

Poetry

Anglo-Saxon Age

Characteristics of Anglo-Saxon Poetry

- ▶ Some 30,000 lines of Anglo-Saxon poetry remain. The Anglo-Saxon language is rough; its words are hard and metallic.
- ▶ Stock formula- A line of accented alliterative syllable with a middle pause or caesura.
- ▶ The Anglo-Saxon poetry used to be sung by a court Minstrelsy or a Scop- a visiting Minstrel who used to frequently visit the royal courts to recite poetry. The alliterative verse is believed to be a product of this culture of oral recitation.
- ▶ Alliteration used in right amount lends musical quality to poetry; but Anglo-Saxon poetry employed it compulsorily making it sound monotonous and mechanical.

Manuscripts of the Anglo-Saxon Literature

- ▶ **Junius Manuscript (10th century)**- Also called as Caedmon's Manuscript.
 1. Genesis A
 2. Genesis B
 3. Exodus
 4. Daniel
 5. Christ and Satan (Attributed to Caedmon)

► **Vercelli Book (10th century)**

1. 23 prose
2. The Dream of the Rood
3. Andreas Poem
4. Fates of the Apostles
5. Elene
6. Soul and Body
7. Homilectic Fragment

► **Exeter Book (960-980 AD)**- It was found in the south-west part of England.

1. The Phoenix
2. The Wanderer
3. The Seafarer
4. The Lament of Deor
5. The Wife's Lament
6. Riddles
7. Widsith
8. Christ II
9. Juliana

► **Beowulf Manuscript**- Also called as the Nowell Codex Manuscript (2nd part of the 2 manuscripts comprising the Cotton MS Vitellius A XV Manuscript).

Important Writers-

Cynewulf

- ▶ Cynewulf was a religious poet of the 9th century Anglo-Saxon era. His poems were based on Christian themes, rather than Biblical themes. The poems display moods of contemplation and meditateness.
- ▶ He is the first Anglo-Saxon poet to sign his poems with his name, in runic letters.
- ▶ His poems are- Christ II, Juliana, Elene and The Fates of the Apostles.

Caedmon

- ▶ Anglo-Saxon Monk and Poet- Considered as the Father of Old English Poetry
- ▶ Believed to have lived in the 7th century.
- ▶ Illiterate- Cow-herder; His hymns take source from his visions in which he converses with God and finds his message.
- ▶ Hymn was written some-time between 658 and 680 AD, it has the distinction of being the earliest English literature of any kind for which we know the author.
- ▶ Germanic poem in alliterative verse; found in 21 different manuscripts- In 9 lines
- ▶ Use of Epithets- God is “Master”, “Almighty”, “Eternal”, “Holy” and “Mighty”.

Bede

- ▶ 677-735 AD- Northumbrian
- ▶ Known as “Venerabilis” or Learned Bede.
- ▶ Used Latin in Vernacular and popularized its use in literature.

- ▶ Is known for literature, History and Linguistics- developed syntax in Anglo-Saxon.
- ▶ Introduced Instructional Verses in poetry.

Famous works-

- ▶ *Ecclesiastical History of the English People* (731 AD).
- ▶ *The Great Chronicle* (725 AD)- account on Biblical History.
- ▶ *Life of St. Paul*- he was a major apostle of Christ. Hence, Bede introduced writing in the genre of 'Lives'.
- ▶ '*On the Nature of Things*'- Astronomical+Astrological work.

Major Poems-

Widsith

- ▶ Found in the Exeter manuscript of the 10th century.
- ▶ West Saxon dialect
- ▶ Assumed to be written in Northumbria, somewhere around late 7th or early 8th century.
- ▶ It is an autobiography of a Scop who visits various courts and tells about his experiences and functions as a Minstrel.
- ▶ He is the "far wanderer" who visits the courts of many kings and chiefs spread over a span of 200 years between 4th-6th century.
- ▶ Eormanric, Aelfwine, Attila, Becca, Gifica, Theodric, Thyle, Breoca, Billing, Oswine, Gefwulf, Fin, Offa, Alewih (bravest of all)- These were the kings and heroes of the whole of Germania.

