

20th Century Poetic Movements

Imagist Poets

Imagism was born in England and America in the early twentieth century. A reactionary movement against romanticism and Victorian poetry, imagism emphasized simplicity, clarity of expression, and precision through the use of exacting visual images.

Though Ezra Pound is noted as the founder of imagism, the movement was rooted in ideas first developed by English philosopher and poet T. E. Hulme, who, as early as 1908, spoke of poetry based on an absolutely accurate presentation of its subject, with no excess verbiage. In his essay “Romanticism and Classicism,” Hulme wrote that the language of poetry is a “visual concrete one....Images in verse are not mere decoration, but the very essence.”

Pound adapted Hulme’s ideas on poetry for his imagist movement, which began in earnest in 1912, when he first introduced the term into the literary lexicon during a meeting with Hilda Doolittle. After reading her poem “Hermes of the Ways,” Pound suggested some revisions and signed the poem “H. D., Imagiste” before sending it to *Poetry* magazine in October of that year. That November, Pound himself used the term “Imagiste” in print for the first time when he published Hulme’s *Complete Poetical Works*.

A strand of modernism, imagism aimed to replace abstractions with concrete details that could be further expounded upon through the use of figuration. These typically short, free verse poems—which had clear precursors in the concise, image-focused poems of ancient Greek lyricists and Japanese haiku poets—moved away from fixed meters and moral reflections, subordinating everything to what Hulme once called the “hard, dry image.”

Pound's definition of the image was "that which presents an intellectual and emotional complex in an instant of time." He said, "It is the presentation of such a 'complex' instantaneously which gives the sense of sudden liberation; that sense of freedom from time limits and space limits; that sense of sudden growth, which we experience in the presence of the greatest works of art." In March 1913, *Poetry* published "A Few Don'ts by an Imagiste." In it, imagist poet F. S. Flint, quoting Pound, defined the tenets of imagist poetry:

- ❖ Direct treatment of the "thing," whether subjective or objective.
- ❖ To use absolutely no word that does not contribute to the presentation.
- ❖ As regarding rhythm: to compose in sequence of the musical phrase, not in sequence of the metronome.

In 1914, *Des Imagistes*, an anthology assembled and edited by Pound, was published; it collected work by William Carlos Williams, Richard Aldington, James Joyce, and H. D., among others. By the spring of that year, however, disputes had begun to brew among the movement regarding leadership and control of the group. Amy Lowell, who criticized Pound for what she thought was a too-myopic view of poetry, assumed leadership of the movement and from 1915 to 1917 published three anthologies, all called *Some Imagist Poets*, but by then Pound had dissociated himself from imagism, derisively calling it "Amygism"; Pound instead appropriated his imagism into a new philosophy, vorticism, claiming that "the image is not an idea. It is a radiant node or cluster; ... a VORTEX."

By 1917, even Lowell began to distance herself from the movement, the tenets of which eventually became absorbed into the broader modernist movement and continued to influence poets throughout the twentieth century.

- **Ezra Pound- Ezra Loomis Pound**, (born October 30, 1885, Hailey, Idaho, U.S.—died November 1, 1972, Venice, Italy),

American poet and critic, a supremely discerning and energetic entrepreneur of the arts who did more than any other single figure to advance a “modern” movement in English and American literature.

He had been to Europe three times before, the third time alone in the summer of 1906, when he had gathered the material for his first three published articles: “Raphaelite Latin,” concerning the Latin poets of the Renaissance, and “Interesting French Publications,” concerning the troubadours (both published in the *Book News Monthly*, Philadelphia, September 1906), and “Burgos, a Dream City of Old Castile” (October issue).

Now, with little money, he sailed to Gibraltar and southern Spain, then on to Venice, where in June 1908 he published, at his own expense, his first book of poems, *A lume spento* (“With Tapers Quenched”). About September 1908 he went to London, where he was befriended by the writer and editor Ford Madox Ford (who published Pound’s work in his *English Review*), entered William Butler Yeats’s circle, and joined the “school of images,” a modern group presided over by the philosopher T.E. Hulme.

In England, success came quickly to Pound. A book of poems, *Personae*, was published in April 1909; a second book, *Exultations*, followed in October; and a third book, *The Spirit of Romance*, based on lectures delivered in London (1909–10), was published in 1910.

Toward the end of 1911 he met an English journalist, Alfred R. Orage, editor of the socialist weekly *New Age*, who opened its pages to him and provided him with a small but regular income during the next nine years.

