dramatic poetry of Christopher Fry, of which Osborne's prose was the violent opposite. Brash, impetuous, full of hyperboles and lashing out at every possible target, this prose had an animal vitality which was new at the time and had not since been equaled. Vitality, in his characters as well as in the dialogue, is the great merit of Osborne's work. His plays *Look Back in Anger* (1956). *The Entertainer* (1957), *Luther* (1961), definitely ushered in a new phase in English drama.

Robert Bolt also falls in the tradition which set in after the World War-II. In his Play The Tiger and *The Horse* (1960) Bolt makes precisely the need for involvement the basic theme of his work. However, it may be mentioned that it is essentially involved with individuals and not with causes. And in *A Man for All Seasons* (1960) Bolt reveals a concept of personal integrity very different from anything which would have been acceptable in the forties. Arnold Wesker accurately reflected the full change from the thirties in his trilogy about the Kahn Family. The first play C*hicken Soup with Barley* (1958) begins in 1936. The Kahns are busy with Anti-Fascist marches, their friends are setting off for the Spanish Civil War, there is general excitement about the future of socialism. The atmosphere is of optimistic political bustle. The Second play Roots is the story of Ronnie and a working class Norfolk girl who is in love with him. The last play of the three I'm Talking about Jerusalem (1960) is set in the late fifties and shows Ada, the Kahn's daughter, and her husband Dave, in a house in the country. Dave is trying to live by producing hand-made furniture. He explains that he left the city because he saw men becoming dehumanized in the factory where he worked. This gap between idealism and practice is central to all these three plays, and the sense in which they can lay most claim to the title of trilogy is as three different and in general, disillusioning experiments in practical Socialism.

Osborne and Wesker were the discoveries of the Royal Court Theatre. Two-dramatists also emerged from London's other left-wing theatrical workshop of the late fifties known as Joan Littlewood's Theatre Workshop. These were Brenden Behan and Shelagh Delaney. Through the new plays which she had chosen to present, and through her method of directing them, Joan Littlewood's name has become associated with a particular style of theatre. It is loose style, involving countless little scenes, a constant flow of movement on the stage and frequent interruptions of the theatrical illusion. Her approach, even though it has on occasions fossilized into a string of gimmicks, has

proved very helpful to actors. It gives them a great vitality on the stage, a freshness and freedom from inhibition. But her influence on her writers may turn out to have been disastrous. Certainly the second plays of both Brenden Behan and Shelagh Delaney conform more nearly to her set style than did their first. Shelagh Delaney's *The Quare Fellow* (1958) and *a Taste of Honey* (1958) are admirable entertainments, especially the latter occupies a bright and almost a poetic world of its own.

In 1960 Peter Hall, the energetic director of the Royal Shakespeare Theatre Company Stratford-on-Avon, took over a London theatre, the Allwych. He began to commission new plays. John Whiting, Robert Bolt, John Arden were the dramatists who were commissioned by Peter Hall.

John Arden's first London production was The Waters of Babylon (Produced in 1957), It is a complex busy play about a polish exile. Live Like Pigs (1958) can be taken as an allegory of the rebel in society but its real appeal comes from the picaresque characters and their richly vivid language. *Sergeant Musgrave's Dance* (Produced 1959; published in 1960) won Arden his reputation. An epic drama in the Brechtian tradition, it has a scatter of songs, fitful didactic reflection, a big cast and the panoramic sequences of the chronicle form. Labeled 'an Un-historical Parable', it is set vaguely in the years between 1860 and 1880. Its most obvious targets are the horrors of war and of industrial or colonial exploitation, but its deepest protest is against any totalitarian method of ending these injustices. Nevertheless, Arden stands back from moral judgement and explores the inherent duplicities of idealism in action. Episode by episode Arden often makes an impact through the theatrical distinctiveness and variety of theme and setting but he tends to sacrifice dramatic thrust and concentration to proliferation of multiple motifs.

After a number of disappointments and protests, John Arden came to despise professional and established theatre. He tried to set up his own production Companies for specific audiences and occasions often using amateur artists. Over the years Arden developed his own stagecraft alongside an active study of English medieval drama, popular ballads and the plays of Aristophanes and Ben Jonson. He was also influenced by the stand up comics of the musical hall that had flourished in Britain at the turn of the previous century. A rebel against the established theatre and against the literary tyranny of the fixed dramatic text, Arden has spoken of his ideal of a thirteen hour play, an audience coming and going and a theatre with the characteristic of a fair ground of amusement park. He characterized himself and his dilemma in the radio play The Bagman (Produced in 1970). Versatile in style he has used

verse and prose and has tied his hand at epic, problem play, melodrama, fable, farce, and several forms of theatrical experimentation. Many critics have alleged that Arden is unclassifiable, that he cannot be put into a category. Refuting the charge Richard Gilman says : "What he has done, an important act for the theatre, is boundable and can be identified : It is to have taken the social and political life of man and rescued it, as a subject for drama, from didacticism on the one hand and from impressionism on the other.

Another dramatist who alongwith John Osborne and John Arden broke the Post war impasse was Harold Pinter. Pinter figures with the new wave of British playwrights and has been classed with social realists, a number of the 'Kitchen-Sink-School'. The affinity of his work with this group of playwrights, however, is a very superficial one. For Pinter is not a realist in their sense at all. He is not concerned with social questions, he fights for no political causes. Pinter is one dramatist who among the dramatists of this decade has been influenced by Samuel Beckett to quite a great extent. Like Beckett he is essentially concerned with communicating a "sense of being", with producing patterns of poetic imagery, not in words so much as in the concrete three dimensional happenings that take place on the stage. Like Beckett, Pinter wants to communicate the mystery, the problematical nature of man's situation in the World. Howsoever, natural his dialogue, how so ever naturalistic some of his situations may superficially appear, Pinter's plays are also basically images, almost allegories of human condition. This can be seen quite clearly in Pinter's first play, *The Room* (1957), which contains as in embryo, much of the subject-matter of his later, more mature and accomplished efforts. However, Pinter himself was quite critical of the over-obviousness of the symbolic machinery of his first play. In his later work The Birthday Party (1958), the allegorical, supernatural element recedes into the background. Pinter's most successful play to date is The Caretaker, (1959) On one level, The Caretaker is a realistic play, almost a slice of life but on another deeper level it is a poetic image of the human condition itself : Man fighting for a place, for security, but at the same time deprived of it by the weakness of his own fallible, selfish nature.

Settings in Pinter's plays remain relatively simple and taken from the world which is recognizable and identifiable. His plays progress with little plot development but by a progressive revelation of inner tensions and appetites towards a moment of clarification when (as he has described it) something is said that cannot be unsaid '*The Room* and *The Birthday Party* present seven or eight people each carefully introduced, but the plots of these plays centre

interest on single characters. But, in *The Dumb Waiter* and *The Caretaker,* the number of characters was reduced to two. The dramatic action borrowing techniques from television film and music allows each character in turn to hold audience's attention alone at the end of each play two characters face each other, both equally understood by the audience. In his *The Lover* again only two characters are presented but now one of them is both husband and love, by insisting on one man fulfilling two contrary functions. Pinter has found a way to give direct expression to irrationality and fantasy and is here more obviously sensual and sexual. This was an important technical advance.

Pinter's works display a superb mastery of construction. Not only can be handle to perfection the one-act form, working up little by little to one decisive climax, but he can also sustain a three-act -drama with complete mastery. He himself says :"I am very concerned with the shape and consistency of mood in my plays. I cannot write anything which to me to be loose and unfinished. I like a feeling of order in what I write "There is a kind of 'musical' appeal in his plays and they are also the most poetic. Commenting on his style John Russell Taylor comments that Pinter's works are the true poetic drama of our time for he alone has fully understood that poetry in the theatre is not achieved merely by couching ordinary sentiments in an elaborately artificial poetic diction, like Fry, writing is formally verse but no appreciable to the unwarned ear as anything but prose, like Eliot. Instead he has looked at life so closely that, seeing it through his eyes we discover the strange poetry which lies in the most ordinary object to the other end of a microscope" On the stylistic level James Joyce has been a significant influence on Pinter. Joyce's influence could be seen in the comically verbal choreography. In Old Times the past is recaptured with fantasy thrown in the realized afresh alongside the present in controlled Joycean juxtaposition. Pinter's skill in using the traditions of Realism, Naturalism, and various Cinema techniques has put him in the main stream of English literature. Pinter's play *The Home Coming* (1965) written in highly stylised absurdist' dialogue and action suggests a connection with Eugene Ionesco.

Like Harold Pinter N.F. Simpson also represents the British version of the "theatre of the absurd". In his plays *A Resounding Tinkle* (1958), *One Way Pendulum* (1960), and *The Cresta Run* (1966), Simpson creates lethally satirical caricatures of law-court procedure, the police and "legality". His satire is merciless and his targets are chooses with extreme precision. Simpson's plays are always striking in the apparently imperturbable rhythm of the play that it is difficult to refer to his work in terms of the theatre of the absurd

only. Simpson goes further : after creating a situation he assesses it in a thoroughly sober, intelligent and precise fashion. The irony, satire and feeling for the grotesque, which are characteristic of the author pose problems of interpretation. It is difficult to judge whether his plays are an original form of modernist theatre or realistic theatre that makes extensive use of the opportunities for satire, humour and the grotesque.

Something similar may be said of Anne Jellicoe's richly inventive *The Sport of My Mad Mother* (1956) and *The Knack* (1961), where singing games, and nonsense are woven into a complex of psychological perception. Freer methods of stage production, such as multiple simultaneous scenes and other innovatory techniques e.g. Wesker's *Their very Own and Golden City* (1966) Donald Howarth' *A Lily in Little India* (1966) or Henry Living's Notes (1965) and *The Little Mrs. Foster Show* (1969) were also cause, as well as effect of freer dramatic writing.

During the second half of the 1960s a group of dramatists conventionally called "the second wave" appeared on the British literary scene. However, it is scarcely possible to draw a precise line of demarcation between their works and the plays of the 1950s and 1960s: The problem of the central character, the problem of human personality and hostility towards bourgeouis civilization remain the dominant features of these new works. The works of these playwrights, which is quite heterogeneous, nevertheless marks the beginning a new stage. The first plays of David Mercer, Joe Orton and Peter Micholas indicated the interest of their authors in mental disorders of all kinds. It was at this time that the "theatre of cruelty" made its appearance on the British stage. This theatrical phenomenon traces its roots to the work of the French director and theoretician of the theatre Antonin Artand. The interest shown by British dramatists in these themes was explained most clearly by David Mercer, who observed that his object was to investigate the despair and violence that, in his view, lay concealed in human relations. He was influenced to quite some extent by well-known British existentialist psychiatrist R.D. Laing. Ride a Cock Horse (1966), *For Tea on Sunday* (1966), *Let's murder Vivaldi* (1967)

Horse (1966). For Tea on Sunday (1966). Let's murder Vivaldi (1967) In Two Minds (1967 Flint (1970), *Duek Song* (1974) are some of his important works which deal with the morbid aspects of human psychology.

Major figures in the "second wave" whose work is still central to British theatre include Edward Bond, Tom Stoppard, David Storey, and Christopher Hampton. Bond's philosophical fables, Stoppard's intellectual riddles, and the

elatistic plays of Storey and Hampton represent a new convincing reaction by artists to the difficulties and problems of British society and the changes in its spiritual climate. The characters created by the: dramatists speak of the necessity for finding new paths, the contradictions, in British intellectual life and the fact that material security certainly does not always lead to spiritual well-being. The crisis of thought and the extinction of ethical standards form the basic subject matter of these plays. Bond's Saved (1965) The Fool (1976), We Came to the River (1980) highlight this connection which was a clearly spelt moral basis. A characteristic of the " second" wave who has done much to define its distinctive nature is Tom Stoppard. His plays most fully embody one of the fundamental themes of British "new drama" that of the collision between the "little man", man-in-the-street, and his hostile an incomprehensible environment. Stoppard achieved fame with the play *Rosencrantz an Guildenstern Are Dead* (1967). *Enter After Man* (1968), *The Real Inspector Hound* (1968) are other farm our works.

David Storey made his appearance in British drama with *The Restoration of Arnold Middleton* (1967). He made use of his knowledge of the working class life his play: In Celebration (1969) is in the tradition of realistic theatre. In *The Contractor, The Changing Room* (1972) and *The Farm* (1973) Storey continues to describe the life of the English provinces. However, man as an individual moves into the background in these plays, is most important feature of which is the reproduction of the slow and montonous process of life.

Christopher Hampton chose as themes for his plays *Total Eclipse and The Philn thropist* (1970) which depict the search for meaning of human life. Contemporary English characters people all the important plays of Hampton. A camparison between the characters of the British playwrights of the 1970s with those of the first plays of the "angry young men" can be helpful in highlighting the profound changes which have taken place in the thinking of British intellectuals.

Radio-drama was another important feature which emerged around 1960s One of the earliest outstanding radio-plays was Dylan Thomas's Under *Milk Wood* (1953) In late years one may note Barry Barmange's crisp but nightmarish No Quark (1968) and Pinter's intensely dramatic interior-monologue piece. *Landscape* (1968 Robert Bolt's popular stage success *A Man for All Seasons* (1960) was one of many plays to succeed as films. Television also produced dramas of Interest in the work of Dennis *Potter's Stand Up Nigel Barton* (1968) and John Hopkins's Talking to a Stranger (1967) as well as popular successes like *Jeremy Sandford's Cathy Come Home* (1971), In all these

inter relation between drama and mass media and with the increasing dominance of the visual dimension in much dramatic art the possibilities are of change that may profoundly affect briber literature and perhaps increase its transient appeal.

It has often been pointed out that the new British dramatists seem to write from no deeply-considered moral, social or political purpose. Their characters seldom debate the nature of existence or of society like the protagonists of Sartre or Priestley or T. S. Eliot. Arden's characters do talk about the nature of war and liberty the conflict of public and private good but what make Arden's plays different from the masters-as Sartre, Priestley or Eliot is that in Arden's plays the discussions about war and liberty or nature of existence do not constitute the climax of the play. Moreover, they explore and present a moral situation from several view points, rather than speak for their author's opinion. The climax of an Arden Play is usually a confrontation or dance, or celebration. Wesker, though has tried to make an honest attempt to find a responsible role for the artist in society yet the theatrical life of his plays is not in the long discussions but rather in what he himself has called 'demonstrations.'

Another charge levelled against these dramatists is that they have no manifesto, no proclaimed and commonly agreed programme. Pinter finds no interest in politics, Arden got involved in subjects like whether to use verse or prose. Osborne made his declarations as an 'angry young man', and his first plays have some political comment. Bamber Gascoigne underlines the lack of grandeur in the central character. He points out "without suffering the central character becomes a mere cardboard hero as he was in the thirties. Without, greatness he will be a creature more of pathos than of tragedy as he would be in the fifties when the terrible and demanding events had passed and, as Jimmy Porter so forcefully pointed out there was nothing left to be great about"

It has often been seen that the new dramatists distrust statements and definitions. However, one has to keep in mind the changed cultural ethos. The area of 'significance' has undergone a drastic change. These writers are acutely conscious of the fact that the language in the modern eye has lost its general referential context. John Russell Brown has rightly said,—— "They are thoroughly theatrical writers who know that words change meaning according to how they are said, by whom, to whom, in what place whether sitting or standing or running spoken slowly or quickly. These dramatists are not without serious purpose. Indeed it is so serious that they will not attempt

to express it in any other medium than the complicated and sensitive one of the theatre"

These dramatists are remarkably diverse in their achievements but they do not lack intellectual and responsible involvement. Their work is closely attentive to the society in which they live in. The plays reflect "Pop Culture" but they are not part of it. They all use Pop elements in their plays, but criticise and evaluate them by dramatic presentation and context rather than by argument. They acknowledge the cruelty and danger, around them by showing and controlling cruelty and danger in their plays. Many of them have remarkably alert cars for contemporary speech, so that their characters, even in farcical or absurd situations, are received by their audiences as pictures of themselves. In themes, characters, setting, real-life behaviour, dialogue, the new dramatists are obviously responding to the society in which they live.

The 1970s produced a new crop of British dramatists, but their variety was deceptive neither the many comedies of Alan Ayckbourn, nor the political theatre of Trevor Griffiths, nor the works of other young dramatist could achieve the artistic and philosophophical power which was characteristic of the first two "waves". The late 70s witnessed a change in British drama, as philosophical parables with their somewhat esoteric flavour, were forced out by plays of everyday life. Despite the revolutionary quality of some of these plays, the third "wave" has not yet appeared.

The specific qualities of British theatrical life continue to be determined by such plays as The Bundle (1978) And The Woman (1979) by Edward Bond, Detrayal (1978) by Harold-Pinter, John Osborne's anthology of television plays, Able's Will (1979) by Hampton, and the work of other playwrights of the 1950s and 1960s. As one comes to know their plays, one perceives that, in its best works, British drama remains a unique phenomenon in the literary and theatrical life of the West.

1.3.2 TRENDS IN ENGLISH NOVEL

English Novel in the Victorian age was rooted in the social world. Fortune, status and martial position were all important for the Victorians as for the 18th century novel. This presentation by the novelist of his world as a wholly objective world, determined in a large manner, his technique. Like a showman, he could reflect the world the confidence because the reader also shared with him his knowledge of the world. But the modern novelist has been faced with two major problems, one moral and another psychologial. The moral problem concerns the value of experience because the modern novelist

has come to believe that some quite ordinary incident or situation or object encountered in daily experience has an intense symbolic meaning. The construction of a plot pattern based on the subtle and private interpretations of the significance in human affairs has brought the novel out of the public arena of value. The psychological problem concern the nature of consciousness and its relation to time. The shift from the outward detail to the inward significance required some subtler technique. Modern novel is crafted with this consciousness. It may be relevant to point here that the technique in the modern novel is not an end itself. It is one way of exploring reality which is in a constant state of flux.

The complexity and chaos of life cannot be reflected in a systematised fashion. Yet this lack of apparent systematization is just one way of representing this complexity. More methods and devices needed to be adopted. Accordingly one can see the modern novel borrowing devices from other arts, especially from motion pictures and music. The modern novel borrowed recurring motifs, verbal harmonies, polyphonic development in which separate melodies or themes combine in contrapuntal interweaving and an emphasis on tones and rhythms. From the motion pictures the modern novel has borrowed devices such as cutback, dissolve and montage. In the use of montage, one finds the basic ingredient of the interior monologue, that past and present time can be important technique of the modern novel as also the shift in perspective which in films is known as the fade in and the fade out. The close-up, the speed up, or relent, the angle or point of view, are all devices common to both films and the modern novel. The works of **E.M. Forster, Henry James, Aldous Huxley, Joseph Conrad, Virginia Woolf, James Joyce, D.H. Lawerence** discovered new terms of artistic exploration. The age when these writers were writing was a time of change, and the shifting values. The writers of this period tried to come to terms with dilemmas and the problems facing mankind. Their works highlight the quest for the artistic methods which could equip them to face the challenge. At the beginning of the century, the works of Joseph Conrad, Henry James and D.H. Lawerence demonstrated the transition from a relatively stable world to a new age which was characterised by a new awareness of the world because of an explosion of knowledge and the consequent changes in the structure of life and sensibility. Before we study the contribution of these avant-grade novelists, let us first try to analyse the trends as these prevailed in the ”transitional period.

Novelists of Transition :

Around 1885, the trend was towards the realistic treatment of the realistic

themes. In the nineteenth century also we see that in matters of subject-matter, the novel was primarily realistic but it was predominantly romantic in tone. The new brand of realism as practised by **George Moore** and **George Gissing** emphasized 'seeing life steadily and seeing it whole'. The novels written by these authors were close to the facts of life. Around 1900, the novels of **H.G. Wells, Arnold Bennett,** and a few others at least established one fact that the passing of the Victorian tradition was not to be something drastic or irreparable.

H.G. Wells (1886-1946) was a critic of institutions. The Time Machine, Love and War, Lewishen Kipps and The History of Mar Polly are some of his well known works. His work reflects his genius for comedy and humanitarian zeal. Tono Bungay is considered his best novel. The book is a serious and illuminating study in English social history between 1880 and 1910. Characterization, narration, description and adventure reflect Wells's talent. H.G. Wells believed that the function of the novel is not merely to entertain. The novel must be used as a platform for the propagation of ideas and discussion of any and every topic of contemporary social and political interest. His later fiction Mar Britling Sees it Through, Christina Alberta's Father are taken by critics more as elaborate pamphlets and less as fiction.

Arnold Bennett (1867-1932) is another important novelist of the transitional phase. The Old Wives Tale, Clay Hawyer give a peep into the then society of England. Bennett's prose, efficient and workmanlike, earned for him a prominent place in the hierarchy of English novel. His work combines the influence of systematic, intellectual approach to fiction and the French influence.

Galsworthy's The Forsyte. Saga gives a large-scale picture of the professional and aristocratic classes. His style was graceful and suave. In his Villa Rubein, the Russian influence especially of Turgeneve is clear.