- ▶ Widsith, hence, presents a wonderful and vivid vista of the Germanic world with all its history and geography.
- ▶ It can be viewed as the first catalogue of rulers ever produced.
- ▶ The narrative is the product of the bard's imagination and how he sees and presents his history and his world.

Beowulf

- ▶ The most important poetic fragment of the Anglo-Saxon era.
- ▶ The only complete long epic of the Anglo-Saxon poetry.
- ▶ It was found in a single manuscript- Cotton MS Vitellius-1010 AD
- ▶ Survived fire in the library of Sir Robert Bruce Cotton, a collector of manuscripts.
- ▶ Written in West Saxon dialect.
- ▶ Part history-part mythology.
- ▶ 3182 lines.
- ▶ Recited by an anonymous bard.
- ▶ It deals with the events of early 6th century though it is believed to be written in the 8th century itself.
- ▶ There is no common consensus if it is the only epic of the Anglo-Saxon poetry or one of it.
- ▶ Written in 2 parts-contains 3 narratives.
- ▶ The protagonist is Beowulf, a Geat (Swede) whose fame "far flew the boast of him".
- ▶ In the 1st part- Beowulf visits the court of King Hrothgar of Denmark and his queen Wealhpeow to help them.

- ▶ A monster, Grendel has been terrorizing their Hall, Heorot, for a long time.
- ▶ Beowulf fights Grendel and mortally wounds him in the battle. He tears his arm off.
- ▶ When Grendel's mother arrives to revenge her son's death, Beowulf follows her to her home underwater and kills her as well.
- ▶ Beowulf is now celebrated as a Hero among the Danes.
- ▶ He returns back to Geatland with gifts and honors from the King.
- ▶ He now becomes the King of the Geats.
- ▶ IIInd Part- 50 years from then.
- ▶ A dragon wrecks havoc on the people of the Geatland when he disturbed while guarding a pile of treasure.
- ▶ Beowulf rises to the occasion to save his people for the terror of the dragon.
- ▶ He kills the dragon while himself sustaining mortal wounds.
- ▶ The epic ends with the Funeral scene of Beowulf.

Genesis

- ▶ Based on Old Testament story.
- ▶ The manuscript has several gaps- The main part of the text is recognized as Genesis A.
- ▶ There is a section of interpolated passage of over 600 lines which is different in language and style; it is recognized as Genesis B.
- ▶ Its source is St. Jerome's Vulgate and Christian legends.

- ▶ Believed to have been written by a clergyman because of its vast biblical and Christian themes.
- ▶ Genesis A begins with the creation of the heaven and of Satan's rebellion and refers to God's decision to cast Satan and other archangels out of heaven and to establish the world as his glorious creation.
- ▶ Next, it describes the first 22 chapters of the Genesis.
- ▶ Genesis B deals with the temptation of Eve and the fall of mankind; it also has a part on Satan's rebellion.
- ▶ Genesis B displays elements of greater vigor and artistic craftsmanship than Genesis A poem.
- ▶ Source is not entirely Biblical; the poet picks up from the oral tradition of Christian legends available to him in his times.
- ▶ Describes Satan not as a fiery rebel but as a lamenting figure who is forever devoid of the joys of heaven.
- ▶ After a series of moving speeches, there is an account of Christ.
- ▶ Towards the end, there is the scene where Satan tries to tempt Christ in the wilderness, followed by focus on Satan again.
- ▶ Through Satan's speeches, which display excellent elegiac eloquence, the poet puts into focus the difference between Heaven and Hell- represented by Christ and Satan respectively.

Exodus

- ▶ *Exodus*, an incomplete poem of 590 lines regarded as older than *Genesis* or *Daniel*, describes the flight of the Israelites with considerable dramatic power.

Daniel

- ▶ *Daniel*, an incomplete poem of 764 lines, is a scholarly work closely following the Vulgate Book of Daniel and much inferior to *Exodus* in poetic quality.

Christ and Satan

- ▶ The 729-line piece known as *Christ and Satan* contains a lament of the fallen angels, a description of the harrowing of hell (Christ's descent into hell after his death), and an account of the temptation of Christ by Satan.
- ▶ In spite of its divided sequence, it is regarded by some scholars as a single poem, its unifying theme being the "sufferings of Satan."
- ▶ The manuscript also contains drawings.