In 1912 Pound became London correspondent for the small magazine *Poetry* (Chicago); he did much to enhance the magazine's importance and was soon a dominant figure in Anglo-American verse. He was among the first to recognize and review the poetry of Robert Frost and D.H. Lawrence and to praise the sculpture of the modernists Jacob Epstein and Henri Gaudier-Brzeska. As leader of the Imagist movement of 1912–14, successor of the “school of images,” he drew up the first Imagist manifesto, with its emphasis on direct and sparse language and precise images in poetry, and he edited the first Imagist anthology, *Des Imagistes* (1914).

As unofficial editor of *The Egoist* (London) and later as London editor of *The Little Review* (New York City), he saw to the publication of Joyce's novels *Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man* and *Ulysses*, thus spreading Joyce's name and securing financial assistance for him. In that same year he gave T.S. Eliot a similar start in his career as poet and critic.

Pound continued to publish his own poetry (*Ripostes*, 1912; *Lustra*, 1916) and prose criticism (*Pavannes and Divisions*, 1918). From the literary remains of the great Orientalist Ernest Fenollosa, which had been presented to Pound in 1913, he succeeded in publishing highly acclaimed English versions of early Chinese poetry, *Cathay* (1915), and two volumes of Japanese Noh plays (1916–17) as well. Unsettled by the slaughter of World War I and the spirit of hopelessness he felt was pervading England after its conclusion, Pound decided to move to Paris, publishing before he left two of his most important poetical works, “Homage to Sextus Propertius,” in the book *Quia Pauper Amavi* (1919), and *Hugh Selwyn Mauberley* (1920). “Propertius” is a comment on the British Empire in 1917, by way of Propertius and the Roman Empire. *Mauberley*, a finely chiseled “portrait” of

one aspect of British literary culture in 1919, was one of the most praised poems of the 20th century.

During his stay in Paris (1921–24) Pound met and helped the young American novelist Ernest Hemingway; wrote an opera, *Le Testament*, based on poems of François Villon; assisted T.S. Eliot with the editing of his long poem *The Waste Land*; and acted as correspondent for the New York literary journal *The Dial*.

In 1927–28 Pound edited his own magazine, *Exile*, and in 1930 he brought together, under the title *A Draft of XXX Cantos*, various segments of his ambitious long poem *The Cantos*, which he had begun in 1915. The 1930s saw the publication of further volumes of *The Cantos* (*Eleven New Cantos*, 1934; *The Fifth Decad of Cantos*, 1937; *Cantos LII–LXXI*, 1940) and a collection of some of his best prose (*Make It New*, 1934).

Between 1946–58, he continued to write *The Cantos* (*Section: Rock-Drill*, 1955; *Thrones*, 1959), translated ancient Chinese poetry (*The Classic Anthology*, 1954) and Sophocles' *Trachiniai* (*Women of Trachis*, 1956).

Pound lapsed into silence (insanity) in 1960, leaving *The Cantos* unfinished. More than 800 pages long, they are fragmentary and formless despite recurring themes and ideas. *The Cantos* are the logbook of Pound's own private voyage through Greek mythology, ancient China and Egypt, Byzantium, Renaissance Italy, the works of John Adams and Thomas Jefferson, and many other periods and subjects, including economics and banking and the nooks and crannies of his own memory and experience.

- **Amy Lowell**- (born Feb. 9, 1874, Brookline, Mass., U.S.—died May 12, 1925, Brookline), American critic, lecturer, and a leading poet of the Imagist school.

Her first volume of poetry was *A Dome of Many-Coloured Glass* (1912). In 1915 was published her second book, *Sword Blades and Poppy Seed*, which includes her first experimentation with free verse and “polyphonic prose.” *A Critical Fable* (1922), an imitation of her kinsman James Russell Lowell’s *Fable for Critics*, was published anonymously and stirred widespread speculation until she revealed her authorship.

Lowell edited the three numbers of *Some Imagist Poets* (1915–17). Subsequent volumes of her own work include *Men, Women, and Ghosts* (1916), which contains her well-known poem “Patterns”; *Can Grande’s Castle* (1918); and *Legends* (1921). *What’s O’Clock* (1925), *East Wind* (1926), and *Ballads for Sale* (1927) were published posthumously. Her critical work includes *Six French Poets* (1915), *Tendencies in Modern American Poetry* (1917), and the two-volume biography *John Keats* (1925).

- **H.D.- Hilda Doolittle**, (born September 10, 1886, Bethlehem, Pennsylvania, U.S.—died September 27, 1961, Zürich, Switzerland), American poet, known initially as an Imagist. She was also a translator, novelist-playwright, and self-proclaimed “pagan mystic.”

Her first published poems, sent to *Poetry* magazine by Pound, appeared under the initials H.D., which remained thereafter her nom de plume. Other poems appeared in Pound’s anthology *Des Imagistes* (1914) and in the London journal *The Egoist*, edited by Richard Aldington, to whom she was married from 1913 to 1938. She was closely associated for much of her adult life with the British novelist Bryher.