These writers appearing at a stage when the Victorian tradition had already become suspect and the avant-grade movement yet had to emerge, earned a place for themselves for initiating a trend opposed to the Victorian ideals. The French influence, especially of Zola, and the Russian influence through the novels of Turgenev widened the scope of the British novel.

Edwardian Novelist :

Two novelists, **E.M. Forster** and **Aldous Huxley** both the members of the Bloomsbury group and advocates of the intellectual and political liberalism,

responded to the uncertainties of the age in still another way. **E.M. Forster** is a novelist of unusual force. His important novels were written before the First War. Chronologically, he could be put among the Edwardians. But Virginia Woolf in her essay, "Mr. Bennett and Mrs. Brown" associated Forster with lawrence, Joyce and herself as one of the novelists writing in reaction against the novel as understood by Edwardians. He himself has said that the novel as he conceives it demands a society with some stability resting on something fixed not only in manners but in place. Even though technically Forster is considered a very old fashioned novelist by many critics yet he alongwith other contemporaries was devoted to craft wherein art and morality meet in commitment. *A Passage to India* (1924) is concerned with the dark places in human heart, which make for unhappiness arid confusion not only between individuals but between races and nations. A symbolic masterpiece, the novel has intensity seldom watched among modern authors. His chief theme is the subtle exploration of the deficiencies, insensibility and an emotional understanding of the English middle-class character and at his best he handles this with irony and a delicate symbolic treatment of events and objects.

Forster's earliest novel *Where Angels Fear to Tread* appeared in 1905. Then followed *The Longest Journey* in 1907 and *A Room with a View* with which his reputation was first established, was published in the following year. In 1910 came Howards End. *The Hill of Devi* (1933) records his experience of his two visits (1912, 1921) to India. His short-stories *The Celestial Omnibus* (1914) and *The Eternal Movement* (1928); a collection of essays *Abinger Harvest* (1936) and *Two Cheers for Democracy* (1951) and *Alexandria* : A History and a Guide (1922) are some of his other important writings. *Aspects of the Novel* is the title of his Olartc Lectures at Cambridge (1927).

Even though Forster stopped writing clearly admitting his inability to do so in the wake of changed sensibility yet he occupies an important place even today among the shapers of contemporary fiction. He neither assaults the reader with a new creed as does Lawrence, nor stalks forth, clad aggressively in technical novelle.

Aldous Huxley (1894-1963) has attempted to reveal the underlying discontent of the twentieth century. As one critic has put it, "The tale his books tell is a twentieth century Pilgrim's progress in which Darwin, Freud and their colleagues patrol the frontier between the realm of eight men and the free state of God men. He echoes our frustrations, articulates our dilemmas and chronicles our struggle with the Janus-headed monster that has time on one face and Ego on the other." His novels include *Crome yellow* (1921), *Anntic Hay*

(1923), *Those Barren leaves* (1925), *Point Counter Point* (1928), *Brave New World* (1932), *Eyeless in Gaza* (1936), *After many a Summer Dies the Swan* (1939), *Time Must Have a Stop* (1944), *Ape and* Essence (1948) and *The Genius and the Goddess* (1955).

The novels of Aldous Huxley signalled a new stage in the anxieties of a liberal intellectual confronted by the modern world. Huxley seemed to doubt not only the ability of liberal culture to survive but the reality of that culture itself. His portrayals seemed like the work of one who had lost faith in what he depicted and who was pre-occupied with its destination at the hands of the violent and irrational, especially in the early novel *Crome Yellow*. His brilliance, and lively witty display of ironic intelligence only emphasized the emptiness that he found at the centre and a culture to which he still belonged. In comparison with those of Forster and Virginia Woolf, his novels seemed to many to lack the sense of values, the human responsiveness of life and (in the case of Virginia Woolf) the sensuous poetry that made their positive contribution in its ultimate quality.

The year 1910 happens to be quite significant as it marked a breakdown between Edwardians and Georgians, between an outworn literature and a living one. An open war has waged against orthodoxy and conventionality in the literary and artistic circles. In the following year great appraisal of the novel occurred. The avant-garde novelists brought some of the techniques of poetry into prose fiction. The novel inevitably became a subtler and in some senses a more difficult literary form that it had hitherto been.

Before we study the contribution of the twentieth century novelists or the avant-*grade novelists*, let us discuss two very important trends in modern novel that is the psychological novel or the stream-of consciousness novel.

The Psychological Novel was born on the eve of the First World War. Its rise in the early 20s is but a reflection of the increasing inwardness of life, consequent upon the breakdown of accepted values.

The Psychological novel represents a reaction against a well-made novel of the nineteenth century. This kind of novel tends towards formalisation. The role of both plot and character in conventional sense has dwindled. There is a shift from externals to the inner self of the character or characters. This type of novel is also known as the **"Stream of Conciousness"** novel.

The novelists who used the technique of "Stream of Consciousness" made consciousness the central subject in their novels. By consciousness they meant the entire area of mental activity from pre-consciousness to the moments of

higher awareness. William James and Bergson had proved it beyond doubt that consciousness was not static but fluid. Freud and Jung had worked out its different layers (conscious, subconscious and unconscious) which often overlapped. In 1890 **William James** described it thus, in his *Principles of Psychology*: "Consciousness" does not appear to be itself chopped up in bits - it is nothing joined, it flows; Let us call it the stream of the thoughts of consciousness, or of subjective life." The "Stream-of-consciousness" thus came to be used metaphorically to suggest the continuity of mental process. Robert Humphrey suggests, the consciousness may be assumed as consisting of the two levels: speech and pre-speech level. The speech level is that region of our consciousness which remains under our rational control. Ideas and thoughts are schematized and arranged when they are brought to this level; but underneath it they remain in a chaotic order. There is a whole reign (pre-speech level) where memories, thoughts, feelings and fancies exist not as a chain, but as a stream of flow. Nothing is rationally controlled or logically ordered. The "stream-of-consciousness" novel is a type in which the basic emphasis is placed on exploration of the pre-speech levels of consciousness. It is in "this dark chamber of experience" the novelist hopes to find the real man. The "stream-of-consciousness" technique is one way to analyse the human nature and depict the individual's psychic life accurately.

With the use of stream-of-consciousness technique, the emphasis is now on the internal conflict, strife or reality than on the external phenomenon. Hence plot and character in the conventional sense of the term assume a subordinate position. The modern novelist does not necessarily follow the chronological order. His concern is to present inwardness, which is also the realness of the character. Life itself is the main stuff to depict for the modern novelists. Virginia Woolf remarked, "The proper stuff of fiction does not exist, everything is the proper stuff of fiction, every feelings, every thought, every quality of brain and spirit is drawn, no perception conies amiss." The modern novelist is interested neither in story telling nor character portrayal. His chief interest is "The ever-changing, ever-fluctuating consciousness." Virginia Woolf remarks," Life is a luminous halo, semi-transparent envelop surrounding us from the beginning of consciousness to the end." She asks, " Is it not a task of the novelist to convey this varying, this unknown and circumscribed spirit, what-ever aberration of complexity it may display, with as little mixture of the alien and external as possible" Thus the modern novelist presents his 'slice of life' in a series of flashes. Life is a continuous motion, and endless alteration of ebb and flow and it is the religion of the novelist to render the dream of emotion

and feelings, thoughts and attitude and desires, the dream played out in the interior landscape of human consciousness.

The stream of consciousness novelists catch their characters from moment to moment and intercept the stream of their consciousness at some significant moment or point, and this moment or point becomes the centre of whole design and the total vision. Conrad's Lord Jim, Virginia Woolfs Mrs. Dalloway. Joyce's Ulysses can be cited as examples.

Joseph Conrad (1857-1920) strikes a new note in English fiction. His novels deal with the themes radically different from the themes of his predecessors. They signify and highlight the experience absolutely different from previous human experience. Conrad viewed life as constant and sustained struggle in moral terms, an issue between good and evil. He criticizes along with many others the basic realities of his time. From his own experience, he knew both far-reaching styles of life and nature and a strict commitment to one tested tradition that of the mercantile expansion. He showed a sense of the less attractive side of overseas expansion. His novel, *Lord Jim* (1900) closed with a memorable picture of the lowest side of the overseas adventure, petty yet ruthless half trader and half bandit. The story of *Heart of Darkness* (1902) struck a balance between what was dark and bestial in primitive black Africa and the greed and aimless vindictiveness of its white exploiters. Conard's most outstanding novel, Nostromo (1904) recorded how finance imperialism operating in a Central American country to replace colourful barbarism was nothing better than soulless sterile materialism. The deepest note running through this and his other works was that of disillusionment with a society that for all its range and power was losing its values and often preferred elaborate show to genuine human worth.

Conrad's art is characterized by appropriate style, scale and method. He was a novelist strictly committed to artistic vocation. His artistic creed becomes clear from his statement wherein he says, "What is a novel, if not a conviction of our fellow-men's existence, story enough to take upon itself a form and imagined life clearer than reality and whose accumulated verisimilitude of selected episode puts to shame the pride of documentary history. That novel as an art form is potential medium to tackle various serious issues of life speaks of Conrad's responsibility as a writer." Conrad declared, "My task which I am trying to achieve is by the power of written word, to make you hear, to make you feel - it is before all to make you see." He considered art a result of an "intimacy and strain of a creative effort in which mind, will and conscience are enjoyed to the full."

In matters of technique, his use of a narrator who gave the novelists an unseen omniscience was another superb artistic creation. He created Marlow, a middle aged sailor, who would direct and arrange the material of the narrative while Conrad in turn controlled him. By means of this device, Conrad could create different levels of reality operating at various levels - the author, the narrator, the character in the novel and the reader. Despite his multiple perception of reality, the ultimate remained mysterious and that becomes one of the strengths of Conrad's art. David Daiches rightly points out : " Joseph Conrad multiplied points of view in the telling of a story so that the tentativeness of all patterns of significance was established and the lonely truth at the heart of individual experience remained teasingly mysterious.'

It is interesting to note that an American expatriate Henry James (1843-1916) responded to the crisis of time in the same way as Conrad did. The world James depicted was the world of Edwardian plutocracy and repeatedly his novels revealed the sordid reality beneath the elegant surface of contemporary life, trendy greatness in *The Sports of Poynton* (1897), calculating promiscuity in *What Maisie Knew* (1897) and *The Awarded Age* (1899), materialism and aloofness in *The Golden Bowl* (1904) and *The Wings of the Dove* (1902). One value not shown explicitly in Conrad's work was conspicuous in James, a conviction of the importance in life of art in its highest sense. James believed that "artist should produce the illusion of life." This was a reminder of something lying behind his whole effort as a writer. In his deep and discriminating study of the great nineteenth century French novelists, in his attention to arrange of other European writers, and in this intent and sustained reflection on the task and art of the novelist, James marked a departure from the general character of English literature in the mid-nineteenth century. He brought a new precision and complexity into the description of states of mind. He remains the supreme master of form, which in his hands became more and more dramatic. James's main concern was to keep the author aloof. Sometimes a narrator was chosen, through whose eyes the scenes were described, sometimes the action was presented as it appeared to one of the characters as in *What Maisie Knew*.

James believed that aesthetic perfection and moral significance were not opposed but complementary aspects of a single reality. His distinction lies in the quick yet strong intelligence in the clarity and nobility of his moral vision and in his great sense of the richness and beauty of what at least is potential in human life.

1.3.3 The Novel after The First War :

As has already been pointed out that immediately after the War, a new generation of writers had emerged on the literary scene. Wyiidham Lewis, who belonged to it called them **"The Men of 1914".** These Men of 1914 were **Joyce, Pound** and Eliot, including, Lewis himself. However, **Lawerence, Virginia Woolf** and **Dorothy Richardson** can, by all standards be included in this list. These writers did not have anything in common except that they were affected by the war. Young talented and intelligent, these writers repudiated the literary practices of the previous generation. **Virginia Woolf** in her essay "Modern Fiction" and "Mr. Bannett and Mrs. Brown" denounced the hitherto common fictional practices and pleaded for a new kind of novel in which there would be no plot, no comedy, no tragedy, no love interest or catastrophe in the accepted sense. Virginia Woolf was writing in 1920, and her criticism of 'the form of fiction most in vogue" anticipated this kind of the novel. She was for the most part to write herself from the publication of Jacob's Room(1922) onwards.

Virginia Woolf investigated to some considerable extent the nature and scope of the novel. These fleeting atoms comprising sights, sounds, feelings and assertions which make up each person's consciousness at any given moment are what the novelist should be writing about. That is why Virginia Woolf tells the novelists to record these atoms as they fall upon the mind in the order in which they fall - trace the pattern, however, disconnected and incoherent in appearance which each sight or incident stores upon the consciousness. ("Modern Fiction"). She formed her new methods of presenting characters, *Jacob's .Room* (1922), *Mrs. Dalloway* (1925), *To the Light House* (1927), *Between The Acts* (1941) are marked by their compassionate awareness and a rare delicacy of response to the world of intuitive consciousness and spontaneous feeling.

Virginia Woolf tried to make a personal sense of belief persuasive to the reader while he read by adopting some of the techniques of lyric poetry and building up a pattern of highly charged symbolic events and reveries told in prose whose suggestive overtones and rhythmic compulsions worked on the experienced readers to produce in them a cause of significance out of which the author's vision arose.

Out of all writers who were writing in the wake of the post war crisis and responded to the need for the search of new technique, the name of **James Joyce** (1882-1941) figures most prominently. From the writing of the first

stories of *Dubliners* (1915) to his last novel *Finnegans Wake* (1939), Joyce's work shows a remarkable consistency. It has stamp and intensity of poetry. Plot, action, character and thought are merged and lost in the "stream of consciousness". *A Portrait of the Artist* as a *Young Man* (1916) includes detailed discussion on aesthetics which are worth reading conjunction with Virginia Woolf's essay "Modern Fiction". Stephen Daedalus, the protagonist of the novel, rejects the claims of church, state family and sets forth upon him a life of silence,- exile and cunning to encounter " The reality of experience" *Ulysses* (1922), Joyce's masterpiece follows the basic pattern of Homer's *Odyssey* and the symbolic correspondences with its episodes, the containing of the whole narrative within a period of twenty four hours; Molly Bloom's unpunctuated interior monologue, the circularity and endless punning constitute an elaborate verbal game.

Finnegans Wake (1939) is a work without beginning or end. It is circular. We are outside time altogether in the world of sleep and dream. The sleeper is a Dublin Saloon Keeper, H.C. Earwicker together with his wife and his two sons. Earwicker is not only a Dublin Saloon Keeper, he is also everybody. His initials stand for "Here comes Everybody."

Joyce sought for technical devices which would enable him to present all points of view simultaneously showing the same persons at once remote and trivial, splendid and silly, important and unimportant. In developing this style, Joyce created a dense texture of associations that purported to represent a mind at work.

D.H. Lawrence (1885-1930) stands prominently among the novelists of the first World War, Lawerence was acutely conscious of the passing of an old way of life. His earlier novels frequently rehearsed his own development. The central character outgrows provincial origins and acquires a modern, urbanised or cosmopolitan consciousness. This was clear in *Sons and Lovers* (1933) and *The Rainbow* (1915).

The White Peacock (1911) was Lawrence's first novel followed by The Trespassers. However, it was with *Sons and Lovers* that Lawrence stepped into the front rank of contemporary novelists. The earlier part of the novel is largely a circumstantial record of the author's own early life and environment. Lawrence unambiguously states his religion, " My great religion is a belief in the blood; the flesh as being wiser than the intellect. We can go wrong in our mind, but what our blood feels and believes and says is always true. The intellect is only a bit and bridle. What do I care about knowledge. All I want is

to answer to my blood, direct without fribbling intervention of mind or moral or what not."

Lawrence's primary interest, was to probe into the unconscious man rather than the social man. He tried to express emotions and feelings as these exist far below the surface of gesture. He constructed his plots in such a way, as to use social institutions as devices for probing difficulties which lie in the way of proper human relationship and showed his characters discovering (or failing to discover) their own sense of meaning in those relationships, through experience that are essentially poetic and even mystical in nature and are projected by means of a quite new kind of emotional symbolism. This he achieves in his two great novels *The Rainbow and Women in Love*. *The Rainbow* is a chronical novel relating the history of farming stock living in the Erewash valley in Derbyshire from the middle years of the nineteenth century to the beginning of the twentieth. The novel describes an England changing through three generations from the rural to the urban and this density of scene, the detail by which the social fabric of life is realised, is the sheet anchor of the novel.

Fiction for Lawrence was in his own words, a "thought adventure" and with *Women in Love*, we are in the presence, as it were, of the act of thinking itself, thinking that has not reached its conclusion. It is almost a picaresque novel, in which various ways of the life are tried by Birkin and Gerald and are found wanting. The novel shows the Bohemian life of London. It also shows the emptiness of intellectual life. It is a strong indictment of industrialism. These themes are taken up in *Lady Chatterley's Lover* (1928) also. This novel aimed at revolutionzing the modern English attitude towards sex.

As his acquaintance with modernity extended, Lawrence seemed to become more and more aware of its dangers and to set himself more and more urgently to find solution for them. At the core of his novels lay a conviction that men were being deprived of traditional sources of strength, balance, genuineness and dignity and that they could replace these only by rediscovering the source of life giving spontaneity that they all possessed in their own innermost selves. Lawrence believed that it was in their sexual lives that men could be most genuinely themselves and least the puppets of a machine age. This was revealed most clearly in short stories such as "Captain's Doll" and "The Fox" and a short novel such as *St. Maur*. From this conviction that the truest and the most unassailable source of vitality resides in the psyche. Lawrence was naturally drawn towards technical experiments not altogether unlike those practised by Pound, Eliot and Joyce, In the fluid episodic construction of his later novels, notably Women in Love with their seemingly disjointed characters,

who yet have an intense reality, and individuality, Lawrence displays the trends of the time. But Lawrence, as he himself recognized, sought the deepest values of life, though he did not always master them. His successes came out of the intensity of his effort, but his work often displayed a bullying insistence that when trust to himself he rejected, yet it is easy to forget his faults and to remember instead his astonishing vitality, often sharply perceptive intelligence, immensely real and tender sense of life's potentialities, for good and passionate stand for the real against the sham.

"That fiction is a lady and a lady who has somehow got herself into trouble is a thought that must often have struck her admirers". Virginia Woolf remarks at the beginning of review of E.M. Forster's *Aspects of the Novel*. "The trouble" which "the Lady" has got herself into, was identified by Virginia Woolf, as the out-worn techniques to arrest the complexity of life and a materialistic approach to life as opposed to the spiritual one.

Virginia Woolf investigated to some considerable extent the nature and scope of the novel. Her essays, *A Writer's Dairy* and novels are interspersed with comments on the form and meaning of the novel. Her ideas about the modern novel are expressed in two important essays "Modern Fiction" and "Mr Bennett and Mrs. Brown". The duty of the novelist was to define the true nature of life. Her own investigation led her to conclude that :

"Life is not a series of gig lamps symmetrically arranged, life is a luminous halo, tenth-transparent envelope surrounding us from the beginning of consciousness to the end is not the task of the novelist to convey this varying, this unknown and uncircumscribe spirit — "(Modern Fiction") The true picture of life, in her opinion was to be gathered from varied human experiences : "Examine for a moment an ordinary mind on an ordinary day. The mind receives a myriad impressions, trivial, fantastic, evanscent, or engraved with the sharpness of steel. From all sides they come, an incessant shower of innumerable atoms." (Modern Fiction).

These fleeting atoms comprising sights, sounds, feelings and associations which make up each person's consciousness at any given moment are what the novelists should be writing about. That is why, Virginia Woolf tells the novelists to :- record these atoms and they fall upon the mind in order in which they fall- trace the pattern, however, disconnected ' and incoherent in appearance, which each sight or incident stores upon the consciousness" (Modern Fiction).

That is what led Virginia Woolf to search for a "formless form" and invent "A stream-of consciousness" technique. She formed her new methods of

presenting characters. The "Mrs. Brown" of her essay "Mr. Bennett and Mrs. Brown" becomes a symbol of that evasive spirit of "inner life" which she tried to capture in her novels. *Jacob's Room* (1922), *Mrs. Dalloway* (1925); *To The Light House* (1927); *Between the Acts* (1941) are marked by their compassionate awareness and rare delicacy of response to the world of intuitive consciousness and spontaneous feelings.

Virginia Woolf tried to make a personal sense of belief persuasive to the reader while he read by adopting some of the techniques of lyric poetry and building up a pattern of highly charged symbolic events and reveries told in prose whose suggestive overtones and rhythmic compulsions worked on the experienced reader to reproduce in him the sense of significance out of which the author's vision arose.

Out of all the writers who were writing in the wake of the post-war crisis and responded to the need for the search of new techniques, James Joyce's name figures most prominently. His first affilations were with Dublin and with 1890s; and something of the conviction that art was and should be self-contained world of its own remained through all his work. Some of his later realism it is believed, he owes to Ibsen or the French Realist fiction of Zola. But his unique style seemed to have emerged mainly from contact with Pound and Eliot and the French writers who had influenced him. In his later prose *Ulysses* (1922) and *Finnegans Wake* (1939) Joyce crystallized the reaction from middlebrow writing toward a style in which art made no compromise with the reader. Ideas come one after another in apparently unpremeditated but highly organised juxtaposition. The effect was to present what seemed like the disorganised thinking of a character who was bringing his thought only partially into conscious focus. Joyce sought for technical devices which would enable him to present all points of view, simultaneously showing the same persons and events as at once heroic and trivial, splendid and silly, important and unimportant. In developing this style Joyce created a dense texture of associations that purported to represent the mind at work yet *Ulysses* is not only a work of stylistic virtuosity, Joyce's constant experimentation with language created a total impression of daily life in a large city (Dublin). The novel is also outstanding for its interpenetrating humour and humanity.