Christ

- ▶ Has 1664 lines.
- ▶ Christ I- Deals with Christ's advent. Also called Advent lyrics. Anonymous.
- ▶ Christ II- Written by Cynewulf. Deals with Christ's Ascension.
- ▶ Christ III- Deals with the episode of Last Judgment. Anonymous.
- ▶ Cynewulf's Christ finds its source in Gregory the *Great's Homilies*.

Juliana

- ▶ Its source is a Latin prose work on the martyrdom of St. Juliana.
- ▶ 731 lines.
- ▶ Written in West Saxon dialect.

Elene

- ▶ Also known as *St. Helena Finds the True Cross*
- ▶ It deals with the episode of discovery of the True Cross by St. Helena, mother of Constantine.
- ▶ 1321 lines.
- ▶ Written in West Saxon dialect.
- ▶ Written somewhere between 750-900 AD.

The Fates of the Apostles

- ▶ Shortest of all Cynewulf poems.
- ▶ 122 lines.
- ▶ “Lo, weary of wandering, sad in spirit, I made this song, gathered it from far and wide, of how the bright and glorious heroes showed forth their courage”.
- ▶ Theme is of the 12 apostles and their respective journeys to spread the Gospel.
- ▶ Cynewulf- 1st person narrator.

The Dream of the Rood

- ▶ Assumed to be written by a poet of the school of Cynewulf.
- ▶ Oldest surviving poem in English in the form of a dream vision.
- ▶ In the poem, the dreamer saw a dream in which he saw the bright Cross etched with precious gems and stones.
- ▶ The narrative of the poem deals with the Cross telling its own story: how it was made, its purpose on earth, god’s command, Christ’s suffering, etc.
- ▶ Christ is referred to as “the Master of Mankind” and “the young hero” in the poem.

- ▶ The poem ends with the dreamer telling his own religious hopes and aspirations.

Other Anglo-Saxon poetry- lyrical elegies

- ▶ **The Wanderer**- It is a lament of departed joys. The protagonist once enjoyed the company and service to his lord but since his death has become lonely and has taken up the life of an exile in the sea. Theme of exile.
- ▶ **The Seafarer**- A melancholy account of a seafarer who recounts the hardships and miseries of the life at sea.
- ▶ **The Wife's Lament**- A wife laments her separation from her beloved husbands with whom she longs to reconcile but cannot do so because of the evil mechanizations of his family. The tone is elegiac and personal.
- ▶ **The Husband's Message**- Theme of love, which is partly also the theme of The Wife's Lament. The speaker is a piece of wood on which the Husband's message is carved. The wood first tells its own story then the message.

Anglo-Norman Age

Introduction

- Ø Refers to the literary era from the Norman conquest in 1066 to the 14th century.
- Ø It was called so because the literature that was being produced during this time was in Anglo-Norman, a unique dialect of French spoken by the invaders who had settled in Britain.

- Ø The Anglo-Norman age is taken to have ended in the year when Chaucer was born i.e. 1300 AD.
- Ø No Standard English was in use. But towards the later part of the 14th century three dialects popularly developed: -
 - Ø Chaucer- London English or King's English.
 - Ø Langland- Worcestershire English
 - Ø Gawain poet- Stafford Border English
- Ø All three combined to form the Vernacular language. Standard form of English came around 1425. Also, it was not until 1362 that English replaced French or Latin as the official language of law and court.
- Ø Effect of Norman conquest on Language
 - Ø Over 10,000 words of French were adopted by English, relating to government, politics, religion, food, literature, etc.
 - Ø Grammar/Syntax changed as well.
 - Ø Use of adjectives with nouns became prolific e.g. **Secretary General**.
 - Ø Spellings underwent transformation e.g. *scolde* became should, *cwen* became queen etc.

Characteristics of Anglo-Norman literature

- Ø Epic tradition of the Anglo-Saxon poetry is replaced by **Romances** in Anglo-Norman era.
- Ø Heroic poetry is not in vogue anymore.
- Ø Religious poetry still exists but not in Biblical strain.

- Ø Development of more prose works.
- Ø **Rhyming** popularized.
- Ø Oxford University- 1167 AD.
- Ø Cambridge University- 1209 AD.
- Ø This gave rise to Humanistic and Academic scholarly culture- which gave rise to **Secular writing**.
- Ø **Debate form** is also developed e.g. “The Owl and the Nightingale” poem.