H.D.’s first volume of verse, *Sea Garden* (1916), established her as an important voice among the radical young Imagist poets. Her subsequent volumes included *Hymen* (1921), *Heliodora and*

Other Poems (1924), *Red Roses for Bronze* (1931), and a trilogy comprising *The Walls Do Not Fall* (1944), *Tribute to the Angels* (1945), and *Flowering of the Rod* (1946).

The *Collected Poems of H.D.* (1925 and 1940), *Selected Poems of H.D.* (1957), and *Collected Poems 1912–1944* (1983) secured her position as a major 20th-century poet. She won additional acclaim for her translations (*Choruses from the Iphigeneia in Aulis and the Hippolytus of Euripides* [1919] and *Euripides' Ion* [1937]), for her verse drama (*Hippolytus Temporizes* [1927]), and for prose works such as *Palimpsest* (1926), *Hedylus* (1928), and, posthumously, *The Gift* (1982). Several of her books are autobiographical—including *Tribute to Freud* (1956); *Bid Me to Live* (1960); and the posthumously published *End to Torment* (1979), a memoir of Pound, and *Hermione* (1981), a semiautobiographical bildungsroman, or perhaps more accurately a *Künstlerroman* (portrait of the artist's development). *Helen in Egypt* (1961), a volume of verse, appeared shortly after her death.

Georgian Poets

Georgian poetry was a poetic movement in England that lasted from 1910 to 1936 during the reign of George V. Georgian poetry, or Georgianism, is defined by a respect for formal qualities of poetry and romantic subject matter. The poems used clear and simple rhyme schemes and metrical patterns and often uses themes of nature and rural life. After the First World War, and the devastation that came along with it, the Georgian poetry movement receded into the background. It was replaced by various movements within the broader modernist genre. Today, the word “Georgian” can have a pejorative connotation when applied to poetry.

The movement is perfectly situated in-between the Victorian era and Modernism. The Former is known for its stoic adherence to traditional formal principles while the latter defined by the exact opposite. Most of the poems published in the anthologies were marked by their romanticism and hedonism. Many were also noted for their sentimentality.

The works of the participating poets were included in *Georgian Poetry*, a series of anthologies. Some of the poets who are included in this category are:

- Rupert Brooke
- Siegfried Sassoon
- Walter de la Mare
- Robert Graves
- A.E. Housman
- D.H. Lawrence

Scholars have noted that the original concept for the Georgian Poetry anthologies came about as a joke between Edward Marsh, Duncan Grant, and George Mallory. It was their intention to publish a party of the numerous small books of poetry appearing in the 1910s. While they took on the task lightheartedly at first, they soon decided to focus on the volumes more seriously. The *Georgian Poetry* anthologies, which included five separate collections, were published by Harold Monro and edited by Edward Marsh.

When Edward Marsh decided that it was time to include a female poet in the collections, he selected Freda Sargant. Four of her poems from *Dreams and Journeys* appeared in the third volume of *Georgian Poets*. In the final collection, readers can find a few poems by Vita Sackville-West (Female poets were only included in the final two volumes.)

Some Forty writers are considered in the group. Unlike their contemporaries the imagists, the Georgians had no agreed programme and were in no sense a literary school. Indeed the only workable definition of a Georgian poet is that his or her work (there were briefly two women among the forty) appeared in Marsh's anthology. Arguably the first of the Georgians was Wilfrid Gibson, who decided in 1905 that a poet should write in simple language about the life of his own times. By 1910 he was well known. In 1911 John Masefield's notorious verse narrative *The Everlasting Mercy*, as well as work by Harold Monro, Lascelles Abercrombie, and Rupert Brooke, gave promise that a long period of stagnation in English poetry was coming to an end.

The most obvious feature of what Brooke in 1913 called 'the New Poetry' was that it was not Victorian. Gone at last were vague rhetoric and earnest moralizing, gone too the languors and introspection of the decadence: the work of the first Georgians was outward-looking, positive, full of energy and hope.

In a prefatory note 'E.M.' declared his belief that 'English poetry is now once again putting on a new strength and beauty'. He arranged his seventeen poets—eleven of whom had contributed to the *Review*—in alphabetical order, so the first poem was Abercrombie's '*The Sale of Saint Thomas*', which set the tone for the book with its dramatic form, evocations of exotic places, tough, sometimes brutal, realism, and precise, vivid imagery. The saint learns that 'prudence is the deadly sin'; certainly none of the 1912 Georgians seemed interested in prudence.