Other authors between 1920 and 1950 responded to what they sense as a period of crisis in human affairs. L. H. Myers, especially in *The Root* and the *Flower* (1935), showed Lawrence's concern for what was real and what was sham in life, though he lacked Lawrence's gift for embodying a philosophy in narrative form. Joyce Gary in such novels as *The Horse's Mouth* (1944) and *A*

Prisoner of Grace (1952); attempted to deal with the demonstrating impact of war and modernity but reasserted the power of the simple human emotions and especially of social and family affection, to overcome it. George Orwell showed perceptiveness and vigour in the semi-autobiographical writing about the life of the underdog. His novels *Down and Out in Paris and London* (1933), *The Road to Wigan Pier* (1937) are characterised by the directness of style free from all "literariness" and formality. By a repudiation, of the upper class, empire-building ethos of the "English gentleman" he prepared the way for much of interest in later English writing. His postwar novels, *Animal Farm* (1945) and *Nineteen Eighty-Four* (1949) rendered unforgettable by a deep general pessimism about the future of mankind reflected more particularly a disillusionment with Stalinist Russia as the embodiment of Socialism.

The great surge of experimentation which the English novel witnessed after the First World war came to subside by the time the Second World War began. In between "The Novel was both dying and being reborn". The novelist's apprehension of and consequent lack of confidence in reality and the grammar of presentation led him to explore new techniques. But then the novel "proper" saw its death. Yet the new poetics of fiction in, itself was a solid gain.

The World War of 1939 ushered in a new historical phase as well as a new aesthetic. It is not difficult to see why the Post war arts have a new flavour, why the tradition now seems to shift. The war was not only a shock to the western culture and values, it created not only a new political, social and ideological environment but inevitably a new intellectual and artistic environment as well. If it led to new forms of society, new balances of power new patterns of politics, it also brought new factions, new difficulties, new challenges and new species of exploration for the arts. It is an age which has come to be characterized by a new type of economic growth and expansion. Radical advancement in technology, has made the moon accessible. Human heart has become a property transferable from one body to another yet on the other hand the discovery of the nuclear bomb has brought life to the verge of extinction. Consequently altogether we have come in many ways to see the world differently; less locally, less patriotically, less morally with a greater degree of neo-scientific rationalism and impersonality. In fact the notions of ethical responsibility, social obligation and personal identity seem to have shifted. And such changes inevitably affect the arts and perhaps the novel above all.

Hence a marked change seemed to emerge in the continuity of the English novel with the end of the Second War. The climate of Bloomsbury which had

made an effective marriage of interest in experiment and social realism seemed to have exhausted. Around this time came a succession of novelists with a different approach to life and literature. Fiction has conspicuously grown more provisional, more anxious, more self-questioning than it was a few years ago. The nature of fictionality and its constituent parts, plot, story, character, the relationship between realism and fantasy or fabulation have drawn the attention of creative artists as well as literary critics. Many young writers have been attempting to return to a traditional nineteenth-century theme, the theme of how a man works his way through society, with a characteristic twentieth century lack of assurance about what the man or the society is really like. Two main streams are discernible after 1939. One is social documentary the practitioners being Kingsley Amis, John Wain, Sillitoe etc. and the other is marked by some kind of philosophical strain concerned with an alternative reality not denned primarily in social terms. The novelists in this category are Evelyn Waugh, Graham Greene, William Golding, Iris Murdoch, Muriel Spark etc. These writers write with "a bias towards the mythical, religious or grotesque novel".

Graham Greene is torn between his ethical myth, a matter largely of character and plot which he regards as self-indulgence. Placing his characters in hostile environments and alien lands Greene analyses them in extreme situations. He creates characters in order to display them in conditions of torture. The problems of doubt and faith in the context of religion are closely analysed in the times when "the religious sense" in the English novel seems to have disappeared. *Brighton Rock* (1938), *The Power and the Glory* (1940). *The Confidential Agent* (1939), *Heart of the Matter* (1948) and *The End of the Affair* (1951), are concerned primarily with the existential dilemmas of the modern man failing to come to terms, with the issue of moral choice. *The Quiet American* (1955) belongs to the realist tradition.

It became clear that, after 1945, a second literary revolution was in progress. The novel showed every sign of reasserting its realistic potential, its moral and social concern, its sense of life as progress. The novel became the book of life the quintessence of experience. The change may perhaps be seen by a comparison of Virginia Woolf with Elizabeth Bowen's *The Death of the Heart* (1938), *The Heat of the Day* (1949); *Look at All Those Roses* (1941). The latter's feeling and subject-matter were not unlike Virginia Wool's but her framework of ideas was slighter and her technique much more conventional.

The novelists who emerged around 1950s seemed to be in deliberate revolt against earlier avant grade ambition. This new generation of writers were

different in temper and commitment from their predecessors. There was a deliberate attempt on the part of these novelists to discard the heritage of 'modernism'. The idea of the novel as a liberal realistic form was now convassed. Whereas in America and on the continent the novelist was in search of new techniques to grapple with the philosophical dilemmas of Existentialism and Absurdism, the English novel reached back to the nineteenth century and the eighteenth century sources, through Bennett, Dickens, and George Eliot, to Fielding and sought to reinstate the realism and the social novel. William Cooper declared : "We meant to write a different kind of novel from that of the thirties and we saw that the thirties novel, the experimental novel had got to be brushed out of the way before we could get a proper hearing" Cooper himself wrote fiction *Scenes from Married Life* (1961) that was traditional in form, dealing with the post war middle class world of bureaucracy and social life. His novel *Scenes from Provincial Life* (1950) broke new ground in its relaxed but witty and frank portrayal of the life of the young and obscure people in the provinces, though it cannot be seen merely as a foreruner of others. Cooper's relaxed satire came out of an attitude of general acceptance, but several later novelists, such as Kingsley Amis in Lucky Jim (1954). *Take a Girl like you* (1960), *The Anil-Death League* (1966) and John Wain's *Hurry on Down* (1953), *Living in The Present* (1955), *The Smaller Sky* (1967) rejected the high-brow values found in such early twentieth century writers such as Bennett and Wells. These writers collectively came to be known as *"Angry Young Men',* August Wilson in his. novels like *The Wrong Set* (1949). *Hemlock and After* (1952); *Anglo Saxon Attitudes* (1956), *No Laughing Matter* (1967) also dealt with current middle class conditions and predicaments with mingled irony and compassion but through lossely episodic plots, characters reminiscent of Dickens and a general adherence to traditional plots.

However, Ivy-Compton-Burnett continued into 1950s and 1960s something of the Originality and the technical innovation of an earlier generation. Ostensibly her narrow but deeply worked achievement in novels like *Pastor and Masters* (1925), *A House and Its Head* (1935), *Parents and Children* (1941), *The Present and the Past* (1953) deal closely with upper ; middle class family like in the countryside of late Victorian England. But character and incident are intensely stylised, and the dry wit of a ruthlessly sustained dialogue suggests an elaborate hidden world of aggression, vanity, deprivation and tangled family affection and hatred. As a result, her work is both timeless and intensely dramatic.

A striking development of the later 1950s and 1960 was the emergence of an

authentic working class or near-working class fiction. It was remarkable that this took so long to happen, but with the arrival of John Briane's *Room at the Top* (1957), *Life at The Top* (1962), Alan Silitoe's *Saturday Night* and *Sunday Morning* (1958), *The Loveliness of the Long Distance Runner* (1959) *Keith Waterhouse's Billy Liar* (1959), Sid Chaplin's *The Day of the Sardine* (1961), Stan Barstow's *Kind of Loving* (1960) and above all David Storey's *This Sporting Life* (1960) came to tight a vigorous fiction dealing with working class life and from this something like a working class point of view came into being. There may have been little or no innovation in technique but this far from negligible development should be seen alongside the assertion of a north-of-England cultural distinctiveness, the increased opportunities for working class children to take part in higher education at all levels, and the impact of a book like Richard Boggart's picture of present-day English working class culture. *The Uses of Literacy* (1957). The novelists of the late fifties and early sixties may have developed from Wain, Amis, and the rest in what concerns their attitudes and techniques but whereas the earlier group largely dealt with "opting put" of middle class situations, the later one concerned itself with the process of moving upward in working class life or with moving over into the middle class. However, the novels written during the fifties as well as in the sixties bear some relevance to contemporary society.

The heroes in novels by Amis, Wain, Keith Waterhouse, and others both reflect the postwar British society and demonstrate a good deal of similarity with one another. The novels are .the novels of conduct and of class placed in contemporary, usually urban society.

Certain other novelists may be loosely linked-sometimes even against their own profession-with this traditional and realist mode of writing. Lawrence Durrell, author of *The- Alexandria Quartet* (four novels, 1957-60), claimed that his fiction was based on the scientific-principle of relativity. Dun-ell's scintillations result chiefly from setting his fiction in an exotic foreign city, partial relic of the imperialist phase of British history. In almost the same year Anthony Burgess was writing his best work, *A Malayan Trilogy*, (1956-59) in which satire, wit, vivid portraiture and marked descriptive power embody a deep sense of the passing of the British "raj". These works belong to a realist tradition.

Some of the other novelists also turned to the exploration of Britain's imperial past, especially in India. The most notable examples are Paul Scott's *Raj Quartet* (1966-67) and *Staying On* (1977) and J.G. Farrell's *The Siege of Krishnapur* (1970) and *The Singapore Grip* (1978).

Most of these writers in an attempt to depict their engagement directly, have avoided the kind of technical innovation favoured by an earlier generation of twentieth-century writers. It is not that these writers dismiss James Joyce, it is simply that they do so to compete. Their interest in man's exterior relationships leads to a less associative, internal style, to a style closer to the straightforward narrative of most of nineteenth-century fiction. They often deliberately try to re-establish older and more conventional prose techniques, John Wain, for example, in *Hurry On Down*, his first novel, attempts to revive the picaresque, a tradition appropriate for his rootless hero leaving the university to survey the contemporary world. Kinrlley Amis uses a good deal of force in his first two novels, deliberately making his humour obvious and his incongruities ridiculous as, a slap against a society in which humour is too delicate and genteel. And Wilson, in *Anglo-Saxon Attitudes,* (1956) uses the large framework of the Victorian novel the huge saga that portrays a society by cutting across numerous class and occupational lines. Like most new writers, these contemporary Britons are not entirely new. In addition to their formal conservatism and their attempts to revive older novelistic traditions, their insistence on man's limitations, their comic perspective, and their partial or hesitant commitment are,all reminiscent of characteristics we tend to apply to eighteenth century writers. They appreciate and echo the scale, if not always the assurance, of Pope, and two of them. Amis and Wain, have spoken of their debt to the comic placement of rootless man in the fictional world of Henry Fielding.

Seeing the trends which emerged around 1950s and 1960s it was felt that the English novel was becoming "restrictive" in nature. Bergonzi refuses to acknowledge it as the novel proper. According to him the novel now tended towards "Pastiche". Some other critics believed that the novel in England was dead. A suspicion remained that the British novel was in sharp decline, both commercially and aesthetically. A gloomy survey in a late issue of Hamilton's The New Review displayed this view among the novelists themselves: a little later Bill Buford's magazine Granta devoted its third issue to "The End of the English Novel". However, according to Gilbert Phelps, "when we recall the scope and variety of English fiction in the earlier years of this century in the hands of such writers- of genius such as Henry James, Joseph Conrad, E M. Forster, D.H- Lawrence, Virginia Woolf, and James Joyce, it is difficult not to feel that there has been a decline. The trend of English novel since the second world war has, on the whole, been analogous to that of the poetry-a turning aside from the main stream of European literature and a tendency to retreat into parochialism and defeatism- attended. It is true, by outstanding moments

of protest, defiance, honesty or insight as well as by a proliferation of genuine talents, but rarely approaching a unified vision the sustained solidity of achievement that rises from it —— At the same time, despite a number of gloomy prognostications, the English novel is far from dead".

As a matter of fact, the so called "provincialism" of the writers of 1950 began to collapse in an era of uneasy internationalism, a world of new politics and new styles. By 1960s in England as elsewhere the novel started moving in diverse directions, Prof. Kinkead-Weekes highlights the three imaginative impulses in the contemporary novel-history, fable and myth. These, he believes, were neither normative, nor qualitative differences but convenient distinctions of modes. In classic European novelists like Stendhal, Tolstoy and George Eliot, these impulses were fused and that accounted for their superiority. A distinguishing characteristic of the contemporary novel, according to Prof. Weekes, was the disjunction of the historical, fabulist and mythical impulses. One need not go into the causes of this disjunction but simply observe it as a fact.

Malcolm Bradbury accurately assesses the situation, 'Indeed, by the sixties much of the realistic emphasis of the 1950s was beginning to fade in the English' novel, for reasons resembling those that affected writers in other countries. As August Wilson's novels probed the ways of pastiche and parody and Iris Murdoch's became a mythic enquiry into the status of character, so Muriel Spark's middle work turned into an economical, clean analysis of the relationship of novelist to agent, a fight for the driver's seat, and an exemplary exposure of the power and pull of endings, the author's right to impose the inevitable. David Storey's novels plumbed extreme psychological depths, B.S, Johnson and John Berger experimented with disordered narrative, John Fowles examines the magicality of invention, and the possibility of granting his characters the existential freedom to choose beyond the limits of his own plotting Pagination. It is certainly possible to discern, in the English novel more than in the bulk of novels in France or the United States, an attempt to salvage a modem humanism, to maintain the idea of character against the swarning text, but a sense of inevitable pressures has promoted a strong experimental disposition."

By the end of 1960s one discerns that the formal and epistemological questions about the novel began to reassert themselves. Certain constituents of the modernist impulse especially its tendency towards play and game, its stress on art as forgery, and its surreal and fabulous dimension began to appear significant again. Again a stress on the insubstantiality or corruptibility of

history became evident. The problems of establishing solid character in a world in which humanism was threatened, which man held by many to be the sum of his roles, was felt and the idea of the novel as realistic tale was challenged. Writers like August Wilson, Iris Murdoch, Muriel Spark, David Storey, B.S. Johnson and John Fowles, have speculated much about the value of realism, the relationship of writer to the text, the coerciveness of plot, the substance of character, the onerousness of form and endings. "These novelists avoid the idea of the novel as an image of all reality; so they don't seem to think of their imaginative powers as a component of or even as a complement to reality." The whole problem of the relation between fiction and reality is seen in terms of their own struggle to be faithful to themselves as perceivers.

The trend moves towards another continuity in fiction, one more romantic, philosophical or indeed fantastic, which was less conspicuous because in the nature of the case it was more diverse-yet one that came to stand recognizably over against the "realist" continuity. Here, the Powys brothers early in the century were key figures. The most important novels of J.C. Powys- *Wolf Solent* (1929), *A Glastonbury Romance* (1932), *Wey Mouth Sands* (1934), were set largely in "Wessex" and to some extent recalled the work of Thomas Hardy, but they showed originality in their variety and profusions eloquent if sometimes artless, power and depth, and intricate development of an almost transcendental awareness. Powys also had a certain kinship With-Lawrence. T.F. Powys, his brother was part of the same development. L.H. Myers, with his Indian trilogy *The Root and The Flower* (1935) falls in the same category. As the avant garde movement receded, J.C. Powys came to seem less isolated and more important. Mervyn Peake's *Tina Groan* (1946), *Gormenghost* (1950) and the sketchier but no less remarkable *Titus Atom* (1959) written during his last illness, all displayed powers of rich- description and fantastic but intense characterization in what can now be seen as an ambitious allegory of decline and modernity. Andrew Sinclair's erudite, bawdy rhetorical fantasy Gog (1957) seems to stem from Powys, though other novels, *My Friends Judas* (1959), *The Breaking of Bumbo* (1970) are more conventional.

The novels of William Golding strike one as strictly contemporary, they are rooted in the anguish and anxiety of their times. His novels indicate an important trend of the time. Around 1960s in England, the tradition of what Robert Scholes calls "Fabulatton" was beginning to - become very powerful in the English novel. Much of William Golding's work *Free Fall* (1959) *The Spire* (1964), *The Pyramid* (1967) has been notable for its imaginative and poetic qualities, though his most

assured success is *The Lord of the Flies* (1954), which converts , the children's desert-Island adventure story into a horrifying moral fable of human evil nature and degeneration. Arthur Koestler described Golding's Inheritors (1953) as an earthquake in the petrified forests of the English novel because it restored the fable to a place in English fiction. It shows *homo Sapiens* overrunning and corrupting the innocent world of Neanderthal man and, like the boys in *The Lord of the Flies* (1954), turning naturally to the worship of Beelzebub because of the evil in them. This is the dominating theme of all Golding's best work. He shows us in his novels, the stripped man, man naked of all the sanctions of custom and civilisation, man as he is alone and in his essence, or as he can be conceived to be in such a condition. In *Pincher Martin* (1956) evil is communicated through a kind of narrative doubletake. Most of the book appears to be a realistic account of a ship-Wrecked sailor, cast up on a jagged rack, in mind Atlantic, heroically struggling to survive. But as he summons up his physical resources Pincher Martin begins to realize that in the pest he had used them in order to lie, cheat and exploit his fellows, so that his physical struggle turns into spiritual exploration. And then at the end of the book, when his body is picked up by another ship, it transpires that he had been drowned almost immediately, never reaching the rock. So that the whole experience must have been an illusion, in which case Piucher Martin's ordeal took place not in time but in eternity and the rock constitutes a kind of Purgatory in which his courage and endurance merely an obstinate refusal to accept God's existence and his offer of redemption.

Consideration of original sin and free will constitute the matrix of all Golding's subsequent novels. All these novels in one way or the other imply that man's propensities for evil are far more powerful than their opposites. *Darkness Visible* (1979) ushers in a new phase in his development as a novelist. The title of the novel is taken from Milton's **Paradise Lost**. Here evil is even more terribly present in the angelic, looking but psychopathic twin Sophy and Toni. In this novel, a modern realistic setting embodies the moral fable with its suggestions of spiritual dimensions. *The Rites of Passage* (1980), reflect still another concern of Golding's creative art. The novel is an example of Golding's concern over fictional reality.

One fact which comes, to the notice in Golding's fiction is that they are self-contained wholes beneath whose surface action and realism one finds much wider and in a sense, cosmic meanings. Commenting on his reputation as a writer of fables, Golding once said, "what I would regard as a tremendous compliment to myself would be if someone substitute the word 'myth* for 'fable' —— I do feel fable as being an invented thing on the surface whereas myth is

something which comes out from the roots of things in the ancient sense of being the key to existence, the whole meaning of life, and experience a whole" Golding is here making a valid distinction. Yet it seems that his definition of the word fable fits one's own feelings about his novel.

Iris Murdoch remains distinct from others in her awareness of the problems of the novel and language. Her creative career is marked by her desire to bring back to the novel some of its earlier comprehensive vision of life, society and human character. More than any other novelist, Murdoch closely examines the contemporary theories of fiction and finds them inadequate. She insistently emphasises the need for the Writing of the "novel proper" in the nineteenth century sense. She has shown her preference for novelists like Tolstoy, Jane Austen, and George Eliot. An important feature of Murdoch's view of fiction is her preference for the primacy of the rendering of character over the rendering of 'surface'. Murdoch contends that today's novel like today's consciousness is either a victim of neurosis or convention. It is either "Crystalline" or "journalistic". It is neither a small quasi- object portraying human condition and nor containing "character" in the nineteenth century sense, or else, it is a large shapeless quasi-documentary object, degenerated descendent of the nineteenth century novel. Neither of these novels grapples with the main aim of the novel which is to depict the complexity of human personality engaged in a living relationship with a recognisable social reality. An undue importance to myth and symbol and subservience of character, are according to Murdoch, some of the reasons which have, created a crisis. The present novelist can play a great role in setting the imbalance right. Her own literary career is marked by her desire to bring back to the novel some of the comprehensive vision of life, society and human character. An academic philosopher by early profession, her first novel *Under the Net* (1954) showed the influence of the French Existential thought while the subsequent works such as *The Flight from the Enchanter* (1956), *The Bell* (1958) and *An Unofficial Rose* (1962) reflect her deep penetration into the problem of human relationships. Her deep attempts to deal with the movements of deep human feeling e. g. in *Bruno's Dream* (1969), her poetic suggestiveness, idiosyncratic fertility of character and incident and sometimes memorable use of archaic myth as in *A Severed Head* (1961), *The Unicorn* (1963) make her probably the most interesting and complex of English novelists to appear since the war.