Romances

Jean Bodel, a 12th Century French Poet, classifies Romances of the Anglo-Norman era in three major categories-

- Ø **Matter of France**
- Ø **Matter of Britain**
- Ø **Matter of Rome**

A fourth category has been added by modern scholars-

- Ø **Matter of England**

A. Matter of France

- Ø Also called as **Carolingian Cycle** because Norman empire during those years fell under the Frankish state or Carolingian empire, which was founded by Charles Martel.
- Ø Includes Epics and early Romances based on the life of Charlemagne or Charles the Great and his court.

- Ø The *Chansons de Geste* or 'Songs of Heroic Deeds' are epic poems that form the traditional subject matter of the Matter of France.
- Ø Chanson de Roland is a part of Chansons de Geste.
- Ø It is written somewhere between 1040-1115 by Turolde.
- Ø It is written in stanzas of irregular length or *Laissez*.
- Ø *Laisse*- It is a stanza of varying length found in medieval French epic poetry.
- Ø Other important works-
 1. *The Sege of Melayne*
 2. *The Sowdone of Babylone*
 3. *Roland and Vernagu*
 4. *Sir Ferumbras*

B. Matter of Britain

- Ø Epics and Romances concerning Life of King Arthur and his court.
- Ø Includes the tales of Brutus, King Lear, Gorboduc and Cymbeline- which will be later picked up various dramatists.
- Ø Provides with the chronology of king Arthur's birth, kingship and death.
- Ø Details on counselor Merlin, Arthur's conquest of Rome, Round Table Knights such as Gawain, Yvain, Tristan, Lancelot, etc.
- Ø Famous works-
 1. Robert Wace's *Geste des Bretons* (Deeds of the Britons)
 2. Chretien de Troyes' *The Knight of the Cart*

3. *Sir Orfeo*
4. *Sir Degare*
5. *The Earl of Toulouse*

C. Matter of Rome

Ø It contains classical tales of Greek and Roman empires.

Ø Famous works-

1. *Roman d' Alexander*
2. Benoit de Sainte-Maure's *Roman de Troie*
3. *Roman de Eneas*
4. *Roman de Thebes*

D. Matter of England

Ø Not as refined as the Matters of France, Rome and Britain.

Ø Deals not with mighty deeds or chivalric ideals but with subtle humanistic values and goodness as a virtue.

Ø Famous works-

- *Havelok the Dane*
- *Guy of Warwick*
- *King Horn*

Secular Poems

“The Owl and the Nightingale”

Ø Written around 12th-13th century.

- Ø Anonymous
- Ø In Octosyllabic couplets- iambic tetrameter
- Ø First example of the debate form in English.
- Ø The Owl- represents monastic life or religious/didactic poetry
- Ø The Nightingale- secular life or delightful/amorous poetry.
- Ø The two birds cover a number of topics, including love, marriage, nesting habits and manners, but they mainly dispute which of the two of them is the superior beast.
- Ø Nicholas of Guildford, a parish priest living in the village of Portesham in Dorset, is mentioned as the worthiest to judge the debate.
- Ø In the end the birds find it best to leave the decision on him though it is never resolved.

“Sir Gawain and the Green Knight”

- Ø Chivalric romance poem- *Gawain* is a story of knightly deeds, sexual enticement and wild landscapes.
- Ø Alliterative verse/prose
- Ø Rhyming bob-and-wheel at the end of each stanza.
- Ø A bob is a short line which is followed by a wheel, a line which is peculiar to rhythmic hymns or songs of church or lyric.
- Ø Sir Gawain is one of the knights of Arthur’s Round Table.
- Ø The poem opens with a description of a New year’s-eve feast at Camelot, the Arthurian court. During the feast a mysterious knight, with green hair and green skin, riding a green horse, arrives and challenges the assembled crowd to a bizarre game-

any knight is allowed to strike him with his axe, given he is returned the blow in a year and a day.

- Ø Sir Gawain takes up a challenge from the Green Knight to give him a blow, which sets off a chain of events in which Gawain faces trials and temptations.

On the way his chivalry and honor will be put into question multiple time by various temptations and advances; particularly by the appearance of Lady Bertilak.