Yet nothing in any volume of the anthology could be described as revolutionary. Marsh maintained that poetry should be intelligible, musical, and 'racy' (he said raciness meant intensity of thought and feeling). These were qualities of Brooke's work in particular: he was 'the moving spirit' among the early Georgians,

as Monro remembered later, and the only significant influence on Marsh, who adored him. In 1914 Brooke collaborated with Gibson, Abercrombie, and Drinkwater in publishing their own verse in their own periodical, *New Numbers*.

Ezra Pound was invited to contribute, but he and Marsh could not agree on a suitable poem: Pound soon grew scornful of the Georgians, and his 1914 anthology, *Des imagistes*, also published by Monro, was intended as a counterblast to Marsh's.

Marsh had not intended to produce another volume, but the success of the first persuaded him that a second, covering the next two-year period, would be worth risking. War intervened, but *Georgian Poetry, 1913–1915* eventually came out in November 1915. The selection had mostly been made early in 1914, so not many war poems were included. Several poets were dropped, and there were only two newcomers, Ralph Hodgson and Francis Ledwidge. The book was dedicated to Brooke and James Elroy Flecker who had both died in 1915: Marsh chose poems by both of them, but ruled that any future volume would be limited to living writers.

Other writers whose work was published in one of the five volumes of *Georgian Poetry* included: Martin Armstrong; G. K. Chesterton; Richard Hughes; Peter Quennell; Victoria [Vita] Sackville-West; Francis Brett Young.

- **Rupert Brooke (1887-1915)**- known for his idealistic war sonnets written during the First World War, especially "The Soldier". Brooke enlisted at the outbreak of war in August 1914. He came to public attention as a war poet early the following year, when *The Times Literary Supplement* published two sonnets ("IV: The Dead" and "V: The Soldier").

- **William Henry Davies** (1873-1940)- a Welsh poet and writer, who spent much of his life as a tramp or hobo in the United Kingdom and the United States. *The Autobiography of a Super-Tramp* (1908) covers his American life in 1893–1899, including adventures and characters from his travels as a drifter. In 1907, the manuscript of *The Autobiography of a Super-Tramp* drew the attention of George Bernard Shaw, who agreed to write a preface (largely through the efforts of his wife Charlotte). *Later Days*, a 1925 sequel to *The Autobiography of a Super-Tramp*, describes the beginnings of Davies's writing career and his acquaintance with Belloc, Shaw, de la Mare and others.

Davies self-published his first slim book of poetry, *The Soul's Destroyer*, in 1905, again by means of his savings. In December 1908 his essay "How It Feels To Be Out of Work", described by Stonesifer as "a rather pedestrian performance", appeared in *The English Review*. In 1930 Davies edited the poetry anthology *Jewels of Song* for Cape, choosing works by over 120 poets, including William Blake, Thomas Campion, Shakespeare, Tennyson and W. B. Yeats. Of his own poems he added only "The Kingfisher" and "Leisure". The collection reappeared as *An Anthology of Short Poems* in 1938.

- **Wilfred Wilson Gibson** (1878-1962)- Gibson was one of the founders of the Dymock poets, a community of writers who settled briefly, before the outbreak of the Great War, in the village of Dymock, in north Gloucestershire. He wrote a piece of criticism on *Italian Nationalism and English Letters* by Harry W. Rudman regarding the contributions made by Italian exiles in England to English literature, which were in the form of poetry by and large. He also wrote criticism on *The Burning Oracle: Studies in the Poetry of Action* by G. Wilson Knight, wherein he commends the fact that Knight sees the creative energy of living writers not only in the creation of artworks, but also in the creation of life itself.

- **Walter de la Mare** (1873-1956)- an English poet, short story writer, and novelist. He is probably best remembered for his works for children, for his poem "The Listeners", and for a highly acclaimed selection of subtle psychological horror stories, amongst them "Seaton's Aunt" and "All Hallows". *Come Hither* was an anthology, edited by de la Mare, mostly of poetry with some prose. It has a frame story, and can be read on several levels. It was first published in 1923.

In 1921, his novel *Memoirs of a Midget* won the James Tait Black Memorial Prize for fiction, and his post-war *Collected Stories for Children* won the 1947 Carnegie Medal for British children's books.

De la Mare was a notable writer of ghost stories. His collections *Eight Tales*, *The Riddle and Other Stories*, *The Connoisseur and Other Stories*, *On the Edge* and *The Wind Blows Over* contain several ghost stories each.

De la Mare wrote two supernatural novels, *Henry Brocken* (1904) and *The Return* (1910). His poem "The Ghost Chase" appeared in *Punch* for 26 March 1941 and was illustrated by Rowland Emmet.

De la Mare described two distinct "types" of imagination – although "aspects" might be a better term: the childlike and the boylike. It was at the border between the two that Shakespeare, Dante, and the rest of the great poets lay. De la Mare claimed that all children fall into the category of having a childlike imagination at first, which is usually replaced at some point in their lives.