Muriel Spark, a significant woman novelist, with a definite catholic slant, is another novelist primarily concerned with realism. But she makes use of it only to the extent it can communicate her main preoccupation. She confesses,

"I don't claim that my novels are truth. I claim that they are fiction, out of which a kind of truth emerges. And I keep in my mind specifically that what I am writing is fiction because I am interested in truth absolute truth." Combined with this is Spark's Catholic background which essentially inculcates a sense of belief in a greater reality. This metaphysical view of the universe provides her with a framework of reference for basic underlying and unshakeable central theme. Her entire novel is so structured as to underline the essentially fictive nature of so much of modem experience. In her novels *The Mandelbaum Gate* (1964), *Moment Meri* (1959) *The- Prime of Miss Jean Brodie* (1961), *The Girls of Slender Means* (1963), *The Driver's Seat* (1970) she reflects the spiritual emptiness of modem society.

A number of other women novelists also need to be mentioned. Olivia Manning in her *Balkan Trilogy* (1960-65) and *The Leavant Trilogy* (1877-80) pre-occupies herself with the "facts" of history and their proper use and interpretation. (Margaret Drabble is concerned in her novels about "The condition of Women" in the modern world. Her novels, *The Ice Age* (1977), *The Millstone* (1965); *The Needle's Eye* (1972) and *The Middle Ground* (1980) were well-received. Some of the better known women novelists are Jean Rhys, Pym, Penelope Mortimer, Brigid Brophy, Edna O'Brien and A. S. Byatt. Out of all these novelists Doris Lessing was the most innovative both in her explorations of women's situation in the modern world and in her awareness of the problems of the modern artist in relation to the self and to the nature of fictive reality. *Children of Violence* (started in fifties and finished in sixties) *The Golden Note book* (1962) are the novels wherein Lessing is concerned with the disintegration of self. Beryl Bainbridge another important woman novelist has experimented with some original fictional modes. Beryl Bainbridge's *The Bottle Factory Outing* (1974) *Angela Carter's Fireworks* (1979) *Fay Weldon' Puffball* (1980) explore with ironic detachment some of the most significant areas of women's experience.

British novel which had acquired the reputation of being traditional and provincial had started showing signs of new directions by 1970s. A new interest in fantasy and fairy, gothic and grotesquerie, made its mark, and a special questioning of the realism which has marked so much post-war fiction, a disquiet with simple ideas of mimesis affected perception of the nature and role of fiction in society. In this general context J. R. R. Tolkien's elaborately topographical *"fairy tale" The Lord of the Rings* (1954-55) may be mentioned.

Several novelists set out to write "anti-novels" based on the premise that all traditional modes of realistic narrative are now valueless, and many have been affected by them. David Lodge wrote a novel *The British Museum Js Falling*

Down (1965), which he termed as 'problematical novel'. The novel consists primarily of pastiches and parodies of some of the modern novelists. The novel has some similarities to French practitioners of the *nouveuroman*. Commenting on the 'Problematical Novel' David Lodge himself has commented : "It Is in fact the transference of the writer's own sense (which may be humorous or deadly serious) of the problematic nature of his undertaking-making the reader participate in the aesthetic and philosophical problems the writing of fiction presents, by embodying them directly in the narrative-that characterises the 'problematical novel'.

Between the extremes of experimental and extremes of realism, there are various possibilities for the novel. By the middle of the seventies, the novelist seems to explore these possibilities and the novel witnessed a reappraisal of realism. B. S. Johnson insisted that the old kind of novel was "finished" and that "no matter how good the writers are who-now attempt it. It cannot be made to work for our time, and the writing of it is anachronistic, invalid, irrelevant, and perverse." For Johnson, indeed, the whole rationale behind novel writing was suspect. He believed, "A. useful distinction between literature and other writing forms is that the former teaches one something true about life and how can you convey truth in a vehicle of fiction? The two terms truth and fiction are opposite? He puts across his ideas in novels *Alberto Angelo* (1964) ; *See the Old Lady Decently* (1975).

Anthony Burgess also in his later fiction tried to offer a more balanced response current challenges to truth in fiction. *A Clock Work Orange* (1962) ; *The Waiting Seed* (1962) *Earthly Powers* (1980), *Nothing Like The Sun* (1964) are full of creative vitality. Novels of John Fowles also display interesting technical resourcefulness. *The Collector* (1960) ; *The Magus* (1964). *Daniel Martain* (1977) ; *The French Lieutenant's Woman* (1969); have brought Fowles success. Such trends according to Gilbert Phelps indicate, "how creative vitality can carry along with it elements that are apparently, in part at least, inimical to the writing of fiction, they show how a compromise can be arrived at and is it possible that it is along the lines of some such compromise that the English novel will develop in future

In an age of cultural pluralism there is a possibility of an astonishing variety of styles to flourish simultaneously. Consequently, two developments have come to be seen. Firstly no style has managed to become dominant, secondly many writers have come to feel extremely insecure, nervously self-conscious and at times have come to suffer from a kind of schizophrenia. In this context Frank Kermodc's views are quite relevant, "The house of fiction has many

windows but at any given period they may all be designed as variations on a few basic shapes. What you see from them varies more considerably within these limits irreducibly complex personalities, a sadistic landscape, a gaunt country house full of secrets that cannot survive the preternatural explicitness of the inhabitants, a mountain of cheese. And for the most part the people at present standing at these windows are content to say 'My window is shafted thus and thus; rather than all windows should by myth-shaped or fact-shaped' there may be above all a God-shaped window giving perfect, all round visibility, but there is in no case held to resemble it."

To look back over the literary achievement of England in the modem period is to be struck by how intensely rich and dense it has been above all in the period from about 1890 to 1920 when two or three consecutive generations of writers distilled a remarkable fund of cultural material and experience, not on the basis of any single aesthetic or movement, but through a multiplicity of directions and dimensions. It has been one of the great modern literatures, and its energies have derived not only from those writers who have stood apart from their culture, but also from those who have lived with it and from it. Many of its classic works-Conrad's Heart of Darkness, Lawrence's The Rainbow, Forster's A Passage to India, Yeats' Byzantium'; Eliot's "The Waste Land', Joyce's Ulysses, the poems of Auden and the novels of Evelyn Waugh and Graham Greene in the 1930s-have been poised, balanced meditations of the new and the old, the idiosyncratic and the communal, in their content, vision and language. Its sense of experiment has been held against a sense of a tradition, a continuity; its novelists have been remarkably assimilated towards the centre. It is a literature that has been lit by lights from modernism, rather than a modernist literature and it has been consider ably rooted-in familiar, national, provincial experience, rather than in arcane worlds of its own making. In this sense it has conducted a liberal dialogue with reality and with its social audience, its writers, functioning as humanist speakers in society while drawn beyond it both to artistic transcendence and historical desperation. The taste for anarchy that has been so important an aspect of certain stages of modernism in other countries has been felt but it has been mitigated, reduced from a stage of outright nihilism or desperation. And in this compensatory process the voices of other writers less extreme in vision have played a consistently major part in maintaining cultural mainstream, of occupying the high brow-middle brow borderland which has been a crucial territory in the social survival of modern literature.

As for the new writers who emerged in the twenties, they tended to assimilate

many aspects of modernism without in most cases being modernist. What they confronted was a world rapidly modernised in a new way by war: a period of acclerating changes, a period of a new kind of 'Bright Young Thing' who regarded himself or herself as emancipated and advanced, a period in which the revelation of consciousness seemed to lie not so much in art as in social style. So now the task of the modern was at least in part to catch the nature of the new social temper of tone and in the work of novelists like Aldous Huxley, later, Auden and Mac Neice, the increased fashionable acceptance of the "advanced intellectual by a society fascinated by its own social turmoil is clear. So by the end of 1920s, there had been a considerable remaking of modernism, as the general ferment reached deeper into more peoples' experience and was reflected in more people's mores and as the immediate stuff and conditions of the modern world became part of the substance of its art".

It would be tempting to explain what seemed to be a relative scarcity of great writers in the period after world war-II as an inevitable result of the cumulative pressure of disturbing social and technological developments accelerated by-that war. The definite anti-experimental stance immediately after the war generated a lot of debate. As a matter of fact, the dialogues between the neo-realists and the experimentalists has been.-a recurrent feature of .modern English writing. There are numerous examples -the arguments between H.G. Wells and Henry James, after the publication of the Wells' book called Boon (1915) or between Arnold Bennett and Virginia Woolf, or between John Galsworthy and D.H. Lawrence of the division, and the advantage often goes to those novelists or poets who are experimental or anti-realist. There was a further period of masked resistance to neo-modernist norms, in the English writing of the 1950s, William Cooper, for example, said, "During the last years of the war, literary comrade-in-arms (C P. Snow) and I, not prepared to wait for times ever rolling stream to bear experimental writing away, made our own private plans to run it out of town as soon as .we picked up our pens again-If you look at the work of the next generation of English novelists to come up after us, you'll observe we didn't entirely lack success for our efforts". He went to say, however that, "we had to qualms about incorporating any useful discoveries that had been made in the course of Experimental writing; we simply refused to restrict ourselves to them. What is apparent in this continuous dialogue, then, is that the belief of certain modern artists that common social symbols and myths, and shared literary languages, have been lost in the conditions of the modern world, has not been universally felt within the English tradition. There is a 'modernist' tradition in English writing

and it has been a very important one, but this is not to say that 'modernism' has somehow been historically necessary". To see and appreciate the important currents of English literature, we have to recognise the power of continuing cultural forces that have enabled many writers to identify themselves with literary inheritance reaching back into the past, despite their awareness of forces of changes occurring in the contemporary times.

It is an accepted fact that social changes have taken place in England radically after the second war and the literary response to this changed situation has taken a varied form and "This means in turn that it is right and proper to read the "modern element" in English writing very broadly and not simply through the eyes of those who identify the modern world with a certain style of art".

1.4 Long Answer Questions

1. Discuss psychological novel.
2. Discuss Existentialism.
3. Theatre of the Absurd.

1.5 Short Answer Questions

1. Who were the poets of Transition?

Ans. W.E. Henley, William Watson and Ruddyard Kipling. W.E. Henley.

2. Write a short note on the stream of consciousness technique.

Ans. The literary criticism defines stream of consciousness as a narrative mode or method that attempts to depict the thoughts and feelings that pass through the mind of the narrator. It is often associated with Virginia Woolf.

1.6 Suggested Readings

Abrahams, M.H. : A Glossary of Literary Terms.

Long, W.J.: History of English Literature.

Singh, T. History of English Literature.

Lesson No. 1.7 **Author : Manjit Kaur**

Albert Camus : An Introduction

STRUCTURE

1.7.0 Objectives
1.7.1 Introduction
1.7.2 The Myth of Sisyphus

1.7.0 Objectives

1. To introduce the idea of assured to the students.
2. To apprise the students with Albert Camus 'The Plague'.
3. To discuss Camu's contribution to English Literature.

1.7.1 Introduction

The Camus of blood, flesh and bones is no more with us but the Nobel Laureate, who had entered the European consciousness not simply as a writer but as an event, still abides. The man has died but the author of such influential works as *The Outsider.* The *Myth of Sisyphus. The Plague, The Rebel* and *The Fall* still continues to live. In the works of this Algerian-born French philosopher, novelist and playwright, we find a searching and courageous exploration of the moral and spiritual dilemmas of our age. In all his works he tries to explore and analyse the hard and obstinate reality of human existence to its very core, and helped by his personal experience, knowledge and artistic sensibility, he suceeds in sounding the depths of human situation. His novels, essays, plays and articles are inter-related parts of a single investigation into the nature of man and his predicament in the world and these works clearly indicate that creative writing was not for Camus simply a process of intellectual analysis or

equiry, it was also a means of establishing meaningful links with other human beings and of entering into a kind of fraternal communion with them.

Camus' art and philosophy are closely linked with his personal life and the times in which he lived and worked. So, in order to understand his works, we must take into consideration, firstly, his North African background and secondly the history of the epoch.

Camus was born in 1913 in the village or Mondovi near Constantine in Algeria. His father, Lucien Camus, was killed in the battle of the Marne in the year after Camus' birth. His widowed mother had to work as a charwoman to support her family. Although there was little display of affection or communication between them, yet Camus' relationship with his mother exercised a lasting influence on his works. In fact the silent, sad and suffering mother in Camus' works becomes the symbol of men silenced by various forms of aggression and Camus feels it to be his duty to speak for them and sympathise with them because of his great love for his mother. Living in the poverty stricken area of Belcourt with a silently suffering mother, a harsh domineering grand mother and an infirm uncle, life, no doubt, was not easy for Camus. But the poverty that he experienced as a child did not leave any bitterness in his heart. The stark naked poverty was not his total world. The sordid brutality around was amply compensated by the beauty and richness of the mediterranean land. The blue and yellow land of the sea and the sun, where Camus spent the first twenty five years of life, had the power to lift his heart and soul. Germaine Bree rightly points out. "At the heart of Camus' senitivity, imagination and thought, and at the heart of his work, are the beauty of African coast and the glory of an unexhaustible sun."[1] Camus has himself explained what the sun of Algiers and the extreme poverty of Belcourt meant to him. "Poverty prevented me from thinking that all is well under the sun and in history; the sun taught me that history is not everything." If he was attracted and pleased by the beauty and bounty of his land, he was also pained by the misery of the masses living in poverty and subjugation.

In primary school, Camus won the attention of his teacher Louis Germain,

1. Germaine Bree, Camus (First Harbinger Books edition, 1964), p. 13.

who prepared him for a scholarship. During school days, football and swimming were his principal passions, and swimming retains an almost sacramental significance in his novels. In college also his greatest occupation was athletics and in a letter to a friend Camus remarked. "It was in the playing fields that I learned my only lessons in moral ethics."

Study, sports and poverty filled his world. To this was added the ordeal of a long illness. At the age of 17, Camus was attacked by tuberculosis. The experience of this disease made him aware of the dark side of human life. This personal agony taught him to look at the never-ending spectacle of human suffering. His preoccupation with death and the tenacious belief in the importance of the senses are reflections on his direct experience of the fragility and uncertainty of life.

After completing his education at the University of Algeria, Camus intended to become a Professor. But as he could not pass the medical examination, he was disqualified for the post. He then turned to journalism. His articles and editorials form an important adjunct to his literary works, complementing and often adding new dimensions to them. Mainly his journalism deals with important social and political problems of the time.

Camus' first volume of essays entitled Betwixt and Between was published in 1937. Here Camus makes it clear that though the world is dominated by death, strangeness and loneliness, yet man can find beauty in it and can give some meaning to life. If on the one hand there are problems of old age, loneliness and certainty of death, on the other hand there is the whole radiance of this world. So the duty of a courageous man is to gaze steadfastly at the life as well as death. His second volume of essays *Noces* throws light on Camus' exultation in the life of the body and the world of sigh and sounds. This book celebrates the nuptials between men and the earth. In the last essay of this volume, Camus does talk about the certainly of death and the transitorinessof beauty, but this consciousness gives him new strength to live in the present. If death can make nonsense of man's projects for the future, man must refuse all ideas of 'later' and should enjoy the richness and splendour of the present.

Betwixt and *Between* and *Noces* both belong to prewar years. Then came World War II and with it began a period of 'the days of wrath'. Camus, a

committed artist like Sartre and Malraux, considered it to be hismoral obligation to raise his voice against the aberration of his times. During these plague years, when the number of "the insulted and injured" was steadily increasing, Europe had simply become an inferno of murder and torture. In such conditions, it was not possible for Camus to build an ivory tower for himself or to follow the principle of 'art for art's sake'. In September 1939, Camus wrote "From the moment the war is, any judgement that does not embrace it is false". Being unable to remain detached, one could only choose between collaboration inits stupidity and cruelty, and an attempt to fight against it and Camus chose to resist, torebel and to fight. If he could not prevent it, he could at least struggle against its encroachment on human life.

So Camus soon got involved in the political situation. Like so many artists and writers of his generation he volunteered for service in the armed forces but he was rejected on health grounds. Though he could not fight as a soldier, yet he was a fighter - a combatant who fought against injustice and cruelty through his articles. He joined the French Resistance movement and during the occupation of France and even after the liberation of France, as the editor of 'Combat' he continued to write articles on the political and social problems of his times. Here one thing must be made clear–Camus got involved in the political issues of his times not because of any lust for power or recognition but because they touched one of his major pre-occupations that is, the daily life of human beings, their basic right to freedom and justice on this earth. He wrote not for any political party but for ordinary men. It is true that for sometimes he was associated with the Communist Party but this association was only for a short time, and soon Camus realised that to serve art, an artist should submit to the discipline of art and not of any political party. In fact, to serve art was Camus' sole aim, and it is this aim which made him fight for the defence of human values. He said "it is not the combat which makes artists out of us, but art which compels us to be combatants".

During the war, the insensate violence unleashed upon innocent people

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2. Raymond Williams, "Fragic Despair and Revolt', The Critical Quarterly, Vol. 5 (Summer-1963), p. 104

created a climate of spiritual sickness and nausea. The spectacle of hunger, torture, murder of millions in concentration camps or we can say the spectacle of this unstable world caught in the web of violence, hatred and irrationality made Camus question the very meaning of human existence. The world ceased to make any sense; all talk about progress, hope and ultimate meaning appeared to be non-sensical empty chatter. Camus realised that suffering and anguish were the basic facts of human existence. Observing the destruction of human values and break down of humanism by violent forces of war, and experiencing the resulting sense of disillusionment, alienation, estrangement and spiritual vacuum, the artist in Camus could not help thinking of human life in terms of its absurdity and irrationality. As a result in his novels, plays and essays, Camus makes it clear that it is not possible to explain or elucidate human life : the reality of human existence is beyond the comprehension of human logos and human existence is out of harmony with its surrounding. Man wants rationality but everywhere he is faced with the irrational; he seeks coherence but is confronted by chaos: he longs to control and steer fate but is chained by blind and evil forces; he is in quest of happiness and truth but finds only misery and uncertainty. It fact, human life and the universe do not connect; the world remains impenetrable to human reason and unresponsive to his attempts, to understand and make sense of it. Hence, Camus comes to the conclusion that human life in this universe is absurd.

What is 'absurd' ? The word comes from the Latin 'Surdus' meaning, deaf, but it is also used to musical sounds where it means 'unharmonius'. For Camus, what is absurd is human existence because man is not congruous with the condition provided for his existence. For him the absurd is born out of the contradiction between our aspirations for the eternal and our subordination to duration, or out of the discord between our passion for understanding and the unintelligibility, the 'unreasonable silence' of the word. As Raymond William puts it. "It is recognition of the incompatibilities : between the intensity of physical life and the certainty of death; between man's insistent reasoning and the non-rational world he inhabits.[2] And it is this feeling–this state of opposition between man and the universe–that Camus has described in his essay *The Myth of Sisyphus,* his novel *The*

Outsider and his plays *Caligula* and *Cross Purpose.* All these words belong to what Camus himself has termed in his *Notebooks* 'Sisyphs : the cycle of the absurd'.

1.7.2 The Myth of Sisyphus published in 1942, is an analytical study of Camus' concept of the absurd. The feeling of the absurd assails us when we suddenly become conscious of the banality of our day-to-day life i.e. when we become conscious of the repetitive and mechanical character of our existence; when we experience a bitter sense of the inescapable transitoriness of life and of time passing; when we feel alienated from others and our own self and finally when we are confronted with the 'mathematical certainty' of death. The absurd, however, is not solely an affective impression; it has an intellectual aspect also and it is an examination of the intellectual manifestations of the absurd which reveals its true nature more clearly. The predicament of man is that he is involved in a quest for rational meaning in an irrational world and this confrontation between the rational man and the irrational universe underlies the absurd. The absurd springs from the clash between our desire for complete explanation and the essential opacity of the world. It is the 'divorce between man and his life, actor and his setting".[3]

The absurd, as explained by Camus, is not a 'thing in–itself but it is a relationship, a relationship of non-conformity between the individual and the world. What is absurd is the fact of the being of man in world. Thus the irrational world the human nostalgia and the absurd that is born out of their confrontation, are the three characters of the drama of human existence.

What is the rational way open for a man out of this dilemma of rational man in the irrational universe ? Camus examines two solutions. The first is suicide. This solution may appear legitimate but with the death of a single individual the absurd is destroyed for that individual alone and so long as there are other individuals, the feeling of the absurd continues. It is a mere excapism; it is not a genuine solution and is, therefore, rejected

3. Albert Camus, The Myth of Sisyphus, trans, Justin O'Brien (Penguin Books) p. 7.

by Camus. In fact, it is no solution to collapse the tension between life and death by merely choosing death.

The second solution examined by Camus is philosophical suicide. This too is rejected by him because such a solution repudiates man's rationality. The absurd is man's existential realityand we cannot get rid of it by an ignorant leap of faith. The essential problem is to live in the full recognition of the contradictions and absurdity. Camus' conclusion is that life is to be lived even if it has no meaning. He describes the finale of an authentic life in the words "in order to exist man must rebel". So it is the positive rebellion that gives life its meaning.

At the end Camus gives up his own version of the myth of Sisyphus. Sisyphus was condemned by gods to futile and hopeless labour and thus the myth of this king become a fit metaphor for life of endless repectition and cyclicality, the awareness of which leads us to the realisation of the absurdity of human condition.