Sir Gawain and the Green Knight

Summary



New Year Fytte the First: Stanza 7

Green Knight arrives at Camelot and challenges King Arthur to participate in a beheading game. Gawain takes the challenge instead. Gawain beheads Green Knight, but it does not kill him.



The day of all saints Fytte the Second: Stanza 3

Gawain prepares to leave Camelot to look for the Green Knight. He puts on his armor, prepares his horse, and starts his journey.



Around Christmas Fytte the Second: Stanza 14

Gawain arrives at Bertilak's castle and meets Bertilak and his wife. Gawain and Bertilak make a bargain that they will exchange the day's catch with each other.



The next 3 days Fytte the Third: Stanza 29

For the first two days, Lady Bertilak kisses Gawain. Gawain kisses her back but doesn't allow more. On the third day, she gives a green girdle that makes a person immortal. Gawain does not reveal it to the host.



New Year's day Fytte the Fourth: Stanza 8

Gawain wears the girdle of immortality and heads to the Green Chapel. He finds the Green Knight there who strikes Gawain but later forgives him. It turns out to be the host, Bertilak.



After the encounter Fytte the Fourth: Stanza 21

Gawain and Gringolet head back to Arthur's castle. The cut on the neck sores, and he wears the girdle as a symbol of shame. Gawain is celebrated upon his return.



After Gawain arrives Fytte the Fourth: Stanza 22

Gawain explains the meaning of the green girdle to the court. The knights promise to wear green bands as a symbol of honor for Gawain.

“Pearl”

- Ø Written in the form of dream vision and allegory.
- Ø A father is grieving the death of his beloved daughter, Perle, here the “Pearl”.
- Ø He sees a dream in which he encounters a maiden from the heavenly lands who shows him the images of that world.
- Ø Hence, the “Pearl” also becomes the symbol of Paradise.
- Ø It is structured in Prologue, Dialogues and Epilogue.

“Purity or Cleanness”

- Ø A didactic poem based on the theme of purity and cleanliness of body and soul.
- Ø It picks episodes from Biblical source: the Flood, destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah and the fall of Belshazzar.
- Ø Uses alliteration.
- Ø Employs the medieval genre of exemplum.

“Patience”

- Ø Employs the genre of Homiletic- use of rhetoric in religious gatherings to persuade and influence the gathering.
- Ø Written in 530 lines in alliterative verse.
- Ø Mentions 8 virtues of mankind from the Book of Matthew- Biblical theme.
- Ø Uses the story of Jonah as an exemplum.

Note: “Pearl Poet” or “Gawain Poet”- Sir Gawain and The Green Knight, Pearl, Patience and Purity are found in **Cotton Nero Manuscript**. All are written in **North West Midland Dialect**. Hence, all the poems are believed to be written by the same poet.

Elizabethan Age

Introduction

- Giacomo da Lentini- inventor of sonnet form in Italy in the 13th century and a senior poet of the Sicilian School. The term *sonnet* is derived from the Italian word *sonetto* which means a "little song".
- Sonnet- 14 lines of equal length
 - Iambic pentameter in English- 10 syllables
 - Alexandrines in French- 12 syllables
 - Hendecasyllables in Italian- 11 syllables
- Petrarch established sonnet form as the leading poetic form in Italy in the 14th century.
- Italian/Petrarchan sonnet rhyme scheme- ABBAABBA
CDCCDC/CDECDE/CDCDCD
- The transition between the octave and the sestet coincides with a “volta” or “caesura” or turn in argument.

- By the 16th century, the Italian sonnet had travelled to England, France and Spain.
- English/ Shakespearean sonnet form rhyme scheme- ABAB CDCD EFEF GG (4 quatrains followed by a concluding couplet).
- (The final couplet has the concluding lines or some kind of worldly truth embodied in it)
- *Shakespeare's Sonnets* were published in 1609.
- Edmund Spenser later modified the English sonnet form by introducing internal rhyming between the stanzas- ABAB BCBC CDCD EE
- Spenser's famous sonnet cycles are *Amoretti* (1595), *Epithalamion* (1595) and *Prothalamion* (1596).
- Sir Philip Sidney is renowned for his sonnet cycle *Astrophil and Stella* (1591).
- Major theme of Elizabethan sonneteers- Love, torments of love, courtship, marriage, beauty of the love etc.
- Sonnets died in the 18th century only to be revived in the 19th century by the Romantic poets.

