

**Semester V**  
**Discipline Specific Elective 1**  
**History of English Literature (OE to 1798)**  
**1700 to 1798**

**THE AUGUSTAN AGE**

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### OBJECTIVES

The prime objectives of this unit are: to make the students aware of socio-political milieu of Augustan Age, of social change, of literary tendencies of the age, and of prose, novel, poetry and drama of the Augustan Age. After studying this unit the students will locate the prescribed text into the literary period and understand the text in the light of the Augustan Period.

### INTRODUCTION

In literature this period is known as the Augustan age. According to Hudson the epithet –Augustan|| was applied as a term of high praise, because the Age of Augustus was the golden age of Latin literature, so the Age of Pope was the golden age of English literature. This epithet serves to bring out the analogy between the first half of the eighteenth century and the Latin literature of the days of Virgil and Horace. In both cases writers were largely dependent upon powerful patrons. In both case a critical spirit prevailed. In both cases the literature produced by a thoroughly artificial society was a literature, not of free creative effort and inspiration, but of self-conscious and deliberate art.|| It is also known as the –classic age||. Hudson writes: –The epithet –classic||, we may take to denote, first that the poets and critics of this age believed that the writers of classical antiquity presented the best models and ultimate standards of literary taste, and secondly, in a more general way, that, like these Latin writers, they had little faith in the promptings and guidance of individual genius, and much in laws and rules imposed by the authority of the past. Some remarkable political and social changes began to take place in England during the closing years of William III and the accession of Queen Anne (1702). That had a great impact on the development of literature during this period. The literature of this era was partly new and partly a continuance of that of the Restoration.

This age may be divided into two periods: the first stretching from 1700 to 1750 in the neo-classic Age, and the second, the transitional period which spans from 1750 to 1798. The classical tendencies lost their hold during the second period and there was a transition from classicism to romanticism. The period of transition is also known as the Age of Gray and Collins.

## **POLITICAL AND SOCIAL MILIEU**

Politically, this age witnessed the rise of two political parties: the Whigs and the Tories. Their political opinions and programmes were sharply divided. The Whig party stood for the pre-eminence of personal freedom and the Tory party supported the royal Divine Right. The Tories objected to the foreign wars because they had to pay taxes to prolong them, while the trading class Whigs favoured the continuance of war because it contributed to their prosperity. In order to propagate their ideologies and programmes both the parties utilised the services of literary men. And the politicians bribed the authors to join one or the other political party. The politicians took the authors into their confidence. Thus began the age of literary patronage. Consequently, most of the writers showed a strong political bias. It was, in other words, a party literature. Literature was honoured not for itself but for the sake of the party. The politics of the period helped to make it an age of political pamphleteering. And the writers were too willing to make the most of it. In order to get prominence in political struggle both parties issued a large number of periodicals. The periodicals were the mouthpieces of their respective political opinions. Thus began the age of journalism and periodical essay. The rise of periodical writing allowed great scope to the development of the literary talent of prose writers of the time. The real prose style— neat, simple, clear and lucid— was evolved during this period. In the words of Albert: —It was the golden age of political pamphleteering and the writer made the most of it.

## **COFFEE HOUSES AND LITERARY ACTIVITIES**

People were keenly interested in political activity. A number of clubs and coffee houses came into existence. They became the centres of fashionable and public life. The Coffee houses were dominated by either of the parties. A Whig would never go to a Tory Coffee house and Vice Versa. The Coffee houses were the haunts of prominent writers, thinkers, artists, intellectuals and politicians. They figured prominently in the writings of the day. The Coffee houses gave rise to purely literary associations, such as the famous Scribblers and Kit-cat clubs. In the first number of *The Tattler*, Richard Steele announced that the activities of his new Journal would be based upon the clubs. The discussions in coffee houses took place in polished, refined, elegant, easy and lucid style. Thus coffee houses also contributed to the evolution of prose style during the eighteenth century.

## **INTEREST IN READING AND PUBLISHING HOUSES**

The rising interest in politics witnessed the decline of drama. It resulted in a remarkable increase in the number of reading public. Consequently a large number of men took interest in publishing translations, adaptations and other popular works of the time. They became the

forerunners of modern public houses. They employed hack writers (the writers who write for money without worrying about the quality of their writing) of the period. They lived in miserable hovels in the Grub Street.

## **THE RISE OF THE MIDDLE CLASS**

This period of literature saw the emergence of a powerful middle class. The supremacy of the middle class made it an age of tolerance, moderation and common sense. It sought to refine manners, and introduce into life the rule of sweet reasonableness. The church also pursued a middle way and the religious life was free from strife and fanaticism. The powerful dominance of the middle classes led to moral regeneration in the eighteenth century. The people were fast growing sick of the outrageousness of the Restoration period. People had begun once more to insist upon those basic decencies of life and moral considerations, which the previous generation had treated with contempt. The middle class writers were greatly influenced by moral considerations. Moreover, William III and Queen Anne were staunch supporters of morality. Addison in an early number of *The Spectator* puts the new tone in writing in his own admirable way: —I shall endeavor to enliven morality with wit and wit with morality. It was an era of the assimilation of the aristocracy and the middle class. The middle class appropriated classicism with its moralising needs. The emergence of middle class led to the rise of sentimentalism, feelings and emotions, which influenced the literature of the latter half of the eighteenth century.

## **EVANGELICAL MOVEMENT**

Religion in the age of Pope was deistic, formal, utilitarian and unspiritual. In the great Evangelical Revival, known as Methodism, led by Wesley and Whitefield, the old formalism and utilitarianism was abandoned. A mighty tide of spiritual energy poured into the Church and the common people. From 1739 the Evangelical Movement spread rapidly among the poor all over England, and it became particularly strong in the industrial towns.

## **LITERARY CHARACTERISTICS OF THE AGE**

The political and social changes exhibiting the supremacy of good sense, rationality, sanity and balance left an imperishable mark on the literature of the Age of Pope and Dr. Johnson. The literature of the period bore the hallmark of intelligence, of wit and of fancy, not a literature of emotion, passion, or creative energy. The main literary characteristics of the age are given below:

## **Age of Prose and Reason**

It is an age of prose, reason, good sense and not of poetry. A large number of practical interests arising from the new social and political conditions demanded expression not simply in looks, but in pamphlets, magazines and newspapers. Poetry was inadequate for such a task. Hence prose developed rapidly and excellently. Indeed, poetry itself became prosaic, as it was not used for creative works of imagination, but for essays, satires and criticism. The poetry of the first half of the eighteenth century as represented by the works of Pope and Dr. Johnson is polished and witty but lacks fire, fine feeling, enthusiasm and imaginative appeal. In short, it interests us as a study of life but fails to delight or inspire us. Matthew Arnold rightly calls it the eighteenth century —an age of prose. The poetry of this period, according to Hudson, —lacked inevitably the depth and grasp of essential things which alone assure permanence in literature, and the quest for refinement in style resulted too often in stilted affectations and frigid conventionalism.