On the whole this book is not a pointless lament on the absurdity of human existence; rather it is a rejection of nihilism–the volt of Sisyphus symbolises rebellion against nihilism Camus acknowledges the fact of the absurdity, but after acknowledging it, he refuses to be obsessed or paralysed by its awareness and ends up by giving us a message of courageous rebellion.

In *The Outsider,* the hero-narrator is a fictional embodiment of the absurd. He is the symbol of modern man condemned to a pointless and absurd existence and an equally absurd death. But once the rational man in the irrational world becomes aware of the reality of existence i.e. the absurdity of his condition, he gains a kind of lucidity–a state achieved by Meursault at the end of the novel.

Caligula, the central figure of Camus' first play *Caligula* written in 1938, is an historical hero of the absurd. He is not identical with Meursault, but as O' Brien rightly points out he springs ultimately from the same stock and from the same situation. He realises that the scheme of things in this world is not as it should be and 'men die and they are not happy.' His quest for happiness is thwarted by the universe and out of this clash between his desire and the reality of existence, is born the feeling of absurdity. Caligula seeks to transcend the nihilism and despair to which

the experience of the absurd leads by systematically destroying all human values i.e. by playing the role of the plague. The result is that he creates a nightmare world of violence and terror. In fact, here Camus investigates the consequences of taking a nihilistic responre to the absurd. Caligula tries to fight the absurd by becoming its ally and as a result brings death and destruction not only of other human beings but of his own self at the end.

Cross Purpose also deals with the absurdity of existence and the helplessness of human beings to achieve happiness in the face of this absurdity. Martha and Jan have their intimations of the absurd through their sense of alienation and exile and in their case also, the contradiction between what they long for and what they actually get highlights the absurdity of human condition.

Thus we see that in all these early works Camus deals with his view of the absurd nature of the human conditions, a view which owes something to the humble and difficult circumstances in which Camus grew up, and also, to the climate of the landscape of the country in which Camus spent the early years of his life, and which was finally confirmed by Camus experience of the war years. This view, no doubt, sees man as an outsider or a lonely figure in an indifferent and ambiguous world; it regards human beings as prisoner's of this world unable to escape from the conditions imposed upon them. But Camus makes it clear that though man may not be able to make sense of his situation in the universe, yet he can find individual happiness. Life may have no meaning yet it is worth living.

In fact, the description of absurdity for Camus is not an end in itself; it is a point of departure. This fact becomes clear when we take into consideration the whole creative output of Campus. When faced with the absurdity of human condition, one may adopt an attitude of acquiescence, and this is what the Nazis did, or one may adopt an attitude of protest and revolt. And to revolt against injustice of the universe means to refuse to add to the misery of mankind and to oppose those who do so. It means trying to promote the happiness of others as well as one's own. It is this revolt of man against his condition, the revolt which is a means of protesting against absurdity, suffering and injustice which is the theme of Camus' novel *The Plague,* his essay *The*

Rebel and his plays *The Just* and *The Stage of Siege* Camus grouped all these works a single label 'Prometheus : Cycle of Revolt'.

In the novel *The Plague,* Camus' emphasis is not on the plague which is a symbol of the Occupation as well as of the absurdity of human condition but on the resistence and rebellion against it. *The State of Siege,* no doubt, presents the incorporation of absurd into social and political action using the symbol of plague but the main dramatic feature is the heroic emergence of Diego and his victory over the Plague. Here again the emphasis is on revolt and non-acceptance as solution to the absurd. *The Just* presents a contract between the absolute revolutionary for whom there is no limit and the rebel for whom there is a limit to everything. Here Camus makes it clear that revolt is not a demand for absolute freedom or for complete liberaion of the individual form all constraints but it is a protest against and excess of suffering and injustice. This idea is again expressed in *The Rebel* and here Camus makes a distinction between the rebel and the revolutionary clear and his own sympathies are with the rebel who fights against suffering and injustice rather than with revolutionary who resorts to violence and murder in the name of some ideology. In fact, Camus is in favour of a revolt based on the idea of moderation and not on absolutism.

Camus makes it clear that it is by means of a positive revolt only that man feels that he is right and the oppressor is wrong. Interpreted in this way, revolt becomes a way of affirming value. Again, revolt is not merely individual. Man's revolt implies the fraternity of all men centred around a common value and against a common oppressor. Camus wrote, "In the absurd experience suffering is individual. From the first moment of revolt it is adventure of all". Thus solidarity and justice, love and respect for mankind, compassion and sympathy for the suffering are the new points beyond the frontier of the absurd stressed by Camus. Because of this emphasis, readers throughout the western world, forced him into a position of moral eminence. But Camus hated self-satisfied virtue and the despicable morality of the world. In his short narrative, *The Fall,* Camus, points out that a man can be corrupted by too much virtue as well as by too much vice. Here the monologist Clamence relatesto his shadowy listener the secret of his clandestine existence, the reason of his 'fall' from his earlier 'radiant perfection'. The steady deterioration of his life under the scrutiny

of his self contempt brings him from his lofty role in the Perisian world to the dark streets, the dingy bars and the bleak little room in Amsterdam where he now exercises the self imposed functions of the 'judge-penitent' and, in accusing himself he accuses all men.

After *The Fall,* came the volume of short stories entitled *Exile and Kingdom.* All these stories deal with the theme of separation i.e. exile, but Camus points out that exile and Kingdom are not two separable continents; They are the two aspects of the same breath or the two sides of the same coln. The kingdom is in the exile and the exile is a path towards the kingdom– in fact, exile could actually be the kingdom.

Thus we have seen that Camus' works are rooted in the soil–a French soil essentially–specific period of time. His strength as an artist lies in his refusal to write any work that did not take into account and express directly or indirectly the anxieties and dilemmas of his generation. The emotional tone of each novel recalls the atmosphere of the historical period in which it was written but through the medium of fiction, Camus frees them from too specific a context. Essentially, he is concerned with man, and the basic pattern of existence is as timeless as the earth itself. That is why Germaine Bree groups all his works under the title, "Cautionary Tales for Our Time and All Time".

The greatness of the quality of Camus' art was confirmed when in 1957, he was awarded the Nobel Prize for "his important literary production which with clear sighted earnestness illuminates the problem of human censcience of our time". It is true that Camus is not the first writer to be shocked by the absurdity of human conditions in this world. In a way, the idea of living authentically in the midst of absurdity has informed all great art and literature throughout human history. For example we find existentialist, absurdist positions and postures in Shakespeare. Melville, Hardy, Dostoevsky Kafka and Conrad etc. But the point to note is that it is Camus who pursued the idea with courage, conviction and authority. Again we can say that Camus is not the first one to wish to wrest happiness from the present though passing moment.

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1. Philip Thody, Albert Camus, 1913-60, (Hamish Hamitton 1961), p. 93.

But what differentiates Camus from others is that his need for happiness was also associated with another need, that is, a feeling of responsibility for the suffering for innocent humanity. Camus finds this suffering to be intolerable for it has no compensation and no meaning. Basically his literary odyssey is a kind of search for moral affirmation in the face of suffering and despair.

This great, gifted and outstanding author was killed in an ancident at the age of forty six in January 1960. This unexpected death appeared to prove the truth of the philosophy of absurdity emphasized by Camus in all his works.

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2. Germaine Bree, Albert Camus, Columbia Essays on Modern Writers, No. 1, p. 33.

Lesson No. 1.8 **Author : Manjit Kaur**

Albert Camus : The Plague
a critical analysis of the text

STRUCTURE

1.8.1 A Critical Analysis of Part I

Of all Camus' works, *The Plague* is the best known. Published in June 1947, it was immediately hailed as an event. It became popular because of the universality of its theme and the accessibility of its ideas. Philip Thody rightly points out that in this novel, "Camus achieves the most difficult ambition of any writer concerned with ideas : that of writing a novel which deals with ordinary people and can be immediately appreciated by them".[1]

It is the most moving and perhaps the most disturbing novel that took its shape out of the chaos of the mid century. The war year had proved the insignificance of the individual human being and the absurdity of all human aspirations. These years had almost plunged Camus into silence and despair but he considered a resigned acceptance of the inevitability of war and oppression as a betrayal. He was a man of courage and so he stood up against the forces of oppression and injustice and fought for the defence of liberty and freedom. It is this experience of occupation and resistance that is reflected in the novel *The Plague.* This book depicts his reaction tothe total unintelligbility of man's condition and his resistance, fight and rebellion against human suffering. No religion, no ideology Camus asserts, can justify the spectacle of collective suffering inflicted upon man.

No doubt, man's condition in the world is absurd and man finds it impossible to make sense of his situation in the universe he inhabits but the discovery of this absurd situation should not be taken as a permission or a sanction

for complete moral irresponsibility. (That's what the Nazis did). Our response to the absurd must be positive, i.e., an attitude of protest and revolt and it is this response which is the theme of *The Plague.* In A *Note of Revolt* Camus writes "In absurd experience, suffering is individual. From the movement of revolt, it is the adventure of all the malady which until then was suffered by one sole individual becomes collective plague". In the novel, the plague is, of course, a symbol–a multi-dimensional symbol. Camus has used this symbol so often in his works that Germaine Bree says that for Camus it becomes "the representative of the calamities that can befall a human society".[2] The most obvious calamity that it represents in this novel is the Nazi Occupation. Camus also makes the plague represent different aspects of misfortune in human life such as loneliness, suffering and death. As such the plague is a suitable symbol of the absurdity of existence. We shall take up the symbolism of the novel in the last lesson. Let us first discuss the surface level story.

On the surface level, Camus's novel is an account of the plague that overwhelmed the town of Oran sometimes in nineteen forties. The chronicle is related in the third person by Dr. Rieux, participant and observer, whose identity is revealed only at the end of the novel. The narrator sets out to describe the progress of the epidemic, the behaviour of the inhabitants and the struggle against the plague undertaken by some courageous men.

It is a record of a collective, not a private adventure, which starts on a certain day in April when rats appear in increasing number to die in the streets and houses of Oran. Like others in the community, Dr. Ricus first ignores this strange phchbomenon. But the cases of fever break out and people are shocked out of their state of complacency and unawareness. City officials are reluctant to admit that there is a plague for them to deal with, but when death rate rises, they are foced to declare a state of contagion and put the town in quarantine. The gates of the city are closed and its inhabitants are separated from the rest of the world. The city is virtually in a state of seige.

The epidemic gradually spreads itself; with the change in weather, its virulence is intensified. The statistics indicate a continuous rise in the

3. D.R. Haggis, Camus" : La Peste, "Studies in French Literature", p. 27.

death rate. As the ravages of the pestilence increase, a small group of men led by a stranger in the city, one Jean Tarrou, form voluntary ambulance teams to help Dr. Rieux in his work. In spite of the efforts of doctors and volunteer workers to fight it, the plague takes a vast toll of lives. After an almost absolute reign of tenmonths, the plague's force decreases and it finally disappears. The city is free from its terror. It returns to "the unknown lair form which it had emerged in silence". The gates of the city are opened and the community once again returns to normal life. As the citizens of Oran celebrate the end of the seige and the opening of the city gates, Rieux resolves to write his chronincle. Dr. Rieux wishes "to compile this chronicle so that he should not be one of those who hold their peace but should bear witness in favour of those plague stricken people : some memorial of the injustice and outrage done them might endure; and to state quite simply what we learn in a time of pestilence : that there are more things to admire in men than to despite". (*The Plague,* p. 251).

Meditating on what he has learned from his experience, Rieux decides that the struggle for life is worth while. He knows, hoever, that their victory over the plague is temporary. The plague may return and that it can never be defeated forever.

As regards the behaviour of the inhabitants during the plague we can say that they are in the grip of fear or rather fright and this fear almost becomes panic when the death-rate shown an increase. They suffer from separation and exile. It is true that some try to evade it by paying visits to cafes and cinemas and others by flying into the arms of religion. Some, taking advantage of the situation, indulge in shady deeds but there are some who put in a courageous fight against it. These fighters are Rieux Tarrou, Rambert and Grand.

This, in short, is the story of the novel. The plot of the story is revealed in five parts. Of these the middle one is the smallest and the second and the fourth are the largest. Each part of the novel does a distinct job. Part I sets the scene, Part II shows the characters, Part III describes the plague crushing the city, Part IV points the battle of the city and most of the characters against the foe and Part V describes the unaccountable lessening and final disappearance of the plague.

The best one word summary of the five parts is given by Francis Henninger as "unawareness, awareness, death, commitment and life". First the people of Oran are unaware of the reality of their world and its inhabitants; they are unfit to become aware of the coming plague. Then they are awakened by brutal and terrifying statistics and prepare themselves for the battle. Then they are crushed both physically and psychologically by the pestilence. But they learn how to fight and organize their resistance and finally the plague leaves and the survivors are once again keenly alive.

1.8.1 A Critical Analysis of Part I

In Part I of the novel we have Camus' presentation of the scene of the story, of the inhabitants of the town, and of the plague itself in its factual and naturalistic aspect. For the presentation of the plague in its naturalistic aspects, Camus is principally indebted to Daniel Defoe's *Journal of the Plague Year.* Some of the features of Defoe's account have been taken by Camus and skilfully woven into the fabric of description of the plague at Oran.

Chapter I : At the beginning of the book, the town in which the plague breaks out sometimes in the nineteen forties is named as Oran. We know Oran to be a real place that we can find on the map, and a sentence in Quillot's book on Camus suggests that an outbreak of plague did, in fact, occur there. But as Dr. Haggis in his book *Camus : La Peste* points out, "while the name of the town links it to he 'real' world of experience, the manner in which Camus describes the town on the first page of the book simultaneously situates it in the realm of the imagination".[3] In certain respects Camus' presentation of the scene of his narrative appears tobe a faithful description of an actual North African town but at the same time it does not enable us to distinguish Oran from other North African towns. Actually Camus' description is designed to convey to us the atmosphere of the town or what may be termed as its 'affective climate'.

In order to understand the character of Oran, we must study an essay that Camus wrote in 1939, called 'The Minotaur' or 'The Stop in Oran'. It becomes clear from the study of this essay that the characters of this 'walled town that turns its back to the sea', a town doomed to pebbles, dust and heat made it suitable for the kind of experience Camus has tried to convey through his plague-image in the novel. The 'Oran' of the novel

owes much to the 'real' Oran in the wayits appearance is described. Here Camus describes this large French port on the Algerian coast, as an ugly town "without any trees or gardens, where you never hear the beat of wings or the rustle of leaves–a thoroughly negative place in short". (*The Plague,* p. 5).

The physical apperance of the town contributes to the citizens' complacency. It becomes easy for the inhabitants of such a place to become numb and to forget the rebellious desires that place men in opposition to the world. The people of Oran who have walled themselves in and who are completely bored, devote themselves only to cultivating habits, and habit as Beckett describes it, is a kind of compromise between the individual and his environment, a kind of lightening conductor of his existence that mitigates the pain of living. These people live feverishly but casually. Camus stresses that the people of this town of striking ordinariness do not really communicate with one another. They are interested only in 'business' or in making money and when they are not 'doing business' they fritter away their time in cafes and boulewards. Lost in their habits or the slumber of the absurdity of their mechanical life, these people are incapable of recognizing that a hostile universe might distrub their secure routine. They carry the burden of their existence without asking any question.

After describing the inhabitants of his Oran, Camus adds that such habits are not peculiar to this town. In fact, all our contemporaries are much the same. Modern man, like the Oraneans, it condemned to the routine of daily life and is not aware of the senseless character of his activity. He undertakes the trivial round of his daily routine mechanically without being concious of banality and meaninglessness. So long as he does not realise the meaninglessness of his situation or so long as the impulse of consciousness is not awakened, he can go on living without being haunted by the feeling of the absurd. But as Camus points out in *The Myth of Sisyphus,* one day the 'why' arises, consciousness is awakened and man realises the reality of this world. The 'stage sets collapse' and man becomes aware of the absurdity of his condition in the world.

Thus we see that Camus has composed his description of the town of Oran

and of the life of its inhabitants in such a way to give to the setting of *The Plague* a character at once peculiar and representative. When it appears to be a recognizable place in North Africa, in certain of its aspects, it is also a kind of microcosm of the world of twentieth century. He draws on his recollections of an actual North African town in order to give an air of authenticity to his description of the setting. Yet, as Albert Maquet rightlyputs it, "this backdrop is sufficiently featureless for us to lose sight of the fact that they are citizens of Oran, sufficiently impersonal for us to discover here the very replica of our slumbering consciousness."

At the end of Chapter I, there are some remarks about the style of the narrative. The narrator, whose identityis revealed only at the end of the book, emphasizes the point that his business is to relate what actually happened. In spite of his personal involvement in the events he proposes to narrate, he subordinates everything to direct and objective reporting as a witness. He has three kinds of data: firstly, what he himself saw; secondly, the accounts of other eye-witnesses; and thirdly, the documents which subsequently came into his hands.

Chapter 2

The narrator now drops the preliminaries and starts the narrative proper. His first hint of something extraordinary in his discovery of a dead rat on his door step. In the month of April, in the town of Oran, a number of rats, carriers of bubonic plague, come out of their holes to die in the streets. Like others in the town, Dr. Rieux first ignores the strange phenomenon. Perhaps he is too pre-occupied with his personal problems to understand that the apperance of dead rates foretells a threat to the seeming security of the town. His wife suffers from tuberculosis and is about to leave for a cure in the mountains. Rieux feels guilty; because of his duties as a doctor, he has neglected his wife.

The doctor begins his round in the outskirts of the town where his poor patients live. His first patient is a man suffering from asthma. This man in a way is a strangle absurd hero. He spends his days in bed transferring dried peas from one pot to another. This mechanical activity tells him when it is time to eat. It appears that this man has decided that the best way to pass this meaningless life is to do as little as possible.

A journalist Raymond Rambert comes to see Rieux. He has been commissioned by his newspaper to make a report on the living conditions prevailing among the Arabs and so he wants some information from Rieux. Since the journalist admits that it is not possible for him to publish an unqualified condermnation, Rieux refuses to furnish any information. Rieux suggests that Rambert might write about the appearance of dead rats.

The number of rats who come out of their holes to die in the streets goes on increasing. Dead rats become the talk of the town. Tarrou finds the state of affairs tobe rather odd. People feel perturbed and the hitherto tranquil town is shaken to its core. The Oraneans are awakened from their state of complacency and demand drastic measures to check the menace. But the situation worsens. Michel suffers from strange fever and finally dies of it. He is the first human victim of the plague.

In addition to Tarrou and Rambert, this chapter also introduces us to Joseph Grand, the municipal clerk, Father Paneloux, a learned and militant Jesuit and Monsieur Cottard who tries to commit suicide. Thus all the major characters of the novel are introduced here.

Chapter 3

This chapter deals mainly with Tarrou's opinion of the period already described by the narrator. In the beginning of the chapter, the narrator tells us something about Tarrou. Tarrou does not belong to Oran. He came to Oran some weeks ago and is staying in a hotel. He is a stranger to the town and no one knows from where he has come and what business has brought him to Oran. He is particularly fond of swimming and is a man of pleasing personality.

Then the narrator gives some extracts from Tarrou's diary which throw light on the narrative of the plague. In his diary there are comments about the ugliness of the town and the commercial character of the people. He finds the town intrinsically ugly–a town without trees and of hideous houses. All activities and even pleasures of the people of this town seem to be dictated by the consideration of business. Tarroon finds the appearance of dead rats queer but he is not much alarmed by this phenomenon because as he tells the night porter at the hotel, "The only thing I'm interested in a acquiring peace of mind."

Trrou is also fascinated by an old little man of the town who daily steps out on to balcony just to spit vigorously at the cats. Perhaps this old man has failed to establish relationship with human beings and for animals also he has nothing but hatred. Moreover, the meaninglessand insignificant routine of this man highlights the absurdityof human existence i.e., its monotonous repetitive and meaningless character.

Chapters 4 and 5

Things take a serious turn. The authorities are slow to aeclare that there is plague for them to deal with. Men begin to die but the local press has nothing to say. Rats die in the streets and so are in the news; men die in their homes and so the fact is not worthy of consideration. The number of human victims of the strange fever rises by leaps and bounds and the doctors know that it is plague. Yet they are afraid to utter the word plague.

The plague is not something new. There have been dangers earlier also. Still people are taken by surprise. Actually the people cannot believe that pestilence is possible. They think that they are free. But we know that the reality of existence is different.

Rieux's thoughts are fixed on the disease and its symptoms. Then he realises that the best thing in the given circumstances is 'to do your job as it should be done.' And as a doctor his job is to attend to the sick–to try his best to lessen their torture and struggle hard to cure them.

From Chapter IV we also know something more about the character of Grand. He shows great anxiety over his choice of words and experience great difficulty to find people words.