Tottel's Miscellany

- Also called as *Songs and Sonnets* was the first printed anthology of English poetry.
- Published in 1557 by Richard Tottel. Appeared in 9 editions (1557-1587).
- *Songes and Sonettes Written By the Ryght Honorable Lord Henry Howard, late Earle of Surrey, Thomas Wyatt the Elder and others- 1st edition.*

- It is considered to be Tottel's 'great contribution to English letters', as well as the first to be printed for the pleasure of the common reader.
- Although it contains 271 poems, there are in total only 54 sonnets in the anthology. The first edition of *Tottel's Miscellany* featured forty poems by Surrey, ninety-six poems by Wyatt, forty poems by Grimald, and ninety-five poems written by unknown authors.
- Out of the 54 sonnets, nine are from unknown authors, three from Nicholas Grimald, 15 from Surrey, and 27 from Wyatt. Other contributors include Nicholas Grimald, Thomas Norton, Thomas Vaux, John Heywood, Edward Somerset and other uncertain or unknown authors.
- The other incorporated poems had themes and comments on religion- Catholicism, Protestantism, and the English Reformation.
- Shakespeare directly quotes the anonymous poem "Against him that had slandered a gentlewoman with him selfe", in *The Rape of Lucrece*:



"To me came Tarquin, armed to beguild,
With outward honesty but yet defiled..."

Sir Thomas Wyatt

- First to introduce the Sonnet form into English.
- He was an esquire to King Henry VIII and made frequent trips to Italy.
- His poems were circulated at court and may have been published anonymously in the anthology The Court of

Venus (1537) during his lifetime, but were not published under his name until after his death.

- He adhered to Petrarchan sonnet form. His sonnets were inspired, imitated and translated from Petrarch. Petrarchan sonnets are metrically disciplined; he introduced that discipline in the rhythm and meter of English sonnet form.
- Wyatt employs the Petrarchan octave, but his most common sestet scheme is *cddc ee*. This marks the beginning of an English contribution to sonnet structure of three quatrains and a closing couplet. The form of 3 quatrains was later given by Earl of Surrey.
- He also wrote satires inspired from Horace and Italian poet Alamanni.
- He was also greatly inspired by Chaucer's poems.
- *Tottel's Miscellany* (1557) consists 96 poems by him, published posthumously (15 years after his death).
- He introduced the *poulter's measure* form, rhyming couplets composed of a 12-syllable iambic line (Alexandrine) followed by a 14-syllable iambic line (fourteener).

Henry Howard, Earl of Surrey

- The star poet of *Tottel's Miscellany*, the Earl of Surrey, created the English sonnet form by modifying the Petrarchan sonnet. He gave the English sonnet form its current rhyme scheme.
- He was one of the founders of English Renaissance poetry and was the last known person executed at the instance of King Henry VIII because he was the cousin of King's 2nd and 5th wives (Queen Anne Boleyn and Queen Catherine Howard).

- The first 36 poems in *Tottel's Miscellany* are written by Surrey and his name appears on the title page of the collection.
- He translated 2nd and 4th books of Virgil's *Aeneid* into English in Blank Verse. He was the first to use Blank Verse in English poetry.
- He acknowledged Wyatt as his master in translation of Petrarch's sonnets but he gave more structure, firmness and finer quality to it.

Sir Philip Sidney

- A courtier, soldier, poet and statesman. He was also a famous patron of poets.
- Greatly inspired by Petrarchan sonnets in which the beloved is idealized- courtly romance.

***Astrophil and Stella* (1591)**

- A sonnet sequence of 108 sonnets and 11 songs published by Thomas Newman, 5 years after Sidney's death.
- The sequence traces the development of the love affair between Astrophel and Stella. Astrophel means a star-lover and Stella means a star.
- Theme- Petrarchan love/unrequited love.
- Sidney also adopts the Petrarchan rhyme scheme, though he uses it with such freedom that fifteen variants are employed.
- Stella- beautiful, virtuous and an ideal embodiment of womanhood.
- Sidney's real life Stella is Penelope Devereux. She was his aunt's, countess of Huntington's ward and Sidney got

introduced to her in 1581. They got engaged briefly but it broke off.