## **Age of Satire**

The predominance of satire is an important literary characteristic of the age. Nearly every writer of the first half of the eighteenth century was used and rewarded by Whigs or Tories for satirising their enemies and for advancing their special political interests. Pope was an exception but he too was a satirist par excellence. W. J. Long writes: —Now satire—that is a literary work which searches out the faults of men or institutions in order to hold them up to ridicule—is at best a destructive type of criticism. A satirist is like a labourer who clears away the ruins and rubbish of an old house before the architect and builders begin on a new and beautiful structure. The work may sometime be necessary, but it rarely arouses our enthusiasm. While the satires of Pope, place them with our great literature, which is always constructive in spirit; and we have the feeling that all these men were capable of better things than they ever wrote.

## **Age of Neo-Classicism**

The Age of Pope and Johnson is often called the neo-classic age. We should clearly understand the meaning of the word —classic. The term —classic refers to writers of highest rank in any nation. It was first applied to the works of Greek and Roman writers like Homer and Virgil. In English literature any writer who followed the simple, noble and inspiring method of these writers was said to have a classic style. Period marked by a number of celebrated writers who produce literature of a very high order, is also called the classic period of a nation's literature. The age of Augustus is the classic age of Rome. The age of Dante is the classic age of Italian literature. The age of the classic age is like those of Homer and Virgil. The writers of this period disregarded Elizabethan literary trends. They demanded that their poetry should comply with exact rules. In this respect they were influenced by French writers, especially by Boileau, who

insisted on precise rules of writing poetry. They professed to have discovered their rules in the classics of Aristotle and Horace. Dryden, Pope and Johnson pioneered the revival of classicism which conformed to rules established by the great writers of other nations. They preferred only set rules to the depth and seriousness of subject matter. They ignored creativity, depth, vigour and freshness of expression. The true classicist pays equal consideration to the depth and seriousness of subject matter, and the perfect and flawless expression. The neo-classicist disregards the subject matter expresses the hackneyed and commonplace subjects in a polished and finished style modeled on the stylistic patterns of ancient writers. Grierson in his famous book *The Background of English Literature* asserts that the hallmark of ancient classical literature is a harmonious balance between form and substance. This harmonious balance between form and substance was disturbed in the Age of Pope and Johnson. The writers of this period care for form, not for the weight of matter. They care only for manner, for artistic finish and polish, but not for genuine poetic inspiration. The content thought and feeling are subordinated to form.

### **Age of Good Sense**

Good sense is one of the central characteristics of the literature of this period. In the words of W. H. Hudson: –Good sense became the ideal of the time, and good sense meant a love of the reasonable and the useful and a hatred of the mystical, the extravagant and the visionary.||

### **Follow Nature**

Another important characteristic of the age was the belief that literature must follow nature. Pope wrote in *The Essay on Criticism*: The rules of old discover'd, not devis'd,/ Are Nature still, but Nature methodiz'd;/ Nature like Liberty is but restrained/ By the same laws which first herself ordain'd/ .../ Learn hence for ancient rules a just esteem/ The follow Nature is to follow them.

By –nature|| the Augustans meant to copy man and manners of society. Pope said, –The proper study of mankind is man.|| Addison also wrote|| –Wit and fine writing|| consist not so much –in advancing things that are new, as in things that are known, an agreeable turn.||

### **Town and City Life as a Theme of Literature:**

Another feature of the literature of the age is that it has a limited theme. It is a literature of the town and the fashionable upper circles of the city of London. Pope, Johnson, Addison, Steele etc., though urban in outlook and temperament, show remarkable interest in the middle classes and, thus, broaden the scope of literature. The theme of literature before them was strictly

confined to fashionable and aristocratic circles. In the works of middle class writers classicism shows itself slightly coloured by a moralising and secretly sentimental intension.

### **The Heroic Couplet and the Poetic Diction as Tools of Writers**

The use of heroic couplet was predominant during this period. The heroic couplet was recognised as the only medium for poetic expression. In it the poets put all the skill and wrote with an unimaginable correctness and precision. The language of poetry became gaudy and inane. The common words or ordinary language were deliberately kept out from poetic literature. The result was that literature of the Augustan Age became artificial, rational and intellectual.

### **THE AGE OF TRANSITION (1850-1898)**

The second half of the eighteenth century is known as a transitional period. It was an era of change from pseudo-classicism to romanticism. The decline of party spirit and the democratic upsurge exercised great influence both on life and literature.

#### **The main characteristics of this period are given below**

**I. Decline of Party Feud:** The rivalry between the Whigs and Tories still continued but it had lost its previous bitterness. This naturally led to a considerable decline of the activity in political pamphleteering. The poets and satirists ceased to be statesmen. The institution of literary patronage gradually crumbled during this period. Men of letters learnt to depend entirely on their public.

**II. Influence of the French Revolution:** During the second half of the eighteenth century new ideas were germinating and new forces were gathering strength. The French Revolution of 1789 was only the climax of a long and deeply diffused unrest. Revolutionary ideas gave birth to democratic and humanitarian feelings. And it influenced literature greatly.

**III. The Revival of Learning:** This period is characterised by a kind of mild revival of learning. In literature it revealed itself in the study and editing of old authors like Chaucer, Shakespeare and Milton. The writers revived the old form of ballad. The publications of Bishop Percy's Reliques (1765), containing the oldest and finest specimens of ballad literature, is a landmark in the history of the Romantic Movement. The latter half of the eighteenth century witnessed the swift rise of historical literature.

**IV. The New Realism:** The birth of a new spirit of inquiry was at the root of realism which is expressed in the novels of this period and is noticeable in the poetry of this century.

**V. The Humanitarian Spirit:** This period is characterised by the rapid growth of democracy. Stress was laid on the individual worth of man. People became familiar with the notions of equality, liberty and brotherhood. The philosophy of Rousseau and the French Revolution popularised the democratic and humanitarian ideals, which immensely influenced the literature of this period.

## THE AUGUSTAN POETRY

As we have seen that the Augustan poetry was the product of intelligence, good sense, reason and sanity. Polish and elegance of form were of more importance than subtlety or originality of thought. It plays upon the surface of life and entirely ignores primary human emotions and feelings. It is didactic and satiric. It is realistic and unimaginative. It is town poetry. It ignores the humbler aspects of life and the entire countryside. The poetic style is polished, refined and artificial. It led –to the establishment of a highly artificial and conventional style which became stereotyped into a traditional poetic diction|. During this period the satiric and narrative forms of poetry flourished. Heroic couplet dominated in this poetry. This metre produced a close, clear and pointed style. Its epigrammatic terseness provided a suitable medium of expression to the kind of poetry which was then popular. Let's see the eminent writers of the period.

### Alexander Pope (1688-1744)

Pope is the representative poet of the Augustan Age. His famous works include Pastorals, An Essay in Criticism, Windsor Forest, The Rape of the Lock, translations of Iliad and Odyssey, Elegy to the memory of an Unfortunate Lady and An Essay on Man.