Chapter 6

The character of Grand is developed further in this chapter. As a clerk in the Municipal office, he is responsible for maintaining the figures of death. These figures are rising and now Rieux emphatically says that they should no longer hesitate to call the disease by its name. Grand tells the doctor that in the evenings he remains busy with his work which is connected with the growth of a personality. Grand seems to Rieux to be a kind of mystery man in his small way. He is a humble employee in the local administration. He is a small insignificant man who appears to have come into this world just to perform "the discreet but needful duties of a

temporary assistant municipal clerk on a salaryof 63 frances 30 dentimes per diem". Though he has been working in the office for the last twenty-two years yet he has not been confirmed. He could have gone to the officer and talked to him but his inability to find words does not allow him to do so. Moreover, he feels a particular aversion from talking about rights. Grand is a unique man, a rare man because he has the courage of good feelings. He has a capacity for affection and sympathy–a virtue that is not easily found in the age.

Chapters 7 and 8

Because of Rieux's efforts, a meeting is held at the Prefect's office discuss the nature of the disease. The question is toknow whether the strange fever is plague or not. Some doctors are still hesitant to use the word plague. The Prefect oo doesn't want to take the responsibility of declaring that it is plague. But Rieux is of the view that half the population maybe wiped out. Finally, they feel that the best thing is to take the responsibility of acting as though the epidemic were plague. Some precautionary measures are taken. People are asked to report immediately any case of strange fever and to send the sick person to the special wards of the hospital.

Here the narrator remarks that though the plague is there in the town, yet people are afraid to confront the reality. They go on performing their daily duties. Tarrou still watches the little old man spitting at the cats, Grand still has the capacity to pursue his mysterious literary activities and the old asthma patient of Rieux still measures time by decanting dried peas from one can to another. People throng the cincema houses and pay visits to cafes. Cottard is a changed man now that the epidemic has set in. He no longer remains aloof but tries to mix with everyone. It is clear that Cottard is a criminal wanted by the police. For him the situation created by the plague is welcome because the authorities now have something more important to deal with. Cottard is no doubt, a victim of fear and despair and this fear and despair decrease when he finds people being haunted by the plague. He feels that everyone is in the same boat–everyone is in the grip of fear and despair and this gives him happiness.

Finally, when the death rate has risen sufficiently, the authorities declare

a state of contagion and seal off the city of Oran from the outside world. The gates of the city are closed and its people enclosed with the scourge. Thus we see that Part I of the novel describes the city of Oran and its inhabitants before the plague, unaware of the horror about to thrash them. The coming of the plague is described here in such a way as to suggest the German invasion and defeat of France and the period of the Occupation. If we consider the general movement of the narrative in relation of the War, we can see that the rapid outset of the plague suggests the rapid sequence of events leading up to the outbreak of war; and the official recognition and the closing of the gates of Oran at the end of this section suggests the fall of France and the division of the country by the enemy. But transcending the limits of a particular crisis in history, the plague here is also a symbol of the absurd. The inability of the people of Oran to communicate with one another suggests the alienation of man; the fact of the Oraneans being lost in their routine life, unaware of the coming calamity, suggests the predicament of human beings lost in the mechanical activities of their day to day life, incapable of recognising the absurd reality of their existence; and the closed world of Oran is the absurd world in which Camus sees man condemned to live.

Lesson No. 1.9 **Author : Manjit Kaur**

Albert Camus : The Plague
a critical analysis of the text (contd.)

A Critical Analysis of Part II

In this part of the novel, Camus describes the activities and suffering of the whole population. It shows the characters facing the plague. Each character defines his philosophy of life as a conceptual source for his peculiar manner of behaving during the plague.

Chapters 1 and 2

The people of Oran become fully aware of the brutal reality and the plague is the concern of all. The gates of the city are closed and for the Oraneans, a long period of separation and exile begins. Camus is quite clearly establishing a parallel here between the official recognition of the plague and the closing of the town gates on the one hand, and the defeat of France in 1940 and the subsequent division of the country bythe Germans into an occupied part and an unoccupied one on the other. Then Camus deals at considerable length with the experience of the people who find, themselves separated, by the sudden and unexpected decision of the authorities, from those to whom they are deeply attached–wives or sweethearts, friends or relatives. They know that a long period of exile is tobe endured by them. They cannot even have the satisfcation of writing tothe loved ones because all correspondence is forbidden. These people are condemned to the same dull round inside the town day after day or to indulge in the illusive solace provided by the memories of the past. The feeling of exile, of separation and of a void within is felt by all. The people first drift through life and are helpless victims of aimless days and sterile memories. This description of the experience of separation clearly evokes an experience with which many people in France must have become familiar in the summer of 1940.

When the plague spreads, the people of Oran feel another kind of separation i.e. separation from the infected relatives. In case of death, relatives are separated from the dead person for ever. In fact, when the intensity of the plague increases, as Camus writes in his Carnets, "Separation becomes general. All are sent back to their loneliness". The idea of separation is rightly transformed by Camus and the word is made to suggest to us that sense ofithe ultimate individual solitude that overtakes man when he becomes aware of his predicament in an absurd universe.

Then Camus goes onto describe another aspect of the misfortum of the people of Oram These people who are separated from their loved ones are so lost in the thoughts of their love that they become immune to the general despair. "Their despair saved them from panic, thus their mibfditune had a good side" (page. 65). Their personal preoccupation, in fact served as a kind of 'screen' concealing from them the deeper implicit ions of the plague, the permanent, unchanging character of their situation which it is the function of the image to bring home to them.

In Chapter 2, we also come to know about Grand's married life. In his case, too much of mork destroyed the marriage. He had failed to keep alive this feeling in his wife that she was loved and so one day she left him. Grand could not find words to keep her with him. Then he wanted to write to her but even this was too difficult for Grand. His inability to find words or to express his feelings is made clear here. Though he is unaW§ 10 give expression to his emotions, yet his heart is full of love-all these years he has not been able to forget his wife. He suffers because he has been condemned to live in a loveless world.

Rambert, the journalist, comes to meet Rieux again. He tells the doctor about his beloved in Paris. Now that the town has been put into quarantine it has become impossible for him to go to Paris. He feels that he does not belong to Gran and so should be allowed to leave the town. Rieux tells him that there are many others like him in the town and they cannot be allowed to leave. Rambert's only desire is to escape from the town and be with his beloved. Actually the theme of separation is concretised in Rambert's character, and his wish to defy the plague and what it stands for by rejoining the woman he loves and so affirming the right to human happiness, is a manifestation of revolt.

Chapter 3

This chapter deals with Paneloux's first sermon. The ecclesiastical authorities of the town organize a week of Prayer and Father Paneloux is asked to preach a sermon beginning with the wordsi "Calamity has comt on you, my brethern, and my brethern, you deserved it". He goes on to explain that the plague is the just punishment given by God to those people who have connived at evil for too long. According to him the pestilence has been sent by God to teach the hardened people a lesson. People of Oran have sinned and God is striking themu Thus he interprets that plague as being divine in origin and punitive in purpose. He emphasizes his point that the evil as a method of punishment is an instrument for good. Here, as Cruickshank points out in his book Albert Camus and the Literature of Revolt, "we have a militant and bloodthirsty form of Christianity".

Paneloux here speaks of the punitive character of the plague in figurative terms. He uses language in such a way that it forms a kind of barrier between his imagination and reality. We come to know that he is used to thinking and judging in the name of an accepted system of ideas and this prevents him from entering imaginatively into the experience of others.

Chapters 4 and 5

In Chapter 4, we come to know about Grand's work. He is engaged in writing a book and wants it to be a perfect work. But the irony is that as yet he has not been able to go beyond the first sentence and even this sentence rewritten again and again is not satisfactory. His problem is the choice of right words and sometimes he has to spend weeks on the choice of simple conjunction. D.A. Haggis is of the opinion that through Grand's desire to write a book, Camus expressess in a semi-humorous way "his own pursuit of an ideal of artistic perfection." This is an activity which, in an absurd universe has the merit, in Camus' view, of being a way of fulfilment and a source of satisfaction that can be enjoyed without adding to the unhappiness of others.

Then Camus goes on to describe the behaviour of the people. Because of the heat the plague, some people lose their heads. Rieux is of the view that if the existing situation continues, the town will soon be a madhouse. There are scenes of violence at the city gates. The citizents make attempts

to elude the sentries and escape to the outside world. Rambcrt too yearns to escape from the exiled city. He makes ail efforts to do so but is not successful. The city is in the grip of the deadly disease and the citizens are panic-stricken but the different offices go on working serently. Rambert keeps on going to different offices explaining his case but nothing comes out of these rounds. Thus these two chapters reflect the mood of the people in general and of Rambert in particular when faced with the plague, the intensity of which is increasing day by day.

Chapter 6

The hot weather sets in and because of heat there is a startling increase in the number of deaths The people feel all the more disturbed, and violence at the city-gates increases. Here again the narrator quotes from Tarrocu's note-books so as to describe the condition of the town and its people in general. From these notebooks, it is clear that Tarrou takes great interest in the man who is in the habit of spitting on the cats and in Rieux's asthma patient who measures time by shifting psas from one pan to the other. The first of these two of men cannot continue his habit because of the disappearance of cats. He is not disturbed by the plague but is certainly sad when he finds no cat in the street. The man who has his own peculiar method of measuring time has been indifferent to his work and friendship. In fact, he is a strange absurd hero. As he believes that life has no meaning, he decides that the best way to live is to do as little as possible. In fact, his way of life is the opposite of that of Dr. Rieux, who spends his days giving vaccinations, caring for suffering patients, and making arrangements to bury the victims of the plague. Yet the old man appears to understand the natuee of life more clearly than many of the active heroes; it is impossible to judge him unfavourably. As Adele King points out. "He represents in the total framework of the novel, an element of irony, which shows the limitation of heroic action."

The narrator also points out in this chapter that from the behaviour of the people, one becomes aware of the fact that in the heart of every great calamtiy, the desire for life still lives. The certainty of death may make us aware of the absurdity of life and the meaninglessness of human situation yet people continue to live. No doubt, everything is rendered useless before the mathematical certainty of death, yet everyone continues to live as if

no one knew the truth about death.

Chapter 7

The death rate continues to rise and the plague is becoming pneumonic. Tarrou comes to Rieux with his ideas and plans for a voluntary group of helpers. He wants to fight against the plague because he hates men being condemned to death. During their conversation, they discuss Paneloux's views about the plague. Rieux is of the opinion that Paneloux has not come in contact with human suffering. One who has seen people suffer and die will try to fight against these conditions of human existence before pointing out the good side of human suffering. Rieux does not believe in God yet he i s devoted to the cause of humanity. People are sick and a s a doctor, he considers is to be his duty to defend them as best as he can against disease and death and to make all efforts to cure them. He tells Tarrou that when he entered his profession, he carried on his fight 'abstractedly', but when he saw people facing death screaming 'never' with their last breath, he was outraged by the whole scheme of things i.e. by the order of the world that is shaped by death. In such a situation, he believes it his duty to fight against death with all his might. He knows that there is no hope of conclusive victory; he realises that the fight against the plague is 'a never ending defeat' yet he does not regard it as a substantial reason for abandoning his struggle against the plague or his efforts to alleviate suffering wherever he can.

Here the doctor in the plague-ridden town becomes an image-a very appropriate image-of Camus'man of goodwill in the world of the absurd. His revolt springs from the vision of human suffering and death and shows him the meaning of the action to which he must dedicate himself-the struggle against evil. His way of service to others symbolizes one positive way of meeting the absurd.

Chapters 8 & 9

The men in the sanitary squads risk their own lives while fighting against the plague. The plague is here in the town and these men consider it to be their duty to fight against it and thus save the people from death and separation. Rieux, Tarrou and their friends do not believe in bowing down before the plague. Grand says' 'Plague is here and we've got to make a

stand that's obvious." The fight of Dr. Rieux and his associates in the sanitary squads against the plague, evokes of course the opposition of the Resistance movement to the German occupation forces and Camus himself was an active participant in the Resistance. But their struggle is not simply the struggle of the Resistance, it is also the revolt against the absurd.

The character of Grand is portrayed in these chapters with special sympathy, Like Meursault in The Outside, Grand is an humble employee'and presents "all the earmarks of insignificance". The narrator calls him the hero of the novel. He is a heroic figure because the modest role that he plays in the struggle and fight against the plague is inspired by kind feelings.

Rambert is still making efforts to escape. When all the lawful methods fail, he turns to the unlawful ones as suggested by Cottard. Cottard, the criminal, feels more at ease in the plague because the pestilence has put a stop to the police enquiries going against him. When Tarrou asks him to join the sanitary groups, he refuses to do so. In fact, plague suits him-it has removed fear from his mind. Rambert feels disappointed when his efforts to escape bear no fruit. Rieux tries to encourage him and Rambert says that perhaps the doctor has not understood the plague. "You haven't understood that it means exactly that the same thing over and over again". This sentence clearly suggests a parallel between the plague and the mechanical repetitive nature of our daily life which is an aspect of the absurd.

Rambert wants to escape from the exiled city* not because he is a coward an d is afraid of the plague. His reason is that he has put love above everything else in his life. But when he comes to know that Rieux's wife is in a sanatorium, a hundred miles or so away, there is a change in him and he offers to join the sanitary groups and fight the plague until he finds some way of getting out of the town.

Thus, this section of the novel on the whole describes an increase in the intensity of the plague and the struggle and fight of some courageous men against it. The increase in the intensity of the plague syncronises with the increase in the intensity of the summer heat-the sun is equated with the force of the plague. The summer, normally the time when the people of Oran feel most in tune with the universe, during the plague becomes

the season when the sun of the plague has killed all colour and sent all joys into exile. The Oraneans suffer the separation and exile which the plague brings with it and the experience of separation, as we have already discussed, is the experience of the people during the occupation and also the sense of alienation that overtakes man when he becomes aware of the absurd. When faced with the plague, Dr. Rieux and his associates put up a courageous fight against it and his struggle and fight can be read as an allegory of the Resistance movement on one hand and the revolt against the absurdity of the human situation in the world on the other.

PART III

This brief and middle part of the nov el is indeed the fulcrum of the book. It shows the plague crushing and swallowing everyone and everything. In it the narrator describes "the excesses of the living, burial of the dead, and the plight of parted lovers".

Because of 'the strong wind, which acts as the infection carrier, the plague now establishes itself in the heart of the town. On the one hand people are shattered by the lo ss of their loved ones ; on the pther hand they feel .anxious about their own safety. Thrown off the balance by the prevailing conditions, they go to the extent of burning their own houses under the delusion that by doing so they would kill the plague. But the plague, the great leveller, continues its cruel reign and people are in the grip of the feeling of unrest and panic. At the closed gates of the city, the sentries have a tough time. So strong is the longing to escape from the city that people resort to violence in order to fulfil it. Those who were considered to be really well behaved people in normal times now become crazy. They are so much unhinged by grief and fear that they do not know what is right and what is wrong.

The death rate goes on increasing and because of this the burial of the dead loses all its sanctity. All formalities and ceremonies are done away with. The dead spend their nights alone because the customary vigil behind the dead is not allowed by the authorities. The only concern of the authorities is the immediate disposal of the dead. So the dead are crushed to the open graves very hurriedly! In the beginning relatives of the dead feel sad about such speedy and unceremonial burials but soon they become

used to it.

When there is scarcity of coffins and shortage of winding-sheets, combine funerals become necessary. Time comes when naked bodies are thrown into the pit and covered with a layer of quickline. The human beings are buried like animals-the only distinction is that "men's death are checked and entered up".

The feeling of exile and of deprivation is felt by all. In the beginning they and memories of the beloved ones, but during the second phase of the plague, even memory fails them. They lose the soothing comfort that may be provided by memory. Feeling helpless before the plague the people adapt themselves to the situation. The plague tries the people so much that they almost wish to die. It even outs love from their hearts.

Of the five sections of the book, this central one is by far the shortest and it marks a climax. It deals with the time when the summer heart is at its fiercast and the plague at its most devastating. The time seems to have stopped and individuals have lost their personal characteristics. The plague has reduced them to a less than human state in which even suffering and despair have become a routine.

Part IV

Part IV of the novel paints the battle of the city and most of the characters against the foe. There is reign of death but men like Rieux, Grand, Tarrou and Rambert organise their resistance and show their ability to fight against the plague, and Camus' emphasis is on these courageous fighters.

Chapter I

The town is at the mercy of the plague. The people of the town have growfi indifferent to everything. The strain of the disease is telling on everyone. Even Dr. Castle is a changed man-he looks old and tried. Dr. Rieux is troubled by the all-pervading order of death but i too much involvement in the work does not allow him to become sentimental. He knows that the only thing he can do in the present conditions is to diagnose-he can no longer cure.

Cottard is the only man in the town who isneither discouraged nor exhausted by the plague. He is at ease in the pestilence-ridden Oran where death threatens everyone. The narrator quotes from Tarrou's diary

in order to throw some light on Cottard's personality "He is in the same peril of death as everyone else, but that's just the point; he's in it with the others". Cottard is happy because the plague has put an end to the police enquiries. Now he finds everyone in the same boat, everyone is hunted-the epidemic makes him feel part of the group. Tarrou tries to understand Cottard and to draw him away from his position of supporting the plague.

Some people try to escape from the thoughts of the plague by squandering money; They pay regular visits to cinemas and cafes. Tarrou and Cottard together go to the Municipal Theatre and Opera House where Orpheus is being staged. The house is full to its capacity. In the third Act, the singer who is playing Orpheus collapse with the plague. The spectators rush towards the exits uttering shrill cries of dismay. Cottard and Tarrou look intently at "what was a dramatic picture of their life in these days. Plague on the stage in the guise of a disarticulated mummer". The fact that cinemas and theatres of Oran are open and full, apply to the circumstance of the Occupation but hardly to those of an epidemic where their dadger of spreading contagion is too obvious. Thus we see that there are some details in the novel which are more applicable to the war than to the plague.

Chapter 2

Rambert continues his efforts to escape the city but at the same time he works indefatigably. Rambert is surprised that Rieux not only does nothing to stop him but actually seems to encourage him. He asks Rieux, "Why don't you stop my going ? Rieux's answer is that he has no argument to put up against Rambert's choice of happiness. Tarrou too, feel s happy when the time for Rambert's going is finally fixed up. But Rambert goes to meet Rieux and tells him. "I' am not going. I want to stay with you". Rieux tells him that there is nothing shameful preferring happiness and Rambert's reply is, "But it may be shameful to be happy by one self."

Thus we see that Rambert subordinates his private problem to his work for the good of all. He rises above his personal self and discovers a sense of solidarity that binds him to the humanity. In the beginning he considers himself to be a stranger in the town but now the spectacle of human suffering that he has seen in Oran has changed him and he says, "But now that-1 have seen what 1 have seen, I know that I belong here whether I want it or not". Through his attitude of revolt against the miserable

human condition, he has become aware of the common humanity that links all.

Adele King is of the opinion that Rambert's choice to stay in Oran is perhaps "the wrong choice." This critic feels that the novel olfers no clear-cut justification for Rambert's action and Rieux too says "For nothing in the world turning one's back on what one loves". It is true that every moral choice in an absurd world becomes ambiguous but Rambert*s decision to stay and be part of the community certainly shows his courage and his capacity to respond to human misery with love, sympathy and compassion.

Chapter 3

Dr. Castle's anti-plague serum is tried on the son of the pompous and self-righteous judge, Othorn Dr. Castle, Rieux and Tarro'u are there to keep watch and note stage by stage the effect of the serum. Grand and Paneloux also come there. The child moves convulsively on the bed and his agony is writ large on his face. Those who watch his agony minute by minute are outraged by the whole scheme of things where innocent children have to suffer so much.. Father Paneloux, a Jesuit priest, who considers the plague as a just punishment sent by God to the inhabitants of Oran, too is moved by the child's torture. He goes on his kness and cries "My God, spare this child". The cries of the child continue and Rieux finds it hard to bear them any longer- Suddenly there is silence and the child dies. A feeling of mad revolt rises in the heart of Rieux but Paneloux thinks that the suffering of the innocent is revolting simply because it passes our human understanding and he believes "Perhaps, we should love what we cannot understand". Rieux shakes his head and says; "No, Father I've very different idea of love. And until my dying day I shall refuse to love a scheme of things in which children are put to torture". The Plague, P. 178).

Camus, here seems to be concentrating on the problem of suffering and more particularly on the problem of the suffering of the innocent. It is the injustice of the death of the innocent child which makes it impossible for Dr. Rieux to accept Christian idea of an all powerful God. The Christians accept the sacrifice of the supremely innocent man, Christ, as well as the suffering of innocent children as having been willed by God, as Paneloux does in the novel. But "such a suspension of the normal standards of ethical judgement" as pointed out by Philip Thody "is impossible in the

philosophy of revolt," which demands that all solutions to human problems must be rationally formulated.

Rieux is not concerned with 'man's salvation'-as a doctor he is concerned with the health of human beings. Health is relative and attainable; salvation is absolute and uncertain, and Rieux, like his creator Camus, gives preference to the first.

The whole conversation between the priest and Rieux shows Rieux's hatred for death and disease. He believes in facing these and fighting against these. It is this sense of revolt against sickness and death which gives determination to Rieux and his men to carry on their struggle against the plague.