By adulthood (de la Mare proposed), the childlike imagination has either retreated for ever or grown bold enough to face the real world. Thus emerge the two extremes of the spectrum of adult minds: the mind moulded by the boylike is "logical" and

"deductive". That shaped by the childlike becomes "intuitive, inductive".

- **Sir J. C. Squire** (1884-1958)- a British writer, most notable as editor of the *London Mercury*, a major literary magazine in the interwar period. He was also a poet and historian, who captained a famous literary cricket-team called the Invalids. In his book *If It Had Happened Otherwise* (1931) he collected a series of essays, many of which could be considered alternative histories, from some of the leading historians of the period (including Hilaire Belloc and Winston Churchill); in America it was published that same year in somewhat different form under the title *If: or, History Rewritten*.

Squire was knighted in 1933, and after leaving the *London Mercury* in 1934, he became a reader for Macmillans, the publishers; in 1937, he became a reviewer for the *Illustrated London News*. Squire is generally credited with the one-liner "I am not so think as you drunk I am", which appeared as the refrain of his *Ballade of Soporific Absorption*.

- **James Elroy Flecker** (1884-1915)- a British novelist and playwright. As a poet, he was most influenced by the Parnassian poets (a French literary style of "art for art's sake" that began during the positivist period of the 19th century, occurring after romanticism and prior to symbolism. The style was influenced by the author Théophile Gautier as well as by the philosophical ideas of Arthur Schopenhauer.

Flecker's poem "The Bridge of Fire" features in Neil Gaiman's *Sandman* series, in the volume *The Wake*, and *The Golden Journey to Samarkand* is quoted in the volume *World's End*. His death at the age of thirty was described at the time as "unquestionably the greatest premature loss that English literature has suffered since the death of Keats".

In 1910 he published the collection *Thirty-Six Poems* and a year later followed it up with *Forty-Two Poems*. His seminal work *The Golden Journey to Samarkand* appeared two years later. In 1914, Flecker published his second novel *The King of Alsander*.

- **Laurence Binyon** (1869-1943)- an English poet, dramatist and art scholar. He won the Newdigate Prize for his poem *Persephone* in 1891 in Oxford University. Moved by the casualties of the British Expeditionary Force in 1914, Binyon wrote his most famous work "For the Fallen", which is often recited at Remembrance Sunday services in the UK, Australia, New Zealand and Canada. His war poetry includes a poem about the London Blitz, "The Burning of the Leaves", regarded by many as his masterpiece.

His first book on Oriental art was *Painting in the Far East* (1908), which is still a classic. His later books on art included *The Flight of the Dragon* (1911) and *The Spirit of Man in Asian Art* (1935), as well as writings on English watercolours. He was also concerned with the revival of verse drama; his works in that form included *Attila* (1907), *Arthur* (1923), and *The Young King* (1934).

His verse translation of Dante's *Divine Comedy* was published in three parts in 1933, 1938, and 1943.

- **Charles Hamilton Sorley** (1895-1915)- a British Army officer and Scottish war poet who fought in the First World War. He was killed in action during the Battle of Loos in October 1915. *Marlborough and Other Poems* was published posthumously in January 1916 and immediately became a critical success, with six editions printed that year. His *Collected Letters*, edited by his parents, were published in 1919.

War Poets

According to Perkins, 'when the war came to England in 1914, poetry was among the first volunteers'. The poetry of the past was everywhere eagerly invoked reflecting the idealistic fervor of the England in the early years of the war. The war fostered an attitude of unquestioning enthusiasm for heroic pieties and nationalistic feelings. The poetry of the First World War is primarily a record of the experience of war in conventionally heroic terms till the event itself transformed this traditional response.

War poets like Robert Graves, Nichols, Edmund Blunden and Julian Grenfell retain a conventional peace time habit of sensibility. Although their first-hand experience of combat was traumatic that experience is not the focus of feeling. It was left for Siegfried Sassoon, Isaac Rosenberg and Wilfred Owen to strip the false literary wrappings from the reality of the war. Like Sassoon, Isaac Rosenberg delineates the physical and emotional realities of war without sentiment. The most valuable contribution to war poetry was made by Wilfred Owen, he is among the first to discard the soothing concept of an England of shining valleys and Arthurian chivalry.

His lingering Romanticism not only makes his poetry more accessible to the reader but also makes his realism more telling. A past master of verbal exactitude which he often achieved through the use of Keatsian intensifiers, Owen was a patient craftsman whose poetic maturity is proclaimed by his complex pattern of alliteration and controlled use of assonance. Had Owen and Rosenberg survived the war, the poetry of the ensuing period might have been different, the features of Modernism for the first time introduced by them. Thus, the war poets and poetry helped prepare the way for change, not least by preparing an audience for the Modernist movement.