He was a great poet of his age. His influence dominated the poetry of his age. Many foreign writers and the majority of English poets looked to him as their model. Pope's poetry is the real picture of the spirit of the age. The three poems in which he is undisputably the spokesman of his age are The Rape of the Lock, picturing its frivolities; Dunciad unveiling its squalor; The Essay on Man, echoing its philosophy. He is a representative poet of the age of –prose and reason|. A hard intellectuality and rationality, qualities proper to prose, distinguish Pope's poetry. In The Rape of the Lock he realistically dealt with the life of the fashionable upper strata of London society. He had a meticulous sense of the exact word in the exact sense. His poetic art is the finest specimen of the neo-classic conception of correctness. His admirable

craftsmanship is best seen in the excellent use of the heroic couplet. He for the first time imparted immaculate artistic excellence to it.

### **Dr. Samuel Johnson (1709-84)**

Dr. Johnson, a voluminous writer, was a man of versatile literary genius. He was the acknowledged dictator in contemporary literature. Smollett called him –the great champ of literature. Johnson's two poems London and The Vanity of Human Wishes belong to the Augustan school of poetry. Both are written in the heroic couplet and abound in Personifications and other devices that belonged to the poetic diction of the age of neo-classicism. In their didacticism, their formal, rhetorical style, and their adherence to the closed couplet they belong to the neo-classic poetry.

### **Other Poets**

Other poets who deserve mention are Matthew Prior, John Gray, Edward Young and Lady Winchilsea.

### **THE TRANSITIONAL POETS**

The transitional poetry marks the beginning of a reaction against the rational, intellectual, formal, artificial and unromantic poetry of the age of Pope and Johnson. It was marked by a strong reaction against stereotyped rules. The transitional poets derived inspiration from Spenser, Shakespeare and Milton. Unlike the Augustan poetry, it is poetry of countryside, of common and ordinary people, and not of the fashionable, aristocratic society and town life. Love of nature and human life characterise this poetry. The transitional poets revolted against the conventional poetic style and diction of the Augustan poetry. They aimed at achieving simplicity of expression. This poetry appealed to emotions and imagination. It is marked by the development of naturalism. Crabbe, Burns, Blake and many others are the pioneers of naturalism. The transitional poets are the forerunners of the splendid outburst of the romantic poetry of the nineteenth century. Let's study briefly about these poets and their works.

**I. James Thomson (1700-48)** was the first to bring the new note in poetry both in his Seasons and The Castle of Indolence. The Seasons is a blank verse poem and consists of a long series of descriptive passages dealing with natural scenes. Though its style is clumsy, the treatment is refreshing, full of acute observation and acute joy in nature. The Castle of Indolence is written in Spenserian Stanza and is remarkable for suggestiveness, dreamy melancholy and harmonious versification.

**II. Oliver Goldsmith (1728-74)** represents the poetic tradition of neo-classicism so far as the use of the heroic couplet is concerned. His treatment of nature and rural life, note of human sympathy and simplicity of expression are characteristics of the transitional poetry. His first poem, *The Traveller* is written in the heroic couplet and deals with his wanderings through Europe. He uses simple and polished language. He reveals human sympathy for the sufferings of the poor. In *The Deserted Village* Goldsmith described the memories of his youth.

**III. Thomas Gray (1716-71)** epitomises the changes which were coming, over the literature of his age. He was —a born poet, fell upon an age of prose|. His early poems *Hymn to Adversity* and the odes *To Spring* and *On a Distant Prospect of Eton College* strike the note of melancholy that characterises the entire poetry of this period. Nature is described as a suitable background for the play of human emotions. His finest poem *The Elegy Written in A country Churchyard* has many new features in it. It is remarkable for the minute observation in the descriptions of nature, love and sympathy for the humble and the deprived, expression of the primary emotions of human life. His two odes, *The Progress of Poesy* and *The Bard* express the new conception of the poet as an inspired singer. The first shows Milton's influence as regards melody and variety of expression. *The Bard* is even more romantic and original. It breaks with the classical school and proclaims a literary declaration of independence. In *The Fatal Sisters* and *The Descent of Odin* he reveals interest in noise legends.

**IV. William Collins (1721-59)** wrote his first work *Oriental Eclogues* in prevailing mechanical couplets but it is romantic in spirit and feeling. His *Ode To Evening* is instinct with a sweet tenderness, a subdued pathos, love of nature and a magical enchantment of phrase. His *Ode To Popular Superstitions of the Highlands* introduced a new world of witches, fairies and medieval kings. So it strikes a new and interesting note in romantic revival.

**V. William Cowper (1731-1800)** is an immediate forerunner of the romantics. His first volume of poems, containing *The Progress of Error*, *Truth*, *Table Talk* etc. shows the influence of the neo-classical rules. *The Tasks* is Cowper's longest and finest poem. His descriptions of homely scenes of woods and brooks, of plowmen and teamsters and the letter carriers indicate the dawn of a new era in poetry. Cowper was a pioneer who preached the gospel —return to nature|. He foreshadowed Wordsworth and Byron. In his love of nature, his emotional response to it and in his sympathetic handling of rural life he certainly anticipates Wordsworth. His minor poems *On the Receipt of My Mother's Picture* and *Alexander Selkirk* show the rise of romanticism in English poetry.

**VI. George Crabbe (1754-1832)** is a pioneer of the naturalistic reaction against the Augustan tradition. His main poetical works are written in the heroic couplet but thematically they deal with the life of simple country folk and show his sincerity, sympathy and acute observation of human life. His descriptions of nature are neither sentimental nor picturesque nor sentimental. They are characterized by sincerity and minute observation. As a pioneer of the naturalistic

reaction against the Augustan tradition, Crabbe's place is certainly very high.

**VII. Mark Akenside (1721-1770)** began his poetic career with Epistle to Curio which is a brilliant satire in the Augustan tradition. His best known poem The Pleasures of Imagination is a long poem in Miltonic blank verse. It contains some fine descriptive passages on a nature.

**VIII. Other poets** of the transitional period are Christopher Smart, Bishop Percy, Thomas Chatterton and James Macpherson. Percy's Reliques revived the romance of the middle Ages. He also revived the ballad which was deftly used by Coleridge and Keats.

## PRECURSORS OF ROMANTICISM

By the end of the nineteenth century the poets had completely abandoned the classical tradition. Robert Burns and William Blake are the early representatives of the new school of poetry known as the romanticism.

**I. Robert Burns** was influenced by the tradition of Scottish poetry and the life he saw around him. His two poems- The Cotter's Saturday Night and Tam O'Shanter are the earliest expression of romanticism in the eighteenth century. Burns spoke straight from the heart to the primitive emotions of the race. His poetry shows great interest in the lives of poor peasants of Scotland. He depicts with sincerity and compassion the poverty, sufferings, natural feelings, joys and sorrows of the people he saw around him. His poetry is the expression of the democratic spirit. Burns brilliantly blends man and nature. He carries into his scenic pictures the same tenderness he shows in dealing with the Cottagers. His finest poetry is lyrical. Both humour and pathos are intermixed in his poetry. As a stylist Burns represents the Scottish Vernacular tradition. He had a matchless gift for catching traditional airs and wedding them to words of simple and searching beauty.