- The sequence begins with Astrophel expressing his love and admiration for Stella. Although she marries another man and is unhappy in that marriage, Astrophel's love for her remains unwaivered; he even starts loving her even more.
- Slowly and gradually, even Stella falls for Astrophel and they begin a clandestine relationship, though Stella never burns in that fire in which Astrophel does.
- He tries to convince her to consummate their love and even steals a kiss from her while she is asleep. But Stella's passion is not so raging and she understands the complication of her situation- society, reputation and virtue. Hence, she decides to end their affair.
- Till around first 30 sonnets, there is only Astrophel and his addresses to Stella. With the exception of Sonnet 24, the first thirty sonnets of the sequence were written while "Stella" was still the unmarried Penelope Devereux.
- In between 31-32 sonnets, Sidney discovers their marriage and in sonnet 33 he first interacts with her as now Mrs.
- Between sonnet 33-60, Astrophel is burning in jealousy for her and is aware of her unhappiness. During these sonnets he will fall more and more in love with her.
- Around 60th sonnet their love affair will begin. Stella will begin to reciprocate Astrophel's advances but her condition is that their love would be platonic.
- In the couple of following sonnets, Astrophel will be torn between his promise with Stella to keep their relationship platonic and his burning passion and desire for her.

- In song 2, he will kiss Stella. This is the junction where they will begin to drift apart because here Stella is furious that Astrophel broke the promise between them.
- In Sonnet 93, he admits that he has harmed Stella in some way, and he is overwhelmed by guilt and sorrow for the next few sonnets. His actions and guilt make it clear that the relationship is now doomed to end forever.
- In sonnet 101, Stella falls ill which prompts Astrophell to express his love for her even more passionately.
- He courts her under her window in Song 11, hoping that she will change her mind and stay with him. Despite his appeals, Stella refuses to sacrifice her husband and her reputation.
- Around this time, we see Stella really angry; as she is not ready to compromise her marriage for her love, fearing of her reputation in the society. Ultimately, she completely breaks off from him.
- He is alone now, but at least happy about the fact that she once loved him.
- Songs-
 - In Song 1 Astrophel praises Stella, declaring that his music will always begin and end with her.
 - In Song 2, Astrophel manages to kiss Stella while she is sleeping.
 - Song 3 is a laudation of the power of music.
 - Song 4 describes a dialogue between Astrophel and Stella in which she rejects his passionate advances.
 - In Song 5, Astrophel vilifies Stella for her "change of looks" and retaliates with a series of insults.

- In Song 6, Astrophel describes a debate between Beauty (Stella) and Music (himself).
 - Song 7 reiterates the words of reason that Astrophel ignored throughout the sonnet sequence.
 - In Song 8, Stella admits that she loves Astrophel, but she must deny him because of her marriage.
 - In Song 9, Astrophel laments that Stella refused him. Song 10 describes Astrophel's ardent desire to see Stella again.
 - In Song 11, Astrophel goes to Stella's home and courts her in one last effort to win her heart. Stella finally and indisputably dismisses Astrophel.
- Astrophel and Stella inspired numerous sonnet sequences in the coming years- Fulke Greville's *Caelica*, Samuel Daniel's *Delia*, Michael Drayton's *Idea*, etc.
 - The publication of "Astrophel and Stella" generated a vogue for the sonnet sequence, and among the English poets who responded was Edmund Spenser, who also wrote the elegy "Astrophel" after his friend Sidney's death in 1586.

***Arcadia* (1590)**

- A Prose Pastoral Romance interspersed with eclogues.
- Traces the adventures of the princes Pyrocles and Musidorus.
- Other important characters are the Duke of Arcadia, his wife Gynecia and their daughters Pamela and Philoclea.
- Musidorus and Pyrocles make their court to the most virtuous Pamela and to radiant Philoclea. They are disguised respectively as a peasant and a woman.