- **Robert Graves** (1895-1985)- English poet, historical novelist and critic. His poems, his translations and innovative analysis of the Greek myths, his memoir of his early life—including his role in World War I—*Good-Bye to All That*, and his speculative study of poetic inspiration *The White Goddess* have never been out of print. He is also a renowned short story writer, with stories such as "The Tenement" still being popular today.

He earned his living from writing, particularly popular historical novels such as *I, Claudius*; *King Jesus*; *The Golden Fleece*; and *Count Belisarius*. He also was a prominent translator of Classical Latin and Ancient Greek texts; his versions of *The Twelve Caesars* and *The Golden Ass* remain popular for their clarity and entertaining style. Graves was awarded the 1934 James Tait Black Memorial Prize for both *I, Claudius* and *Claudius the God*.

- **Siegfried Sassoon** (1886-1967)- an English war poet, writer, and soldier. His poetry both described the horrors of the trenches and satirised the patriotic pretensions of political leaders. In 1919 took up a post as literary editor of the socialist *Daily Herald*. Sassoon had expressed his growing sense of identification with German soldiers in poems such as "Reconciliation" (1918). He also wrote one of his best-known peacetime poems, "At the Grave of Henry Vaughan". While in America, he had experimented with a novel. In 1928, he branched out into prose, with *Memoirs of a Fox-Hunting Man*, the anonymously-published first volume of a fictionalised autobiography.

The book won the 1928 James Tait Black Award for fiction. Sassoon followed it with *Memoirs of an Infantry Officer* (1930) and *Sherston's Progress* (1936). In later years, he revisited his youth and early manhood with three volumes of genuine autobiography, which were also widely acclaimed. These

were *The Old Century*, *The Weald of Youth* and *Siegfried's Journey*.

- **Edmund Blunden** (1896-1974)- an English poet, author, and critic. Like his friend Siegfried Sassoon, he wrote of his experiences in World War I in both verse and prose. He was nominated for the Nobel Prize in Literature six times. Blunden published such collections of poems as *The Waggoner* (1920), *The Shepherd* (1922, won the Hawthornden Prize), *Choice or Chance* (1934) and *Shells by a Stream* (1944). He also published crucial prose works on Charles Lamb; Edward Gibbon; Leigh Hunt; Percy Bysshe Shelley (*Shelley: A Life Story*); John Taylor; and Thomas Hardy; and a book about a game he loved, *Cricket Country* (1944).
- **Wilfred Owen** (1893-1918)- an English poet and soldier. He was one of the leading poets of the First World War known for his verse about the horrors of trench and gas warfare. He is best known for his famous phrase "the pity of war".

Among his best-known works – most of which were published posthumously – are "Dulce et Decorum est", "Insensibility", "Anthem for Doomed Youth", "Futility", "Spring Offensive", "The Parable of the Old Men and the Young" and "Strange Meeting". He was greatly influenced by the Romantic poets- Blake, Keats and Shelley; Sassoon's emphasis on realism and "writing from experience" was contrary to Owen's hitherto romantic-influenced style, as seen in his earlier sonnets. Most of his collections were published posthumously: *Poems* (1920), *The Poems of Wilfred Owen* (1931), *The Collected Poems of Wilfred Owen* (1963), *The Complete Poems and Fragments* (1983); fundamental in this last collection is the poem *Soldier's Dream*, that deals with Owen's conception of war.

Pat Barker's historical novel, *Regeneration* (1991), describes the meeting and relationship between Sassoon and Owen, acknowledging that, from Sassoon's perspective, the meeting had a profoundly significant effect on Owen.

- **Issac Rosenberg** (1890-1918)- an English poet and artist. His *Poems from the Trenches* are recognized as some of the most outstanding poetry written during the First World War. He is best known for his “trench poems,” written between 1916 and 1918. He published a pamphlet of ten poems, *Night and Day*, in 1912. He was very critical of the war from the onset, as described in his very initial phase poem, *On Receiving News of the War*. He published a second collection of poems, *Youth* in 1915.
- On 11 November 1985, Rosenberg was among 16 Great War poets who were commemorated on a slate stone unveiled in Westminster Abbey's Poet's Corner. The inscription on the stone was written by a fellow Great War poet, Wilfred Owen. It reads: "My subject is War, and the pity of War. The Poetry is in the pity."

The Movement Poets

In Literature, the term ‘movement’ denotes a new development or epoch in literary activity or interest of some specific period. The ‘Movement Poetry’ was also a new development in the arena of literature of the 1950s which showed its detestation for the established norms in literature of the period.