**II. William Blake's** first publication Poetical Sketches is a series of imitative poems. In it he experimented with various verse forms in the manner of Spenser, Shakespeare and Milton. His The Songs of Innocence, a collection of short lyrics expressing the poet's views of the original state of human society, symbolized in the joy and happiness of children. They have a passionate sincerity and a deep sympathy with the child. And his Songs of Experience is another collection of lyrics in which the mood of spontaneous love and happiness revealed in Songs of Innocence is replaced by a less joyful note. His other writings are The Book of Thel, The French Revolution, The Visions of the Daughters of Albion, The First Book of Brizen, The Book of Ahania, The Book of Los and The Song of Los. Blake is the worthy predecessor of Wordsworth. His poetry deals with simple and ordinary themes— the love of the country, of simple life, of childhood and of home. He became the leader of naturalistic kind of poetry. He poetically deals with childhood, flowers, hills, streams, clouds, birds and animals. He, for the first time, introduced the note of

mysticism in poetry. He clarified the common objects of nature and human life, and cast on them a halo of mysticism. In this respect he anticipates the mystical poetry of Wordsworth. Blake was a lyric poet par excellence. As a lyricist he is a visionary like Shelley. He rapturously sings of Nature, Love and Liberty.

## PROSE OF AUGUSTAN AGE

The Augustan Age, as we have already discussed, is the age of prose in the real sense. The prose of Bacon, S.T. Browne, Burton and Milton is prose of an age of poetry; but the prose of the new age is far better adapted to an age richer in philosophic and political speculation than to poetry. The prose is greater in the art of critical exposition and journalistic realism than in work of creative imagination. Dryden is the pioneer of modern prose.

The Periodical Essay was the peculiar product of the eighteenth century. It was called a –periodical because it was not published in book form like other types of essays, but it was published in magazines and journals which appeared periodically. It had an inherent social purpose. It aimed at improving the manners and morals of the people. Therefore, it is also termed as the –social essay. Defoe, Steele, Addison, Dr. Johnson and Goldsmith enriched the periodical essay during the eighteenth century. We have already discussed that the increasing interest in the political affairs, the establishment of clubs and coffee houses also contributed to the development of prose. Let's throw more light on periodical essay.

### (i) The Periodical Essay

Periodical essay played the role of mirror to show the society in its entirety. About the periodical essay Hazlitt writes: –It makes us familiar with the world of men and women, records their actions, assigns their motives, exhibits their whims, characterizes their pursuits in all their singular and endless variety, ridicules their absurdities, exposes their inconsistencies, –holds the mirror up to nature, and shows the very age of body and the time, its form and pressure, takes minutes of our dress, airs, looks, words, thoughts and actions, and shows us what we are and what we are not, plays the whole game of human life over before us, and by making us enlightened spectators of its many coloured scenes, enables us, if possible, to become tolerably reasonable agents in the area in which we have to perform a part. Daniel Defoe (1661-1731) is a pioneer in the periodical essay and in the novel. The germs of the periodical essay are found in Defoe's Review, which at first appeared weekly, then twice, and later thrice a week. Its main aim was to acquaint the English people with the thoughts of Defoe on international politics and commerce. The Review comes nearer the periodical essay proper in the section called Advice from the Scandalous Club; which is described as being –a weekly history of Nonsense, Impertinence, Vice and Debauchery. Before the Review was a year old this section became a monthly supplement. Later, it was separated from the main portion and was distinguished by

the title of *The little Review*. Thus, in the *Review* the element of news ousts gossip and moral criticism. He contributed to *Mist's Journal* and *Applebee's Journal*. Defoe was a born journalist and pamphleteer who wrote with remarkable facility, command and effect on an infinite variety of subjects. He had the keenest sense of what the public wanted. He was a moral and social reformer and aimed at correcting and teaching his age. Defoe's papers are noticeable for their clear, lucid and vigorous style. He is, indeed, the great pioneer of the periodical essay, and he influenced *The Tatler* and *The Spectator*.

Jonathan Swift (1667-1745) was the most original writer of his time. He was the man of genius among many men of talent. But his connection with the periodical essay is very slight. He wrote a few papers for *The Tatler* and *The Spectator*. His *Journal to Stella* is an excellent commentary on contemporary characters and political events. His *Drapier's Letters*, a model of political harangue (a lecture) and popular argument roused an unthinking English public and gained him popularity in England. He also contributed to Sheridan's periodical *The Intelligencer*. Swift was not by nature an essayist. He was not endowed with a genial humour, humane outlook and an impassioned approach to life. Swift's intellect was too massive for the essay and we look for the real Swift on the larger canvas of *Gulliver's Travels*, *A Tale of A Tub*. *The Battle of Books* and *A Tale of a Tub* rank among the finest prose satires in English literature. The style of *A Tale of A Tub* is verse and has a sustained vigour, ace and colorfulness. Swift's inventive genius, his fierce satire and his cruel indignation at life were well depicted in *Gulliver's Travels*. Swift was a great stylist. His prose is convincing and powerful. W.J.Long remarks: —Directness, simplicity, vigour mark every page.|| He writes —in the plainest style.|| —He was born to write great prose as Milton was born to write great poetry.||

Sir Richard Steele (1672-1729), an original genius, founded the famous periodical, *The Tatler*. Expounding the purpose of writing *The Tatler* he wrote: —The general purpose of this paper is to express the false arts of life, to pull off the disguises of cunning, vanity and affectations, and to recommend general simplicity in our dress, discourse, and our behavior||. As a social humorist, Steele paints the whole age of Queen Anne particularly the political and social disputes, the gentlemen and ladies, the characters of men, the humours of society, the new book, the new play. He was the originator of the *The Tatler* and joined with Joseph Addison (1672-1719) in creating *The Spectator* in 1711. The new paper appeared daily. In *The Tatler* Addison had been an occasional and latter a frequent contributor. In *The Spectator* both Steele and Addison were co adjustors from the start. Steele being an original genius suggested the idea of the *Spectator* and his club. The Human figure of the *Spectator*, surrounded by his club consisting of representatives of various grades and classes of society, was an immense improvement of the crude machinery. Herein consists the superiority of *The Spectator*. Sir Roger is the central character in *The Spectator*. Other memorable characters in it are Sir Andrew, Will Honeycomb and the *Spectator* himself. *The Tatler* is a collection of disconnected essays, but there is a sort of unity in the latter due to the presence of these characters. However they both can't be separated from each other while studying and evaluating the periodical essays of the time. In this connection the views of William Long is important: —It is often impossible,|| remarks