Chapter 4

This chapter deals with the second sermon of Paneloux, his sickness and finally death. This second sermon is preached shortly after the death of Othon's son. It differs markedly from the earlier one. The greater part of this sermon is reported in indirect speech by Rieux and although the plague is still personified, the elaborate figurative treatment of it has gone, paneloux now speaks of 'we' rather than "you" and thus identifies himself with his congregaiion, Philip Thody writes "There is much greater humility and a certain hesitancy in his manner and phrasing". All these stylistic changes indicate the change that has taken place in Paneloux's attitude during the five months that elapse in the chronology of the novel between the two sermons. He still maintains that good finally comes out of evil but he admits that this belief cannot be demonstrated rationally-it has to be accepted by faith. He distinguishes between necessary sufferi ng (e.g. of Don Juan in Hell) and apparently unnecessary suffering (e.g. of the child). He does not say that earthly pain in amply compensated by eternal bliss. Rather here he takes a 'leap' and asserts that we must will the suffering of the children since God wills it. The suffering or agony of a child is a horrifying fact but we must believe everything or deny everything. There is no middle way. The problem of evil brings one to the cross-road of complete faith or complete disbelief-we must wholly love or hate God.

A few days after the sermon, Paneloux falls sick but he refuses to consult a doctor. He has none of the specific symptoms of the plague and dies a

'doubtful case'. He wills to die in order to demonstrate his complete acceptance of God and His will.

Chapter 5

This chapter describes the mood and feelings of the people in general. All Soul's day comes but people do not go to the cemetries to lay flowers on the graves. In fact, they have already too much of death, for them each day has become the Day of the Dead because of the plague. Though there is no increase in the actual number of deaths at this stage, yet it appears that the pestilence has settled there for good. Rieux and his men have to work constantly under high pressure.

Another problem facing the authorities is the difficulty of maintaining the food supply. Even during the reign of death that daily demonstrates the uncertainty of human life profiteers are active. Taking advantage of the situation, these people sell essential foodstuffs at enormous prices thus creating more problems for the poor.

Tarrou and Rambert pay a visit to one of the camps. Tarrou in his notes writes about the inmates of this camp. These people are living in an exile and tried of thinking about death. They now think of nothing. These people symbolise the condition of human beings alienated from the world and from others and from their ownselves. Moreover, these isolation camps are symbolic of the concentration camps created during the German Occupation.

Chapter 6

Rieux and Tarrou take an nour off for friendship, Tarrou shares with the doctor the experiences of his life. He tells Rieux that as a young boy he had his innocence and lived without ideas. But one day something happened and he started thinking i.e. become aware of the absurd. His father, a public prosecutor, one day-in order to impress his son, invited him to come and watch him in court. That day-when Tarrou was seventeen-decided his future. Only one memory haunted him after that i.e. the figure of the criminal in the dock, a little red-haired man, who looked like an owl frightened by two strong a light, who was alive and who was inevitably to be; killed. Tarrou was horrified at this 'murder in its most despicable form i.e. capital punishment. After that incident, he could not stay at home. He

left home and decided to fight against the society that rested upon the institution of death penalty. "I did not want to be a carrier of the plague" he says and identifies it with the guilt which no member of a society which practices capital punishment can ever escape. But in the struggle against such a society and in his attempts to transform it he encountered the same plague but in a new form. He joined a group of revolutionaries and these men themselves pronounced death. One day he saw an execution by a firing-squad in Hungary. Again he felt the same horror that he had experiericed earlier. This experience revealed to him that, as he says, "I anyhow had plague throtigh all these long years in which, paradoxically enough, I'd believed with all my soul that I was fighting it". (P. 205). His companions tried to justify the occasional sacrifice of some men in the name of the salvation for all men. But Tarrou refused to believe it. He realised that in his efforts to defeat evil, he had become an accomplice of evil-a plague-striken person. Thus he tells Rieux that his past experiences have taught him that in this world these are pestilences and these are victims and he does not want to form the forces of pestilences. He knows that it is very difficult id become a true healer, but at least he can take the victims' side. By refusing to side with the pestilence, one may at least be an 'innocent murderer'doing the least possible harm, to men and occasionally perhaps a little good. He has chosen the path of sympathy to attain peiace. So the plague in Oran has not taught him anything new-he already knows that all human beings carried within themselves the germs of the plague i.e. the desire for violence. What is required is that "we must keep endless watch on ourselves lest in a careless moment we breath on somebody's face and fasten the infection on him."

Tarrou, in fact, wants to be absolutely free from evil, wants to achieve a state of total innocence which he himself knows is not possible tQ attain in the world of imperfection. But at least he can do his best to limit the "damage and destruction and that's what he decides to do when there is plague in Oran. His more personal and intimate aim is to become 'a saint without God' to attain a peace of mind where he will no longer feel his guilt for the death of others and be a carrier of the plague. But Rieux is interested in being a man.

Thus we see that the whole chapter gives an account of the two situations

that instituted in Tarrou a sense of responsibility for the suffering and even the death of his fellow beings. This account reflects Camus' own preoccupations, his preoccupation, first of all, with the moral problems underlying capital punishment. Camus believed that there cannot be any "lasting peace either in the heart of individual or in social customs until death is outlawed. To him this punishment of murder by murder was not only something absurd by unjust alsb. Like Koestler, Camus believed that "the death penalty besmirches our society, and its upholder cannot reasonably defend it".

Tarrou's second experience i.e. his realization of the fact that revolutionaries also use violence shows Camus' own concern with the politieal philosophy that justifies the liquidations of dissenters because it promises to establish a greater degree of justice for all in the future. No doubt, these revolutionaries have the best of intensions but the question is can these intensions justify the use of violence and murder? In their protest against suffering and death, do they have any right to add to these by killing their enemies ? Tarrou's reply is an uncompromising No'. In their attempts to establish a society based on absolute justice the revolutionaries are led to the path of violence and tyranny and Tarrou's sensitive spirit, or for that matter Camus's can never tolerate this. Camus, like Koestler and Orwell, challenges the Marxian view that a certain kind of violence in politics is both necessary and ethical.

Chapter 7

The plague becomes pneumonic. The magistrate M. Othon comes out of quirantime camp. The death of his little son has greatly changed this man. His hard impressive eyes have lost their "steely" glitter and now they reflect gentleness any sympathy. His own suffering has made him aware of the agony of others. He wants to join the group of voluntary workers believing that this work would make him feel less separated from his little dead son.

This chapter also describes the^agony of Grand. Christmas comes but it has none of its old-time festivity. People are cheerless and despirited. Grand's agony is so intense that he cannot control his tears. He is reminded of his wife Jeanne and of the Christmas that they had enjoyed as

youngsters. He has endured this loverless world for a long time but now he is weary of all these controls. Rieux is all sympathy for Grand. The anguish " of Grand longing for the face of his beloved fills his heart with passionate indignation. Grand falls ill. When Rieux visits him, Grand asks him to read the manuscript of his work. Rieux starts reading and a moment later. Grand asks him to burn it. Rieux puts- it in the fireplace and the pages are reduced to ashes. But the next day Grand recovers and feels sorry for his decision to burn these pages. The idea is that when one is pressed by the absurd from all sides and is filled with despair, even the pursuit of and ideal of artistic perfection cannot be carried on. But soon, one realises that within the absurd walls, that activity alone can provide some satisfaction. So Grand again decides to continue it.

Part V

This part of the novel describes the unaccountable lessening and final disappearance of the plague. Apparently having achieved its purpose and reached all its objective it disappears cosmically and not because of any human effort. The separated lovers are united and the life again becomes normal. All the survivors are happy-beginning to forget what they have had to suffer.

Chapters 1 and 2

After having held the town under its domination, for nearly six months, the plague's fury gradually diminishes. The serum begins to have an effect and the death rate decreases. The sudden set back of the plague is welcomed by all, yet the Oraneans are afraid to express their happiness. They begin to dream of the golden age of health but they are aware of the fact that one couldn't expect the plague 'to stop from one day to another'. In fact, they have been made wiser by the suffering they have undergone. The authorities declare that they have won a victory over the enemy but it is doubtful if this can be termed a victory. It is never known whether the resistence to the plague and the organisation to prevent at spreading are successful. The epidemic seems to be leaving as unaccountably as it had come. There is a striking resemblence between what Camus says here and what we find Defoe saying about the impression made by the London plague when it began to re cede.

When it is officially declared that the epidemic is over, the people feel happy and indulge in celebrations. But those who have their loved ones shut themselves in their houses. Those who have their relatives down with the plague at that time are unable to participate in the general jubilation. Thus there is happiness joy and laughter outside in to streets where as inside the houses of mourning there is a sense of exile and tears. This is the bitter reality of life.

There is only one person in the town i.e. Cottard, the criminal, who doesn't welcome the retreat of the plague and wants Rieux and Tarrou to assure him that the plague has not dissappeared completely. But the fact is that the town has already started returning to the state of normaley and with this the old services start up again, including the police. So two men appear looking for Cottord. The idea is that one cannot escape from the consequences of what one has done for long.

Chapter 3 and 4

Just a few days before the date fixed for the opening of the city gates, the plague strikes Tarrou. Tarrou fights against the disease, suffers a lot and finally dies. This death makes Rieux reflect on his own situation. What has he gained from the conflict between plague and life ? Nothing but knowledge and memories. Perhaps that is what a man can gain from his life long battle with the essential absurdity of life. But it is really very hard to live with just what one knows or remembers, completely cut off from what one hopes for, and it is this kind of life that Tarrou lives-a life emptied of all illusions and hopes. The experience of such a life makes man understand and nature of his situation in the world and naturally he loses all his peace of mind. Because of this only, Tarrou is in search of peace by service in the cause of others. This is the only way to give meaning to an otherwise meaningless life.

Rieux receives the news of his wife's death. He asks his mother not to cry. Suffering is not something new to him. He has been experiencing it for the last many months especially during the last two days when Tarrou lay dying on his bed. By causing the book to close upon Tarrou's death and Rieux's loss of his wife, Camus is emphasizing that human beings live in a condition where suffering predominates. The gates of the city are ceremoniously opened, follow ed by such rejoicing on the part of the people.

The people who had suffered the pangs of separation for such a long time now rush to meet their loved ones. Rambert too is happy to think that soon he will have his beloved with him. When he reaches the platform, his beloved in a flash throws herself on his breast. Holding her in his arms, he left his tears flow freely and these are tears of joy as well as of sorrow. To the united 1 overs, the plague had come and gone without changing anything. But those who have lost their loved ones think that the plague has not come to an end. For them the plague of separation will always be there to torture them, and such is the fate of Rieux whose wife has died.

The two celebrations that mark the end of the plague-the first when the death rate declines and the second when the city gates finally reopen-suggest a parallel to the liberation of Paris and the end of the war in Europe.

Chapter 5

In this last chapter of the novel, Rieux acknowledges that he is the narrator and explains his method. Although deeply- involved in the events he is narrating, Rieux adopts a detached tone and subordinates everything to the objective and direct reporting as a witness. The doctor's clinical objectivity, however, is not allowed to degenerate into a cold abstract. Everywhere he is on the victims' side and shares with them their love, exile and suffering. In the course of narrative' allusions; are made to the circumstances of his own private life, but these are brief, discreet and always kept in the background. Moreover, such matters are touched only for the light they may throw on the situation of his fellow citizens. Rieux is not simply describing his personal experience; the experience of the plague is a group experience-a collective experience-and Rieux has to speak for all.

He ends his narrative by writing about Cottard. Deprived of the plague Cottard is exposed again to his old fears of persecution. He goes mad and starts shooting at people in the street, i The police comes to arrest him and after much effort they catch him. Rieux is deeply moved by the scene of policeman beating and kicking Cottard. Perhaps it is "more painful to think of a guilty man than of a dead man".

The plague has run its course; the town comes back to its normal state.

The people are just same as ever. While observing the town folk celebrating their freedom from the plague, Rieux thinks of writing the chronicle. He wants to testify to the violence and injustice imposed upon his town and to the fact t hat man shows in times of tribulations more things to admjre than to despise. In fact, this man of compassion has respect for man's fragile joys.,

Even while'tile crowd is noisily celebrating the liberation of the .town, Rieux knows that there is no final victory in the Struggle, that the germ of the plague does not die, that human happiness is always threatened.

Thus, we see that five sections of the novel, suggests a circle of experience, from the common place to (he height of suffering and then returning to ordinary life. This circle will begin again, for the plague bacillus never dies. This arrangement of the novel suggests that man's history is a cyclical repetition.

Lesson No. 1.10 **Author : Manjit Kaur**

Important Characters

In *The Plague*, the people of Oran and the plague which seems to have a personality of its own, are the principal characters because, on the whole, this novel of Camus recounts a struggle between the epidemic and the community. But there are, as well, a few individual characters, who appear from time to time on a stage that is dominated by a destructive force and a suffering body of men. These characters are voices and attitudes before they are individuals, yet each character is differentiated by the particular way in which he reacts to the epidemic or by the particular form of sensitivity his suffering reveals. These characters represent a reply to the problem of evil and it is through them that the author pursues his search of an order of values in humanity's blind-alley existence. If their creator has withheld from them the keen breath of passionately imaginative life, it is because he did not propose to launch them into the free exercise of their lives allowing them to accomplish their destinies in their own ways. The role given to them is restricted and linear. Life has plunged them suddenly into a night of mistortune, injustice and suffering and each character is expected to reply to the question that is put to all at the same instant and in the same terms. Each one is a man confronting the condition of mankind and not simply an individual contending with his present problem.

"Against this background of collective misery and egotistic preoccupations, some individual in revolt against the plague are sharply silhouetted" writes Albert Maquet in his book ? Albert Camus : The Invincible Summer. The plague for these characters is the test which reveals instead of dissolving, which concentrates instead of disconcerting; it is a tragedy which calls upon each of them to specify the relations between his thought and his behaviour. Thus it is a case of extreme situation such as we find in the

works of such modern novelists as Conrad, Kafka and Graham Greene. Let us now take these fighters Ricux, Tarrou, Rambert and Grand one by one and see how they behave when confronted with the plague.

RIEUX

Of all the characters in the novel, Dr. Rieux, who is also the narrator of this ch roniclc of the plague is the least complicated. As a doctor, he occupies an important place in the fight against the plague. He hates death and disease and believes in facing these and fighting against these. He has devoted his whole life to this fight. The pestilence in Oran is only an acute manifestation of his daily enemy i.e. man's mortality. His ethics are clear-a doctor fights against illness and to fight it one must realise what illness is. Like Castel, he quickly realises the full implications of the situation in which the city finds itself and with no illusions, he does, to the limit of his strength, what it is his function to do.

Rieux is not concerned with 'men's salvation' as Father Paneloux is. As a doctor he is concerned with the health of human beings. "Salvation's much too big a word for me. I don't aim so high. I'm concerned with man's health; and for me health comes first" he tells Paneloux. In fact, he wants to serve human beings in a relative nd limited way without aspiring to the eternal or absolute. Salvation is something, absolute and uncertain whereas health is relative and attainable, and Rieux,, like Camus, gives preference to the second. In one of his conversations with Tarrou he tells him that when he entered his profession, he carried on his fight against illness and death 'abstractedly' but when he saw people facing death* 'screaming never' with their last breath he was enraged by death. His reaction to this discovery of the truth about human condition is not the negative response which Caligula gives when he discovers. "Men die and they are not happy", Rieux's revolt is positive-a revolt which helps to alleviate and gives rise to the dawn of brotherhood and solidarity. His revolt springs from his vision of human suffering and pain and it binds him to his fellow men.

Rieux fights against the plague with all his might. He knows the helplessness of his undertaking : as a doctor he can diagnose, not cure; he knows that there i s no hope of a conclusive victory; he realises that the fight against the plague is a 'never ending defeat', yet he does not consider it a substantial reason for giving up the struggle. His experience

of the human situation makes him spmpathise with others and dedicate himself to the struggle against evil. Following the fdictates of his heart' he takes 'the victim's side'and tries his best to share with his fellow citizens "the only certitude they had in common-love, exile and suffering". His wife dies sick of T.B., atone and removed from the scene of his struggle. His close friend Tarrou, is killed by the plague. In fact, the battle against the plague shatters his few illusions about his ability as a doctor and about the permanence of love and friendship. He survives the plague but knows that the plague of separation will always haunt him. As he watches the exuberant crowd on the night when the city gates are opened, he realises that he will always be a prisoner of the plague. This clear inner awareness of man's accidental and transitory presence on the earth will always remain with him. What has he gained from the conflict between plague and life ? Nothing but knowledge and memories-knowledge of the absusdity of human situation in the world and memories of the dead -past.

In fact. Rieux is a conqueror and in The Myth of Sisyphus, the conqueror is described as one of the four heroes of the dbsiird. By conqueror, Camus does not mean a victorious general; his conqueror is a revolutionary struggling for justice and happiness. This definition applies to Dr. Rieux- a man of action in the interest of a relative and limited future and struggling against the creation as he finds it. He doesn't believe in God and Tarrou asks him "why do you yourself show such devotion, considering you don't believe in God ?" Rieux's reply is that if he believed in the all powerful God, he would leave the business of curing the sick to Him. He doesn't believe in God but he has faith in humanistic virtues and these virtues reside in his heart. When faced with the plague or war or the absurdity of life, this man has the courage to manifest the qualities of love, compassion and understanding. His sense of responsibility does not allow him to bask complacently in his own happiness as long as some men continue live to in a state of distress. He isv in fact, a modern Sisyphus condemned not to roll a stone toward the summit, but as a doctor, to minister the sick. The plague is his rock and gives him dignity.

TARROU

Jean Paul Tarrou, who has been described by some critics as Rieux's

'alterego' too is a fighter against the plague. His fight against the plague is a continuation of his life struggle against the plague in general identified by him with the existence of death penalty. The whole pattern of his life is determined by one thing-his horror of the legalized murder. He has his first feeling of nausea or we can say, his first intimations of the absurd when at the age of seventeen, he hears his father, a prosecuting attorney, demanding the execution of a convicted criminal. He feels horrified and resolves to fight against the society that is based on capital punishment. The whole incident makes him think i.e. makes him aware of the absurdity of human situation and question it. To fight against death penalty, which he describes as 'murder in its most despicable form, he becomes a political revolutionary. But this form of action makes him face the same plague in a new form. The revolutionaries with whom he works themselves pronounce death sentences and one day he actually witnesses an execution in Hungary. This experience reveals to him as he says, "I had not ceased to be a carrier of the plague during all these long years". His companions try to justify the occasional sacrifice of some men in the name of the salvation for all men. But Tarrou refuses to believe in this. In his fiuht against suffering and death, the rebel has no right to add to these by resorting to the path of violence and destruction. He refuses to believe that the fight for a better world can ever justify this 'disgusting butchery'. He comes to feel that in his efforts to defeat evil, actually he has become an accomplice of evil-a plagueridden person. He tells Rieux, "Yes, I've been ashamed ever since; I have realised that we all have plague and, I have lost my peace". Tarrou's account of the two situations by means of which he incurs a sense of responsibility for the suffering and death of his fellows reflects Camus' own preoccupation with moral problems underlying capital punishment and his concern with a political philosophy that justifies the use of violence and murder in the present so as to establish a greater degree of justice for all in future. In fact, Tarrou's emotional reaction against capital punishment is Camus' own and his remarks that "it seems to me that history has borne me out; today there's a sort of competition, who will kill the most" reflects Camus' own horrified vision of the mid twentieth century politics.

Tarrou's experience has taught him that in this world there are pestilences and there are victims and he does't want to join the forces of pestilence. It is intolerable to his sensitive spirit that man should ever side with pestilences against humanity becoming directly or indirectly the agents of their fellow human beings' misfortune or of their death. He knows that it is very difficult to attain a state of total innocence in this world of imperfection or to become a true healer but at least he can take the victims' side. By refusing to side with the pestilence, one may at least be an ^innocent murderer' doing the least possible harm to human being. He has chosen the path of sympathy to atta in peace. The plague in Oran has not taught him anything new-he already knew that all human beings carry within thim the germs of the plague i.e. desire for violence. What is required is that "we must keep an endless watch on ourselves lest in a careless moment we breathe in somebody's face and fasten the infection on him". (The Plague, P. 207).

Tarrou conscientiously develops an ironic awareness of life's absurdity. He keeps notebooks putting down all the meaningless activity about him. He attracted by the ugliness of Oran, finding in the sordid commercial character of the city a confirmation of his view of life. Those notebooks which the narrator incorporates into his narrative, also describe Tarrou's attempts to find inner peace and to kill the germs of the plague within himself. He is obsessed with a desire to understand yet not to pass judgement and because of this desire only he tries to befriend Cottard, the criminal.

Tarrou wants to attain a state of total innocence or to achieve a purity of thought and action. But this search is something beyond man's ability. As Adele King puts it, "Tarrou's search for inner peace is noble, but it seems a leap beyond man's situation into transcendental". He aspires for something beyond and above human individual and can find it only in death 'too late to turn into account', Rieux is of the opinion that only those whose desires are limited 16 man and his humble yet formidable love are rewarded in life.

Tarrou wants to be a saint without God while Rieux is content merely to be a man, and Camus perfers Rieux's strictly human attitude to Tarrou's

quest for sanctity and sainthood. But there is no denying the fact that Tarrou too is a fighter, as dedicated to his fight at Rieux. He is all praise for the doctor who goes on fighting his war in which no victory is lasting and the doctor in turn is sympathetic to Tarrou's desire to fight against the plague in the broadest sense of the term. Their paths are not the same yet they follow parallel lines and Tarrou tells Rieux, "we are both after the same thing, but I'm less ambitious" (The Plague p. 204).