The term “Movement Poetry” was coined by J.D. Scott in 1954 who was then editor of the periodical, “Spectator” which heralded the birth of a new trend in poetry of the 1950s. The term 'Movement Poets' was not applied to any literary school as such, but to a group of poets of the 1950s.

The literature of the 1950s was a reflection of pain, sufferings, frustration, class struggle and anger of common man. It was not a literature of an élite class but of a lower-middle-class of society. The Movement poets depicted the life in provincial region of the period.

The group of the Movement poets comprised some famous poets and novelists such as Robert Conquest, Philip Larkin, Kingsley Amis, Donald Davie, Dennis Enright, Thomas Gunn, Elizabeth Jennings, John Wain, John Holloway, Anthony Thwaite, Vernon Scannell, and George MacBeth.

Characteristics of the Movement:

- The Movement poetry stayed away from the charm and spell of Thomas Stearns Eliot and Ezra Pound and the high emotion and verbal effusion of Dylan Thomas.
- The Movement poets rejected not only the Romantic tradition but also reacted against the experimentation of the modernist poets. The movement poetry lacked spontaneous outburst of feelings and emotion. It appealed more to the head than to the heart of readers.
- It was a group of poets who were realist, robust and sceptical. They gave vent to their pent up feelings in ironic vein. Realism is the keynote of the Movement poetry which sometimes makes the works dull, boring, and dry.
- The Movement poets experienced the world as materialistic, banal and evil. They did not lament over the loss of glory and weep for the horror of the wars and boredom like Tiresias in T.S. Eliot's "The Waste Land" but they believed in facing ugly reality with bravely. It is clear that the Movement poetry was less sentimental and more intellectual in nature. It was anti-Romantic, witty, laconic and ironic.
- The modernist poetry emphasized a new form, a new way of looking at life, and channel through which the sensibility of the

age was to be expressed whereas the Movement poetry rejected every principle of the Modernist poetry. They showed antipathy to the cultural pretensions of Bloomsbury and elitism of the modern age. They adhered to the traditional metrical forms and syntax.

- The poets of the 1950s abhorred over-experimentation in form and over-use of figurative language in poetry. They put stress on simplicity and clarity of expression in poetry.
- Philip Larkin remarked, "First of all you have to be terribly educated, you have to read everything to know these things, and secondly, you have got somehow to work them in to show you are working them in."
- The Movement poets disliked the allusive and mythical nature of T.S. Eliot's poetry which demands greater knowledge and understanding on the part of the reader. It was too complex and difficult to be understood by ordinary man.
- If Eliot's poetry was too complex and unsuitable for the common man, so was the poetry of a group of W.H. Auden. It is too intellectual and political in sense and gives reflection of the time between the two World Wars.

Movement Poets:

- Robert Conquest, one of the renowned writers of the Movement of the 1950s edited an anthology, "New Lines" which was published in 1956. It contained the principles and ideology of the Movement.

It is important to note that Robert Conquest has criticized the obscurity and metaphorical nature of modern poetry in the preface of the anthology "New Lines". He considered Dylan Thomas's style as 'diffuse and sentimental verbiage and pirouettes'.

The second anthology of Movement poetry was titled as the same as, “New Lines”; it appeared on the literary scene in 1963. Robert Conquest produced several collections of poetry, they are “Poems” published in 1955, “Between Mars and Venus” in 1962, “Arias for a Love Opera” in 1969, and “New and Collected Poems” in 1988.

Robert Conquest poetry dealt with the pain, disillusion, frustration and suffering of man of the prevalent period. There is a fine blending of colloquial speech and irony in his poetry which vividly present hollowness and hypocrisy of modern age.

In his poetry, Robert Conquest has depicted man as an integral part of Nature. The tone of his poetry is intellectual rather than emotional and sentimental.

- Philip Larkin, one of the chief pillars of the Movement poetry, expressed his abhorrence and dislike for figurative language and experimentation in modern poetry. When a number of modern poets were under the spell of Thomas Sterns Eliot and Ezra Pound in the first half of the twentieth century, Philip Larkin was not much influenced by their spell.

He emphasized use of traditional metrical forms, precision and plain diction in poetry rather than experimentation in poetry. He expressed his detestation of Mozart; and he had little faith in myth-making tendency and allusive nature of the modern poetry.

Philip Larkin’s first collection of poetry “The North Ship” appeared in 1945 which clearly indicates influence of William Butler Yeats. Another volume “XX Poems” appeared on the literary scene in 1951.

But the most famous collection of Poetry by Philip Larkin is “The Less Deceived” that established Larkin in the literary arena. “The Less Deceived” was published in 1955. It was filled with pessimism and grim humour which clearly indicates that the poet was highly influenced by Thomas Hardy.