W.J.Long, –in the Tatler essays to separate the work of two men, but the majority of critics hold that the more original parts, the characters, the thought, the overflowing kindness, are largely Steele’s creation; while to Addison fell the work of polishing and perfecting the essays, and of adding that touch of humour which made them the most welcome literary visitors that England had ever received.|| Commenting on the co-authorship of Steele and Addison, Rickett also writes: –Steele brought to his work a wide experience of life, generous sympathies and a sunny humour: Addison brought a wide experience of literature, a polished style, and just a pleasant tang of acidity in his humour. Both were moralists at heart, with much the same outlook on the society of their day.|| In short span of for years in which Addison 72

and Steele worked together the periodical essay was established as one of the most important forms of literature. Addison had a gift for social criticism which Steele did not possess. In The Spectator he appears as a consummate painter of contemporary life and manners. He was an informed observer, a judicious critic of manners and characters. He aimed at social reformation, at establishing social standards of conduct in morals, manners, art and literature. His task was to recover people from that state of vice and folly into which the age had fallen. He had brought philosophy –out of closets and libraries, schools and colleges, to dwell in clubs and assemblies, at tea tables and in coffee houses. It was his task –to enliven morality with wit and to temper wit with morality.|| Addison was a genial and soft humorist. He had a keen sense of the ludicrous. He knew how to use ridicule without abusing it. He was the gentle satirist –who hit no unfair blow, the kind judge who castigated only in smiling.|| He was also a great master of prose style. –Addison may be said|| writes Court hope, –to have almost created and wholly perfected English prose as an instrument for the expression of social thought||. His style is noticeable for neatness and lucidity of expression. In this respect he represents –our indispensable eighteenth century||.

## **(ii) Dr. Samuel Johnson (1709-84)**

He was a first-rate prose writer of the eighteenth century. In the beginning he contributed to The Gentleman’s Magazine and to his periodical The Rambler which appeared twice. These papers were full of deep thoughts and observations. They lacked the elegance of The Spectator. The Rambler re-established the periodical essay when it was in danger of being superseded by the newspaper. During 1758-60 he contributed papers to The Idler and to The Universal Chronicle. In 1747 he began working on his monumental work The Dictionary of the English Language. In the Preface he explains that his aim was to –preserve the purity and ascertain the meaning of our English idiom|| and prevents the language from being overrun with –cant|| and Gallicized words. He also wrote Rasselas and Prince of Abyssinia, a philosophical novel. It is as a literary critic that Dr. Johnson left his imperishable mark on English prose. His two memorable critical works are Shakespeare and The Lives of the poets, a series of introductions to fifty two poets. T.S.Eliot regards him as –one of the three greatest critics of poetry in English literature: the other two begin. Dryden and Coleridge. As a poet and literary critic he was an ardent

exponent of neo-classicism. His *Lives of the Poets*, remarks T.S.Eliot, —is the only monumental collection of critical studies of English poets in English language, with a coherence, as well as amplitude, which no other criticism can claim.||

Johnson's prose style has been variously termed as —manly and straightforward, lucidly distinct, heavy, individual and ponderous, full of mannerisms, vigorous and forceful, wearisome but lucid.|| The style of *The Rambler* and *The Rasselas* is marred by mannerisms, but in *The Lives of the Poets* he gives up mannerisms and writes as lucidly and easily as he talked. Indeed, his style has the merits and defects of scholarship. He seldom uses language which is either empty or inexact. To him a standard prose style should be —above grossness and below refinement.|| The peculiar power of his style consists in —making the old new, and the commonplace individual.||

### **(iii) Oliver Goldsmith (1728-74)**

Goldsmith enriched the periodical essay. He contributed to *The Monthly Review* and to several other periodicals. The earliest periodical with which his name is associated was *The Bee* which was published weekly. It contained papers on a variety of subjects. After the closure of *The Bee* his papers began to appear under the caption *The Citizen of the World* in a journal called *The Public Ledger*. It is one of the finest collections of essays ever written. Goldsmith's essays reveal an extraordinary power, boldness, originality of thought and tenderness. His minute observation of man and human nature is remarkable. As an essayist he was inspired by a touch of fellow feeling, personal experience and kindly sympathy. His essays are also conspicuous for their genial humour. His style is clear, limpid and delicate. After Goldsmith the periodical essay began to decline. About his contribution to prose, Rickett writes: —Indeed, his quaint whimsicality, passing unexpectedly from delicate fancy to elfish merriment, anticipates in many ways the methods of Elia and Leigh Hunt.—He was a poet of a talent, a prose man of genius, a prose man, moreover, of distinctive and original genius.||

### **(iv) Other Prose Writers**

During this age prose was a common and popular medium of expression and communication. John Arbuthnot is remembered for his political writings which include *The History of John Bull* and *The Art of political Lying*. Lord Bolingbroke wrote on politics and philosophy in an agreeable, lucid and vigorous style. His works include *Letter to Sir William Wyndham*, *A Letter on the Spirit of Patriotism* and *The Idea of A Patriot King*.

Edmund Burke was the renowned politician, parliamentarian and orator. He wrote on political and philosophical topics. His philosophical writings are *A Vindication of Natural Society* and *Our Ideas of the Sublime and Beautiful*. His political writings consisting of his speeches and pamphlets have an abiding place in English prose. His speeches collected in *American Taxation* and *On Conciliation with the Colonies* are distinguished by a passionate, rhetorical, brilliant and lucid style, fine and artistic arrangement of material and the statesmanlike insight which

underlies these arguments. His speeches on the impeachment of Warren Hastings are highly moving. He also wrote a number of pamphlets. Burke's style has assigned him a permanent place in literature. Adam Smith is known worldwide for his *The Wealth of Nations*. He laid the foundation of modern economic thought. In the history of English prose he is remembered for his plain and businesslike prose. George Berkeley wrote *The Principles of Human Knowledge* and *The Minute Philosopher*. His writing revolves around the scientific, philosophical and metaphysical topics in a language of literary distinction. Boswell's *The Life of Samuel Johnson* is the first great biography in English literature. Lord Chesterfield was an eminent letter writer of this period. His *Letters to His Son* are noticeable for lucidity of expression, intimacy and flawless ease. Thus, the eighteenth century was the golden age of English prose. Varied type of prose was written during this period.

## **DRAMA OF AUGUSTAN AGE**

The first half of the eighteenth century was almost blank in dramatic literature. The days of the brilliant Restoration Comedy of Manners were over. Addison's *Cato* is the only noteworthy work in the field of tragedy. Steele's *The Constant Lovers* does not amuse as a tragedy. It preaches. So he became the founder of that highly genteel, didactic and vapid kind of play which is known as sentimental comedy. George Lillo wrote *London Merchant* and *Fatal Curiosity*. They are examples of domestic drama, in these plays, the characters and incidents were taken from common life and not from romance and history. Hugh Kelly's *False Delicacy* and Richard Cumberland's *The West Indian* are regarded the best examples of the sentimental comedy. In sentimental comedy tears took the place of laughter; melodramatic and distressing situations that of intrigue, pathetic heroines and serious lovers and honest servants that of rogues, gallants and witty damsels.