RAMBERT

Rambert, the journalist, has been described very sympathetically in the novel. He is a more human though a less dedicated figure than Tarrou and Rieux. He does not belong to Oran. He has come there to make a report on the living conditions prevailing amongst the Arab population. But once the plague settles in Oran, he is imprisoned in the closed city. He had no sense of belonging to the city : the woman he loves is in Europe and all he wants is to join her there. He does everything in his power to get out of the town because he feels obsessed by the feeling of exile and cannot bear separation from his beloved. In fact, Rambert concretizes the fundamental theme of the novel : the suffering that the plague causes by separating and isotating all who consciously or not, love each other.

One of the evils of the plague is its ability to make mem seem abstract and less than human. But as Adele King rightly points out, "Rambert does not get caught in the abstraction of the plague; when the others have lost their sense of the passage of time, he counts the days that he has been separated from his mistress". In trying to escape, Rambert justifies the right of man to avoid succumbing to the plague's depersonalised effects. When he is told by Tarrou that Rieux's wife too is suffering at some distant sanitorium, he is moved and decides tp stay and fight the plague. We cannot say that his decision to turn his back on his happiness or his sacrifice is worthwhile but there is no denying the fact tha^ this decision shows his courage. "But now that I hpe seen what I have seen, I know that I belong here whether I want it or not. This business is everybody's business'. (The Plague p. 170). He who has been living in terms of feelings only has now learnt to reconcile his, feelings with what the plague means as an abstraction. In fact, in Camus' world one hps "tp fjggl" in order *'to understand". Rambert's capacity to feel helps him to understand the

situation created by the plague. The spectacle of human pain and suffering that he witnesses in Orap changes him-his heart responds to human suffering with love and sympathy. He realises that if he went away would feel ashamed of himself, even though Rieux tells him "There's nothing shameful to be happy by oneself" (The Plague, p. 170).

Thus Rambert subordinates his personal and private problems tp his work for the gppd of pll. By depiding to stay and fight the plague, he rises above his pergonal self and sacrifices his pwn immediate happinesg. This sacrifice helps him to discover a sense of solidarity that binds him to the suffering humanity. In fact, no sensitive heart can keep from responding tp human suffering with sympathy.

It is true that the experience of the plague changes him too much and in the closing pages of the novel, there is a suggestion that perhaps he has sacrificed too much; "he had changed too greatly, The plague had forced on him a detachment which, try as he might, he couldn't think away, and which like a formless fear hunted his mind" (The Plague p. 240), He can no longer be the man who at the outbreak of the plague hag only one thought and one desire-to be with his beloved. Now that he has undergone the experience of the plague, he has understood the absurd reality of man in the world. One who had lived at the level of consciousness now develops conscience.

At the end of the novel he is reunited $ith his mistress. He has his reward in this very life because his desires ate 'limited to map ap$ h|§ humble yet formidable love'. In the beginning of the novel he is described by the narrator as one who 'gave the impression of someope who could Jceep |jf$ e^d up in any circumstances' and that's what he really is.

JOSEPH GRAND

Joseph Grand, whom Rieux proposes as the hero of his narrativ e, is a small insignificant man who works as an underpaid clerk in a government office. Like Meursault of The Outsider Grand is an humble employee and presents "all the earmarks of insignificance'. His wife, Jeanne, had left him many years before * because he could not keep in her the feeling that she was loved. In his case; too much work destroyed the love. As Germaine Bree points out, "Grand had lost love for he had let it to be stifled by the

dreary routine of his insignificant life" as a clerk in the city administration and so he suffers from the loneliness and unrequited love. He still thinks of his wife, wants to write to her to explain to her so that "she could be happy without remorse" but his problem is that he cannot express himself. He seems to be 'searching for words', he stammers and words come 'stumbling' when he tries to express himself. It is because of this infirmity, that when his wife was growing weary of him, he was unable to find words to keep her with him and again it is this infirmity which still keeps him from writing the letter which would justify him in the eyes of his beloved. Between these two impossible letters is drawn, on the chart of his life, the curve of his destiny.

Grand's seemingly absurd ideal is to write a 'perfect' novel, whose very first sentence he has not been able to complete to his satisfaction. It is his form of rebellion against the pettiness of his life. In fact, lhrough Grand* "Camus expresses in a semi humorous way his own pursuit of an ideal of artistic perfection". This is an activity which in the absurd universe, has the merit of being a way of fulfilment and source of satisfaction that can be enjoyed without adding anything to be the misery and unhappiness of others.

Why has this disillusioned insignificant man who exudes the faint odour of smoke- filled basement rooms, who has been put into the world for the sole purpose of performing the discreet and indispensable duties of a temporary assistant municipal clerk, been described as the real hero of the novel ? It is because in a certain sense his life is exemplary. He is one of those men, rare in Oran as elewhere who always have the courage of their good feelings. The little that he confides of himself testifies in effect to acts of kindness and a capacity for affection that no one dares to own in this century. He may not be able to express himself but this heart is full of feelings-feeling of love, sympathy and understanding. He is the hero because the modest roll that he plays in the fight against the plague inspired by kind feelings. Moreover he is engaged in an activity as modest and as unassuming as that which Camus had admired as expressing the true nature of rebellion. He keeps the statistics of the plague. In, A Note on the Revolt it is stated by Camus that the action of a trade union secretary who

keeps his accounts upto date is "metaphysical revolt, just as much the spectacular daring which sets Byron against God". In fact, true rebellion against injustice lies in the humble task such as that undertaken by Grand, which helps man in his fight against it.

Grand is involved in the fight against the plague not because of any intellectual convictions but simply because he feels that people must help each other. "Plague is here and we've got to make a stand." More than Rieux and Tarrou, he is the true embodiment of quiet courage. As Maquet points out, in his book Albert Camus. The Invincible Summer "Between Rieux who has unhesitatingly turned his back on personal happiness to throw himself whole-heartedly into the fight, and Rambert, who has joined it after a struggle with his conscience, Grand will represent that category of individuals who are impelled by a kind of sure and noble instincts to do what is necessary in time of misfortune without any choice or renouncement on his part".

Although revealed in a subtle and insistent light, Grand plays only a small part, a little in background. In the moments when his face passes under full light, we are given a geimpse of what human vocation is; we experience it through him : it is a vocation of suffering and of humble grandeur The caricatured nature of this little insignificant man goes beyond the merely picturesque and becomes charged with symbolical meaning. The true healers' and the 'saints without God' give to heroism a place above happiness and this Camus disliked. Grand, on the other hand has no concept of heroism and even though he fights against the plague, he still remains absorbed in his own drama-the slender horse woman of his literary efforts and the memory of Jeanne, the two phantoms aiternating in his nostalgic reveries.

In fact, this man comes out of the rank and file to bear witness in his suffering and his courage to a dignity that the superior characters maintain in a clearsighted revolt. It is to him that the novel owes the best part of its optimism.

To sum up, we can say that all the important characters of the novel-Rieux, Tarrou, Grand and Rembert are fighters and their resistance and struggle against the plague symbolizes the Resistance movement and the

rebellion against the absurd. The experience of the plague brings changes in the characters and these changes have great significance. Most of the characters are better off after their encounter with the plague than what they are before. Rieux is less jaded, more involved; Grand is able to communicate directly with his wife; Rambert subordinates his private problem to his work for the common good; the judge Othon becomes warm to his fellowmen and loses his uncompromising rigidity; Tarrou's death is his final victory over the plague and death; and Father Panelous after having seen the agonising death of a child who dies of the plague, cannot believe in his earlier notion of the plague as a just punishment. All these changes are in the direction of communication, commitment and life. In order to live, we must learn to communicate truly and to commit our lives to our fellowmen.

Rieux, Tarrou, Grand and Rambert in different ways and for different reasons-pit their wills against the affliction and struggle hard to alleviate suffering. However, useless or insignificant their actions might seem to be, they continue to perform these and refuse to submit to the plague. All of them testify to man's allegiance to men and to man's capacity for love, affection and sympathy. The irrational and unjust world is admittedly overpowering yet its violent outrage cannot destroy the inherent human value.

Lesson No. 1.11 **Author : Manjit Kaur**

Some Important Aspects

STRUCTURE

1.11.1 SYMBOLISM

1.11.2 STYLE

1.11.1 SYMBOLISM

The epigraph, "It is as reasonable to represent one kind of imprisonment by another, as it is to represent anything that really exists by that which exists not invites us to surpass the realism of the work and to penetrate its veritable reality. The plague here k a symbol-a multi-dimensional symbol. Camus has used this symbol so often in his works that Germaine Bree says that for Camus it becomes "the most representative' of the calamities that can befall a human society. The most obvious calamity that the plague represents in this book is the Nazi Occupation of France and Europe. When the book appeared in 1947 most French critics greeted it as an allegorical presentation not only! of 4La Condition humaine', in general, but also of the particular experience of the German Occupation. The minds barely delivered from the nightmare of the dark years of the war quite naturally were inclined to recognize the plague as being the German Occupation and the struggle against the epidemic as the very action of the Resistance. What Camus intends to tell us through this narrative of an outbreak of plague is the experience of the defeat of France and the German Occupation. In his letter to Ronald Barthes, CaipniM states that his novel has "as its evident content the struggle of the European resistance against Nazism".

The segregation of Oran from the rest of the world, necessary from a strictly medical point of view, symbolizes the separation of France from

the rest of the civilized world between 1940 and 1944. The impossibility for the citizens of Oran to protect themselves against the arbitrary death sent by the plague differs little from the helplessness of the average French citizen in face of the imprisonment as a hostage or the deportation for forced labour imposed by the German Occupation, The men whd fight against the plague resemble those with whom Camus worked in the Resistance movement. Father Paneloux is given an heroic role, because Camus wants to render homage to those Christians (such as his close friend, Rane Leynard, who was captured and executed by the Germans) who.sacrificed themselves in the Resistance movement. In fact, the military images, metaphors and analogies that Camus has used throughout the book, the atmosphere of threat and exile that he has built and the various phenomena such as isolation camps, separatiop of the city; from the rest of the world, clearly show that the plague symbolizes the Nazi Occupation. Yet the plague is not simply this one particular historical crisis it becomes a symbol of violence in general. As Cruick-shank points out. "Indeed, through the generalising agency of the symbol, the Nazi Occupation is put into the wider historical context of all social, and political tyrannies and the justification of resistance to them". Camus hipsblf in his letter to Barthes states that his novel .emphasises resistance to all, and every kind of tyranny The very idea behind using a symbol and not directly naming any one particular tyranny is to condemn and strike at all of them.

Camus' symbol extends further. From being a symbol of war and tyranny, which is one asbebt of evil, it becomes the symbol of evil in general, and as such it enfolds in itself all the problems 6f human suffering, misery, pain and wretchedness. Father Paneloux in the novel provides the attitude of H Christian to the problem of evil. In his first sermon, he expresses his opinion that the darkness of the plague is the punishment given by God to those people who have connived at evil for too long. But he changes his views when he witnesses the agony and suffering of Othon's little child. In his Secbnd Sermoii, he takes a 'leap' and asserts that we must will the suffering of the children since God wills it: But Rieux refuses to aspects the harsh logic advocated by the priest. Like Camus he refuses to accept the scheme of things that condones the suffering of innocent

children. Never ending' struggle against suffering and death is his answer to the plague and all the evils in the world.

The experience of the Oraneans under the plague is not simply the experience of the inhabitants of the occupied countries. It also expresses certain unchanging aspects of all human experience. The 'closed' world of Oran is the absurd universe in which human beings are condemned to live and die. Just as people living in Oran are separated from the outer world and isolated from each other, so are the human beings living in exile and solitude. Camus finds in the plague a suitable symbol to represent the absurdity of existence because it brings men and women face to face with the reality of suffering and death, which provide the primary evidence of the absurd. The closed world of Oran also indicates that there ie no escape from the painful reality of human existence i.e. from its monotony and repetetive character.

In fact, The Plague reveals Camus' skill as a writer not only in the way he contrives to make the plague image suggest both a real outbreak of the plague and the same time something more than the plague but also, in the way he manages to use the different figurative meanings that the image is made to assume. For example let us take the opening of the second section of the book. Here Camus is quite clearly establishing a parallel between the official recognition of the plague and the closing of the town gates, on the one hand, and the defeat of France in 1940 and the subsequent division of the country by the Germans into an occupied and unoccupied Zone, on the other. Camus describes the experience of the people of Oran who find themselves separated from those to whom they are deeply attached and this description cleary evokes an experience with which many people in France must have become familiar in the summer of 1940. This is not the only kind of separation that is experienced by the people of Oran. Faced with the plague; they are also cut off from their future i.e. they can make no plans for the future and secondly the plague brings to them a constant threat of suffering and death. So the idea of separation is subtly transformed, and the word is made to suggest to us that sense of ultimate individual solitude that overtakes man when he becomes aware of his predicament in an absurd universe.

The fight of Rieux and his associates against the plague evokes of course, the opposition of the Resistance movement to the German occupation forces. When faced with the Nazl-plague, a few dedicated Frenchmen wedded to the Resistance volunteered to vindicate the honour of their defeated and occupied motherland. But to see the struggle against the plague simply as the Resistance movement is to ignore its much wider context. If we take the plague as a symbol of the absurd, then the fight against the plague symbolizes the rebellion against the absurd. No doubt, Camus in this novel deals with the absurdity of human existence as he does in his earlier novels but now the answer to the absurd has changed-it is no longer the indifference of Meursault or the destructive rage of Caligula, but a positive revolt. From the experience of the absurd springs the movement of revolt and through the attitude of protest and revolt against a condition which Camus sees as the lot that all men share, his characters, i. e. Rieux and his associates discover the common humanity that binds them to one another.

Let us first take up the inconsistencies in the use of the plague as a symbol. The parallel between war and plague is not always clear cut. There are some details in the novel that are more applicable to the war than to the plague. The cinemas and threatres remain open, inspite of the obvious dangers of contagion. Shortage of food, petrol and clothing is an acute problem in Oran. This suggests war-time France rather than plague in any modern city where incoming supplies would presumbly be more adequate. Sometimes the suggested parallels to the war prove ambiguous. The quarantine camps and the incinerators used for cremation call to mind German concentration camps, yet Rieux, who resembles a Resistance hero is instrumental in setting up the camps and recruiting people to staff them.

These incongruities point to a basic ambiguity : the choice of natural evil to symbolize a social evil. Since it never necessitates violence against others men, Rieux's work differs from that of the Resistance movement. The people of Oran were innocent victims of the plague; their situation has none of the moral ambiguities of war.

Many critics feel that the choice of a natural disaster to symbolize war

and torture perpetuated by human beings reflects a fundamental weakness of Camus' thought : a diregard of man's guilt. As Cruickshank says. "It covers human wretchedness but ignores human wickedness". No doubt, the plague offers many circumstancial similarities to the Occupation, but it is powerless to convey a sense of its human agency and moral ambiguity. One cannot equate the resistance to microbes with resistance to men. What would combatants of La Teste do when faced with a human visage of pestilence ? Was tile question asked by many entities and Camus answers them in his letter to Roland Barthes. He wrote"it has already received its answer, which is a positive one. What these combatants whose experience I have partially translated, did's they did in fact against men, and at a price which you know well'. This reply though sincere is not convincing. Camus chooses to transfer an actual fight against men into an allegorical fights against disease and in doing so as Philip Thody writes, he has, "eliminated the problems raised by a struggle in which men have to kill the r fellows".

Some problems occur in the plague at the absurd level also. The most obvious one is that plagues are 'sporadic phenomena' whereas the absurd is permanent feature of the human condition. In spite of this inconsistency, we can not deny that the symbol is powerful enough to evoke the reality of human existence; horror of dying, alienation from self, from the other and from the world. In fact, Camus has blurred the edges of his symbol toward of excessive simplicaiion but at the same time, he keeps intact its general validity.

1.11.2 STYLE

The whole chronicle of the plague is narrated in the third person by Dr. Rieux who reveals only at the and of the novel that he is the narrator. This revelation does not surprise us because clues to it arc scattered throughout the text. And indeed, had there been none, the amount of knowledge that the nameless narrator has, from the beginning about Rieux's intimate feeling would probably alert all reflective readers. Rieux is the central moral consciousness and our understanding of the incidents and situations decribed in the novel comes from this source only, though at places the diary or Tarrou also helps to illuminate them.

The actual situation here is similar to that in The Outsider : a person recounting his own experience without revealing any emotional involvement. In both the novels we have the same detached and objective narrative voice speaking in clipped sentences and using 'white prose' a neutral, colourless and bare prose. Now the question arises why has Camus adopted the 'pseudo-third person' in the novel when he could easily narrate the story by a first person narrator ? the answer, of course, is that Camus here is not describing the response and reaction of one person, the matter related is not the private personal experience of the narrator but an account of his participation in a collective experience. The experience of the plague is a group experience and Rieux has to speak for all, "bear witness in favour of those plague-stricken people."

Quite early in the book, it is made clear that Rieux believes in admitting and facing the facts of the plague. At the meeting convened in the Prefect's office to discuss the situation in Oran, to answer the question whether or not an outbreak of plague has occured in the town, and consequently, whether precautionary measures should be taken or not, Rieux insists on describing what he has actually seen and experienced and on deciding in the light of that description what ought to be done. But contrasting with his attitude is the attitude of Dr. Richard, Chairman of the Medical Association, supported the Prefect's stand on the issue, explaining away the fever in vague, medical book sounding generalities and refuses to allow Dr. Rieux to isolate the patients, as recommended, since there is no definite proof of contagion. Dr. Richard also uses language full of escape from reality and this is something that Rieux refuses to do of this attitude of Rieux, the style of his narration is an exact transcription. Whether we take plague as an image of occupation or of the absurdity of human situation in the novel, Rieux's even tone, controlled manner, clear and precise language indicate his courageous recognition and acceptance of the situation.

Throughout the narrative, Rieux tries to be objective and to describe only the facts. He subordinates everything else to the sober, direct reporting of what he has witnessed. Camus' style in the Plague largely conforms to the themes that he has chosen to highlight the novel. Through the use of

highly effective and appropriate images, metaphors and symbols in the novel, he is able to capture the political nucances of style.

The Plague is an allegorical attempt to capture the suffering, injustice, and savages of a society during its occupation in World War II. Using images, metaphors and symbols, Camus likens the pain of the plague in Oran to the pain of Nazi occupation. The reference to the period of the plague as "a region of terror" clearly refers to the Hitler's reign and the atrocities he sanctioned during the war. The sheer lack of preparation on the part of the populace and the laxity of the regulations in the early stages of the Oranian plague apply to the conditions in France and other European countries when Hitler began his ravages.

The style of the novel alternates between graphic descriptions of the physical horrors of the plague and the attendant psychological havoc created by the disease. The best illustration of this pattern of alternation is found in Part III, where details about the arrangements for disposing of dead bodies are followed by a discussion of the pain endured by the surviving exiles. During the Nazi occupation of Europe, the Jews also suffered both physical and emotional pain.

Another variation in style is achieved through interspersing Tarrou's observations in his journals with the narration of Dr. Rieux. Tarrou's style is often ironic and occasionally tongue-in-cheek with a penchant for understatement. The lightness of Tarrou is a stark contrast to the seriousness of Dr. Rieux, who tends to give every detail of the unpleasantness associated with the plague. His long descriptions are most obvious.

1.12 Long Answer-Questions

1. Write a note on myth of Sisyphus.
2. Discuss the Plague as an allegary.
3. The character of Dr. Rieux.

1.13 Short Answer-Questions (Solved)

Q.No. 1 What does Camus tell about Oran and Oraneans in Chapter I of the novel ?

Ans. In Chapter I of the novel, Camus names the town in which the plague

breaks out sometimes in nineteen forties as Oran. Then he describes it as a 'walled town that turns its back to the sea.' It is an ugly town without any trees or gardens, a town where one can never hear 'the beat of wings or the rustle of leaves'. It is a town dommed to pebbles, heat and dust a 'thoroughly negative place' in short.

The physical characteristics of the town contribute to the citizens' complacency. It is natural for the people of such a place to become numb and to forget the rebellious desires. The walled in Oraneans lead a life of habits only. There people are interested only in business and in making money. They are so absorbed in their daily mechanical activities that they do not communicate with each other and carry the burden of existence without asking questions.

Q. No. 2 How do the people of Oran react when rats start coming out in the streets to die ?

Ans. In the month of April, in the town of Oran, a number of rats come outof their holes to die in the streets. In the beginning, the Oraneans who are lost in their daily routine ignore the phenomenon. But when the number increases, this becomes the talk of the town. People are perturbed and when men also begin to die of a strange fever, the whole town is shaken toits core. All know that the plague is there in the town, yet they are afraid to confront the reality and utter the word plague. But when the number of human victims of the strange fever increases people become panic-stricken and want the authorities to take drastic steps to check the menace.

1.14 Suggested Readings

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