Philip Larkin’s collection of poems “The Less Deceived” was followed by another two volumes named “The Whitsun Weddings” in 1964 and “High Windows” in 1974. The sharp and bitter tone of his poetry clearly indicates his alliance to the Movement poetry of the 1950s.

The titles of Elizabeth Jennings’s collection of poems “A Way of Looking” and “A Sense of the World” clearly reflected the principles of The Movement of 1950s; they vividly indicate a new and different way of The Movement of perceiving and experiencing the world. Though the two volumes “A Way of Looking” published in 1955 and “A Sense of the World” published in 1958 are tinged with the features of the Movement poetry, much of Elizabeth Jennings’s later works are highly personal and confessional in tone. The poems of the two collections appeared in Robert Conquest’s edition of the anthology “New Lines” in 1956.

- Kingsley Amis, a poet and famous novelist, was also associated with the group of 'angry young men' of the 1950s. In his famous Campus novel, “Lucky Jim”, Kingsley Amis has introduced a hero, Jim Dixon who is against the established values, pretensions, and élite art and craft art with rebellious attitude.

Jim Dixon expresses his anger, frustration, alienation and disillusionment in sardonic tone and grim humour in the novel.

Jim Dixon is a representative of the Angry Young Men and he belongs to the lower-middle-class of society.

Kingsley Amis's volumes of poetry, "Bright November" appeared in 1947 and "A Frame of Mind" in 1953 clearly indicate revolutionary ideas of the Movement poetry.

Kingsley Amis stated in "Poets of the 1950s" that nobody wants any more poems about philosophers or paintings or novelists or art galleries or mythology or foreign cities or other poems. He objected to Dylan Thomas style and asserted that Dylan Thomas should have "stuck to spewing beer, not ink".

As a member of The Movement, Kingsley Amis has expressed conservative taste and hostility to contemporary manners. His volume of poems "Collected Poems 1944-1979" appeared on the literary scene in 1979.

- Thomas Gunn's poetry can be deemed as the meeting point of the American Beat Movement and the English Movement Poetry. He was greatly influenced by a critic, Yvor Winters. Thomas Gunn's first volume of poetry "Fighting Terms" appeared in 1954 which established him in the literary arena of poetry. The second volume "The Sense of Movement" was published in 1957 that clearly displays Yvor Winter's influence.

Thomas Gunn has skillfully observed rationalistic precision and clarity while handling a subject matter of his poetry. His style resembles with that of John Donne because it demonstrates a fine blending of far-fetched imagery, economy of words, wit and laconic vein. Some other famous works of Thomas Gunn

are “My Sad Captain” published in 1961, “Touch” in 1967, and “Moly” published in 1971.

- Dennis Joseph Enright played vital role in the development of the Movement of 1950s. His first volume of poems “The Laughing Hyena and Other Poems” was published in 1953.

Dennis Enright has adroitly handled various themes through his poetry. it is important to note that he produced anthology of The Movement “Poets of the 1950s” in 1955 which became a primary source for the anthology “New Lines” by Robert Conquest in 1956. Several other collections of poems are “Bread rather than Blossom” published in 1956, “Addictions” in 1962, and “Sad Ires” appeared in 1975.

It is to be noted that Dennis Enright has also composed a series of poems “A Faust Book” in 1973 which is based on the theme of Faust legend. Some other volumes of poetry “Under the Circumstances” appeared in 1991 and “Old Man and Comets” in 1993.

Dennis Enright’s poems “Laughing Hyena”, “Some Men are Brothers” and “The Old Adam” present a precarious condition of common man. In these poems the poet has expressed his grief and pain along with disgust for man’s hardships and sufferings.

There is fine use of colloquial speech without pedantry. In the poems, Dennis Enright has given vent to his anger and indignation and criticized hypocrisy and cruelty.

- Donald Davie, one of the members of the Movement, expressed his anti-Romantic views and anti-bohemian principles in his famous work “Purity of Diction in English Verse”; it was published in 1952. He also produced some volumes of poetry “Brides of Reason” in 1955, “A Winter Talent” in 1957, “Events and Wisdom” in 1964 and “Essex Poems” in 1969.

His volume of poems “In the Stopping Train” appeared in 1972. The reader can find lucidity of expression and pictorial description of landscapes in Donald Davie’s poetry. His poems are tinged with speculation and philosophy. The poet is often charged with obscurity and complexity of his verse.

- John Wain, a famous novelist and critic, was associated with the group of Movement poets of the 1950s. Many of his works were published in “New Lines”. He has been charged with dull and prosaic style of his writing.

He produced a collection of poems “Mixed Feelings” in 1951 and “Weep before God” in 1961. Though John Wain’s name is linked to the group of “Angry Young Men”, he himself detested this term.