### **Reaction to the Sentimental Comedy**

Goldsmith and Sheridan pioneered the movement against the sentimental comedy. —Goldsmith endeavors|| writes Nicoll —to revive the spirit of *As You Like It*, where Sheridan strives to create another *The Way of the World*.|| Goldsmith attacked the sentimental comedy in his essay *The Present State of Polite Learning*. In another essay *On the Theatre or A Comparison Between Laughing and Sentimental Comedy*, he started

with the classical formula that tragedy should represent the misfortunes of the great and comedy the frailties of humbler people. So, according to the classical principle the sentimental comedy had no place in literature. In the Preface to his comedy *The Good Natured Man* Goldsmith exposes the hollowness of sentimental comedy. *She Stoops to Conquer* is Goldsmith's masterpiece. About Goldsmith's dramatic writing, Rickett writes: —Goldsmith's *Good Natured Man* is excellent in parts; *She Stoops to Conquer* is excellent throughout, with a bright whimsical humour and a fresh charm of dialogue not attained since the days of Congreve. Less witty than the Restoration dramatists, Goldsmith is greatly superior in his humanity and

taste. Sheridan sought to revive the spirit and atmosphere of the comedy of manners, especially those of Congreve in *The Rivals* and *The School for Scandal*. His last play *The Critic* or *A Tragedy Rehearsed* is very telling on popular sentimental drama. It has been called the best burlesque of the age.

## **NOVEL DURING AUGUSTAN**

### **The Forerunners of Novel**

The development of English prose contributed to the rise of novel during the eighteenth century. Daniel Defoe's *Robinson Crusoe*, *Captain Singleton*, *Moll Flanders*, *A Journal of the Plague Year* and *Roxana* are the forerunners of novel. His fictional works are called –fictional biographies. The entire gamut of his fictional work is biographical and he made no attempt towards the organization of material into a systematic plot. However, his fictional works are distinguished by –the extraordinary realism which is an important element in the art of novel writing. His stories are told so convincingly as if they were stories of real life. He also knew the art of narrating details effectively. He had a swift and resolute narrative method and a plain and matter-of-fact style. To the development of novel Defoe's contribution is remarkable. His fictional works –form the transition from the slight tale and the romance of the Elizabethan time to the finished novel of Richardson and Fielding. Jonathan Swift's *Gulliver's Travels*, which satirises the manners and politics of contemporary England and Europe, is written in powerful and convincing prose. It also contributed to the evolution of English novel. The famous periodical *The Spectator* is a forerunner of English novel. It contains all the elements of social novel, except a harmonious plot. The material for the novels of manners or social comedy is found in *The Coverley Papers*. It contains vivid and realistic presentation of contemporary society, well delineated characters, rich fund of humour and pathos and a clear, lucid style. Edward Albert remarks: –if Addison had pinned the *Coverley Papers* together with a stronger plot, if insisted on only referring to the widow who had stolen the knight's affections, he had introduced some important female characters, we should have had the first regular novel in our tongue. As it is, this essay series bring us within measurable distance of the genuine eighteenth century novel.

**Causes of the Popularity and Rise of Novel in the Augustan Age. The following factors contributed to the development of novel during the eighteenth century.**

#### **I. The Spread of Education and the New Reading Public.**

In the eighteenth century the spread of education and the appearance of newspapers and magazines led to a remarkable increase in the number of readers. The newspaper and the periodical essay –encouraged a rapid, inattentive, almost unconscious kind of reading habit. It

is exactly such a kind of habit that is required for novel reading. The middle-class people, who had a foremost place in English life and society, wanted to read for pleasure and relaxation without caring for any high classical or literary standards, and this change of emphasis favored the growth of the novel. Moreover, the new reading class wanted to read about itself, about its own thoughts, motives and struggles. It did not have leisure enough for reading the lengthy heroic romances. It demanded new type of literature. So the novel was born, which mirrored the tastes and requirements of this new class of readers. Women, who had plenty of leisure, sought pleasure through novel reading.

## **II. The Democratic Movement**

The rise of the novel is also associated with the democratic movement in the eighteenth century. Hudson remarks: –The comprehensiveness of the novel, its free treatment of characters and doings of all sorts and conditions of men, and especially its handling of middle class and low life, are unmistakable evidences of its democratic quality.|| The rise of the middle class is closely related with the democratic movement. With the growth of commerce and industry, the prestige of the old feudal nobility was on the wane. And the middle classes were increasing steadily in social and political power. The middle classes were inclined to morality, sentiment and reality. The novel reflected the temperament of the middle class and, therefore, it became popular.

## **III. Comprehensiveness of Form.**

Novel as a new form of literary art offered a fresh field, in which the writers were to work independently. Hudson writes: –Finally, as the form of the novel, gives a far wider scope allowed to the corresponding form of drama for the treatment of motives, feelings, and all the phenomena of the

inner life, it tended from the first to take the peculiar place as the typical art form of the introspective and analytical modern world.||

## **IV. The Development of the New Prose Style.**

One of the important causes of the development of novel is the evolution of a new prose style. As the novel deals with ordinary life, ordinary people, and ordinary events and with all sorts of miscellaneous matters, it requires plain, lucid and straightforward style. During the eighteenth

century, writers like Addison, Steele, Goldsmith, Burke etc. evolved a plain style which was capable of expressing the realities of life. It has a close relation with the reflections and expressions the novel expresses.

## **V. The Decline of Drama.**

Drama had grown artificial, unnatural and immoral during the earlier part of the eighteenth century. It was the decline of drama during the first half of the eighteenth century that made way for the novel. The latter part of the eighteenth century was the golden age of the novel. A true novel is simply a work of fiction which relates the story of plain human life, under stress of emotion, which depends for its interest not on incident and adventure, but on its truth to nature. Richardson, Fielding, Smollett and Sterne, known as the —four wheels of novel||- all seem to have seized upon the idea of reflecting life as it is, in the form of a story, and to have developed it simultaneously.

### **The Four Wheels of the Novel.**

Richardson, Fielding, Smollett and Sterne are known as the —four wheels of the novel||. They brought this new genre to such maturity that it became the glory of England. Let's see, in short, these authors and their works as follows:

#### **(i) Samuel Richardson (1689-1761)**

Richardson's first novel Pamela tells the story of the trials, tribulations, and the final happy marriage of the heroine. It is written in the forms of letters. It is also known as an epistolary novel because the novel is developed with the exchange of letters between the characters. It was instantly successful. In it the moral and social purposes are successfully blended. Pamela's character is well drawn. The plot, though simple, is well developed. It is considered as the first novel in the modern sense.

His Clarissa or The History of A Lady in eight volumes is a sentimental novel. It gave Richardson European reputation and —it is still regarded as one of the greatest of the eighteenth century novels||.

Clarissa's character is realistically drawn with psychological insight. It also contains the most remarkable study of the scoundrel, Lovelace. In it the dramatic element is strong. It is characterized by pathos, sincerity and minute realism. Richardson's novels are stories of human life, told from within, and depending for their interest not on incident and adventure, but on their truth to human nature. Reading his work is, on the whole, like examining an antiquated work of a

stern wheel steamer, it is interesting for its undeveloped possibilities, rather than for its achievement. Richardson's place in the history of English novel is very high. –Richardson||, writes Rickett, –introduced sentimentality into English novel and popularized it forever. Without his influence we never have had Tristram Shandy, we certainly should have been without Joseph Andrews, ... Then the feminine standpoint taken in his writings stirred many able women to continue and amplify the feminine tradition. Fanny Burney and Jane Austen are indebted to him and a host of lesser names||. In Clarissa he introduced the epistolary form of novel. He was the first novelist to show the real and vital knowledge of human heart, its perversities and contradictions.

## **(ii) Henry Fielding (1707-54)**

Fielding was the greatest of this new group of novelists. He is called –the father of English novel|| because he for the first time propounded the technique of writing novel. He had a deeper and wider knowledge of life, which he gained from his own varied and sometimes riotous experiences. As a magistrate he had an intimate knowledge of many types of human criminality which was of much use to him in his novels. His first novel Joseph Andrews (1742) began as a burlesque of the false sentimentality and conventional virtues of Richardson's Pamela. In it Fielding humorously narrates the adventures of the hero, Joseph Andrews, and his companion, Parson Adams. From the very beginning we see the stamp of his genius- the complete rejection of the epistolary form and moralizing, the structural development of the story, the broad and vivacious humour which was denied to Richardson, the genial insight into human nature, and the forceful and pithy style. In Joseph Andrews Fielding emerges on a pioneer of the novel of manners. In Jonathan Wild he gives us new and piercing glimpses of the ruffian mentality.

Fielding's masterpiece, Tom Jones, takes an enormous canvas and crowds it with numerous characters. It gives us the fullest and richest picture of English life about the middle of the eighteenth century. Although the picaresque element is strongly marked in this novel, it is more than a picaresque novel. Fielding calls it –the comic epic in prose.|| Tom Jones stands unrivalled in the history of English novel for its coherent and well-knit structure, richness of characterization, vivid and realistic presentation of contemporary society, sane and wise point of view. Amelia is the story of a good wife who, in spite of temptation,

remains faithful to a good-natured but erring husband, Captain Booth. It is at once a searching criticism of contemporary society and a mature. It soberly conceives story of everyday life, is rich in incident and, like Tom Jones, is remarkable for its insight into human character. Fielding has rightly been called –the father of English novel||. He for the first time formulated the theory of novel writing in the prefaces of Joseph Andrews and Tom Jones, and followed his own definition with utmost consistency. Other novelists followed his example. He gave a definite form and shape to the novel. In the words of Richard Church: –He is the first writer to focus the novel in such a way that he brought the whole world as we see it, within the scope of this new, rapidly maturing literary form.|| Fielding is the first great realist in the history of English novel. Common life is the material of his novel but it is handled as Raleigh points out, –with the

freedom and imagination of a great artist. He presents a complete and comprehensive picture of contemporary society. His realism is epic in its range, sweep and variety. He is the founder of modern realistic novel and the novel of manners. Fielding's realism is connected with his comic point of view, his wise, tolerant acceptance of things as they are. He had nothing to do with the prudish morality of Richardson. He threw it aside and presented man in full length as he found him. Though he portrayed men with no reservations, he never forgot that he was one of them. From this inborn sympathy comes his large, tolerant way of looking at things, a view of life that often finds expression in raillery but never in cynicism. He laughs, but his laughter is always ready to give place to tenderness and pity. For him the tragedy of life lay in the presence of virtue and innocence in a world of evil, cruelty and deception. In the presentation of tragedy, Fielding is always direct, simple and sincere. Fielding was the first to infuse the novel –with the refreshing and preserving element of humour. He was capable of presenting pure comedy in such characters as Adams and Partridge and lower and more farcical comedy in characters like Mrs. Slipslop and Square Western. He effectively lashes out his satire at affectation, vanity, pedantry, hypocrisy and vice. But he is always human and humane. Irony is a great weapon of his satire. Fielding's aim was to replace Richardson's morbid morality by a healthy commonsense morality. This commonsense morality gave him a shrewd insight into the weakness of his character. Fielding was a superb craftsman. He changed the concept of plot construction. In his novels we get for the first time a closely-knit organic plot. Other novelists learnt the art of plot construction from him,

He is the creator of the novel of character. He peopled his novels with lively and interesting characters. He endowed his characters with life and vitality. He has vividly portrayed all kinds of characters like Shakespeare. Like Shakespeare he has a sympathetic yet maturely detached view of human comedy. The forces which guide his characters are; for the most part, natural human needs, for it were these that Fielding knew best. Settings in Fielding's novels are realistic and recognizable. His narrative is energetic and effective. He initiates the practice of the omniscient narrator, which has been universally followed, by many following writers. As a stylist he broke away from the mannered, artificial style of the earlier novelists. It is fresh, clear, direct, unaffected, vigorous and easy. It gives vitality to his characters.

### **(iii) Tobias Smollett (1721-71)**

Smollett, who wrote *The Adventures of Roderick Random*, *The Adventures of eregrine Pickle*, and *The Expedition of Humhry Clinker*, added new feathers to the cap of the craft called English novel. His novels are simply strings of adventures which are not organized into an artistic whole. He conceived the novel as a –large diffused picture of life. It is the personality of the hero which has the semblance of unity to various incidents and adventures. His novels are called episodic or panoramic novels. As a panoramic novelist Smollett has never been surpassed. Smollett's characters are types and not individuals. He had a genius for depicting oddities and he excels as a caricaturist. He describes his characters in terms of externals. His characters are grossly exaggerated and distorted. Smollett's presentation of the harsh and ugly realities of life and society makes him a forerunner of the novel of purpose. Hudson writes: It has, however, to be

remembered that Smollett wrote expressly as a satirist and reformer, and that his purpose was to paint the monstrous evils of life in their true proportions and colours that he might thus drive them home upon the attention of the public, and we must certainly set it down to his credit that the sickening realism of the ship scenes in *The Roderick Random* led directly to drastic changes for the better in the conditions in the naval service. He, thus, anticipates the novel with purpose. Smollett followed the tradition of the picaresque novel, which presents a union of intrigue and adventure. His style is vivid and lively. It is forceful and masculine. His method could be easily imitated. Dickens followed him. There was a spurt of picaresque him.

#### **(iv) Laurence Sterne (1713-1768)**

Sterne's first novel *The Life and Opinions of Tristram Shandy* won him immediate recognition. It records the experiences of the eccentric Shandy family. —Its chief strength lies in its brilliant style,...and in its odd characters like Uncle Toby and Corporal Trimm, which, with all their eccentricities, are so humanized by the author's genius that they belong among the great —creations|| of our literature.|| His second novel *A Sentimental Journey* combines fiction, sketches of travel, miscellaneous subjects and essays. It is remarkable for its brilliant style. Sterne defined all conventions of novel writing. He contributed to the development of English novel in his own peculiar way. He is a skilled master in creating brilliant effects. Plot is non-existent in his novels. There is neither chronology nor progression. —His novels are one long parenthesis — a colossal aside to the reader. Yet despite the chaotic incoherence of his method of storytelling, his effects are made with consummate ease.|| Sterne's prose style, which is characterised by brilliance, force, precision, force, melody and sensuousness of the highest order, helped him to create brilliant effects. His technique of creating striking effects influenced the school of the Stream of consciousness. Sterne's greatest contribution lies in the field of characterization. Cross writes: —He enlarged for the novelist the sphere of character building by bringing into English fiction the attitude of the sculptor and the painter, combined with a graceful and harmonious movement, which is justly likened to the transitions o music.|| His characters are drawn with an economy of strokes, and they are utterly solid, three-dimensional characters. He develops his characters by subtle and minute analysis of gesture, expressions, intonations and a hundred other details. He imparted humanity to his characters. His methods of characterisation is impressionistic, a method which he introduced for the first time. This method of characterisation was followed by the novelists of the Stream of consciousness school. Sterne is the most original of English humorists. He deftly intermingles humour and pathos. He smiles at sorrow and finds matter for pathos in the most comical situation. He was the first to use the word, —sentimental|| to indicate —the soft state of feelings and the imagination.|| He used this word in the sense now attached to it. He made the word classic and current in the record of his continental travel, *The Sentimental Journey*. He could tell and distinguish between fine shades of feeling, and could communicate them to his readers in a way that aroused both compassion and mirth. Sterne is the pioneer of modern impressionism. His impressionistic narrative method is very close to that of modern impressionists like Virginia Woolf and James Joyce. He is regarded as the first of the impressionists. —Richardson had given



sentimentality, Fielding humour, Smollet liveliness and Sterne impressionism.

#### **(v) Other Novelists**

Oliver Goldsmith's *The Vicar of Wakefield* stands in the first rank of the eighteenth century novels. Its plot is simple, though sometimes inconsistent, the characters are human and attractive and humour and pathos are deftly mingled together. Goldsmith has adopted the direct method of narration through the principal character. Goldsmith for the first time depicts the picture of English domestic life in this novel. It is also unique because it gives delightful and idealistic picture of English village life. The blend of humour and pathos makes it all the more charming. Hecy Mackenzie's *The Man of Feeling* is a sentimental novel which shows the influence of Sterne. William Godwin (1745-1831) wrote *Caleb Williams or Things As They Are* in order to give —a general review of the modes of domestic and unrecorded despotism by which man becomes the destroyer of man. Miss Fanny Burney (1752-1842), the first of the women novelists, is an important figure in the history of English novel. She wrote four novels: *Evelina*, *Cecilia*, *Camilla* and *The Wanderer* but her fame rests mainly on the first two. She was endowed with considerable narrative faculty and great zest for life. She has successfully created the novel of domestic life. In *Evelina* she reverts to the epistolary method of Richardson, and in broad humour it follows the tradition of Fielding and Smollett, but without their coarseness. She for the first time wrote from a woman's point of view and, thus, brought feminine sensibility to English novel of the eighteenth century. —She has presented a large gallery of striking portraits, writes Edward Albert, —the best of which are convincing and amusing caricatures of Dickensian type. Her observation of life was keen and close and her descriptions of society are in a delightfully satirical vein, in many ways like that of Austen.

#### **(vi) The Gothic Novel**

The eighteenth century novel from Richardson to Miss Burney was, on the whole, conceived on realistic lines. Towards the close of the century the novel, like poetry showed signs of change, as it began to exhibit romantic tendencies. During the transitional period return to nature, absorption in the remote in time and space, especially in the middle Ages, became the marked literary characteristics. The new interest in nature made scenic descriptions or landscape an important element in novel. The interest in the past brought into being a new type of novel, known as the gothic novel, which anticipated the historical novel of the nineteenth century.

The Gothic novel or the novel of terror is the peculiar product of the late eighteenth century. It is a new genre of the romantic fiction which drew its inspiration from the general revival of interest in medieval life and art, in Gothic castles, in churches and Cathedrals and in ruins. The novelists resorted to the use of ghosts, portents and satanic forces in order to arouse emotions of awe, mystery and terror. Horace Walpole (1717-1797) wrote *The Castle of Otranto* which proclaimed the entry of romantic revival into English novel. Walpole gave to the Gothic romance the elements on which it was to thrive for a generation to come — a hero sullied by unmentionable crimes, several persecuted heroines, a castle with secret passages and haunted rooms, and a

plentiful sprinkling of supernatural terrors. Mrs. Anne Radcliffe (1764-1832) was the most popular of terror novelists. She wrote five elaborate romances of which the most famous are *The Mysteries of Udolpho* and *The Italian*. Her stories have well constructed plots which contain medievalism, —a lively, if undisciplined imagination, and a skilful faculty of depicting wild scenery. She could successfully create an atmosphere of suspense and dread. What distinguishes her as a novelist is the fact that she rationally used the supernatural machinery. William Beckford (1660-1844) wrote *The History of the Caliph Vathek*, which deals with the mysteries of oriental necromancy. Satire mingles with sensation in his novels. Matthew Lewis (1775-1818) wrote *The Monk*, which is the crudest terror novel. Miss Clara Reeve (1729-1807) is remembered for *Old English Baron*. It is a Gothic story. Maturina is remembered for *The Fatal Revenge* and *Meimoth the Wanderer*. Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein* is the only terror novel which is still famous. It is the story of the ravages of manmade monster equivalent to the modern robot. It may be considered the first work of science fiction and the last one of the terror school. Thus, at the close of the nineteenth century, we find the three types of fiction: first, the realistic novel which deals with social life and manners; secondly, the romance which represented the purely emotional interest in nature and the past; and finally, the humanitarian novel, which seriously undertook to right the wrongs sustained by the individual at the hands of society. —These three types, write Moody and Lovett, —...have defined three schools — the realists, the romanticists and the social novelists, which have continued, with innumerable cross divisions, until the present time.

## LET'S SUM UP

In this unit we have discussed the social change in the eighteenth century called the Augustan Age which includes emergences of coffee houses and literary activities, interest of people in reading and publication houses and consequently the rise of middle class. It is followed by the discussion of the prime features of literary tendencies of Augustan age. On the literary domain, this period is called the age of prose and reason, the age of satire and the age of neo-classicism. It also covers the transitional poetry along with the eminent poets of transitional poetry that breaks its umbilical cord with neoclassicism and paves ways to the forthcoming age. The Augustan prose, poetry, drama and the new emergence of new genre called novel are discussed in detail.