- The king is smitten with love for Pyrocles whose woman's guise deceives him and the queen who discovers the fraud is also smitten with guilty love for the same prince. Amphialus is fond of Philoclea, and with the help of his mother, he keeps the maidens captive.
- Love and virtue save the persecuted women. When Amphialus has been defeated and slain, the love of Musidorus and Pamela and of Pyrocles and Philoclea end in a double marriage. This is the principal plot, but is crossed by many episodes.
- Dedicated it to his sister Mary Herbert, the countess of Pembroke (*The Countess of Pembroke's Arcadia*).
- It is written in 2 parts- *Old Arcadia* (completed in 1580) and *New Arcadia* (published in 1590).
- Old Arcadia involved sensational treatment of sex, politics, violence, mobs, and cross-dressing. Narrated in prose, the romance comprises five "books or acts," organized according to the five-part structure of classical dramaturgy: exposition, action, complication, reversal, catastrophe.
- In 1584, Sidney took the frame of the original story, reorganized it, and added episodes. He transformed its linear dramatic plot into a many-stranded, interlaced narrative.
- He left it half finished, but it remains the most important work of prose fiction in English of the 16th century.
- The incomplete revised version of his *Arcadia* was not printed until 1590; in 1593 another edition completed the story by adding the last three books of his original version.

The Lady of May (1578)

- Short pastoral One-act play- Masque
- This masque was first published (though without a title) in Sidney's 1598 folio of the Arcadia.

- A woman approaches the queen whilst walking in Wanstead Garden saying that her daughter - the Lady of May - has two suitors, and that she would like the queen to judge which of the two should win her hand.
- Having left, a crowd of people come into view. There are six foresters and six shepherds (among them the suitors), the Lady of May herself, and a schoolmaster called Rombus.
- After a brief quarrel between Rombus and the May Lady, the two suitors, Therion and Espilus, begin a singing competition. With this finished a second debate starts between Rixus, a forester (like Therion) and Dorcas, a shepherd (like Espilus), moderated by Rombus.
- The Queen judges Espilus to have won the contest and Espilus sings to celebrate. Finally, the characters take their leave of the queen and the play ends.

Edmund Spenser

The Faerie Queen

- An incomplete English epic.
- Allegorical poem- praise of Queen Elizabeth, moral virtues, etc.
- Original plan had 24 books.
- 1590- Books I, II and III
- 1596- Books IV, V and VI
- Original plan-

12 books based on 12 different knights, each allegorical of one of 12 virtues or “private virtues”
--

12 books on King Arthur allegorizing 12 “public virtues”.

- This plan was outlined by Spenser to Sir Walter Raleigh in a prefatory letter added with *The Faerie Queen*.
- Model- Ariosto's *Orlando Furioso*.
- Purpose- To write a "courtesy book" to "fashion a gentleman or noble person in virtuous discipline".
- Various knights and their allegorical virtue:

1. Book 1- Red Cross- Holiness

2. Book 2- Sir Guyon- Temperance

3. Book 3- Britomart- Chastity

4. Book 4- Cambel and Telamond- Comaradie

5. Book 5- Sir Artegall- Justice

6. Book 6- Sir Calidare- Courtesy

- Written in a 9 lined-stanza called Spenserian stanza- ABABBCBCC (First 8 lines are iambic pentameter and last line is an iambic hexameter (Alexandrine). Spenser specially invented this stanza form for *The Faerie Queen*. He wrote it to earn royal favor.

Summary

Book 1

- The first book follows the adventures of the **Redcross Knight**, the knight of Holiness. Redcross is on a mission from the Faerie Queene Gloriana to lead his companion, **Una**, back to her

homeland where he is to defeat a mighty dragon that is terrorizing the people.

- The Faerie Queen opens with Redcross and Una, followed by their attendant, a dwarf, coming upon the monster Errour, a woman-snake hybrid.
- Redcross defeats Errour, and after leaving the forest they are lured into the home of Archimago, an evil sorcerer disguised as an old man. Archimago creates a false Una and sends his creation to seduce Redcross.
- Redcross rebuffs the false Una, only to later find the false Una laying with a squire. The Redcross Knight abandons Una, fooled by Archimago's magical deception.
- Traveling alone, Redcross meets **Duessa**, who calls herself Fidessa, another agent of deception. Duessa leads Redcross to a magical spring that drains his vitality, and the evil Duessa delivers the weakened Redcross Knight into the captivity of the giant Orgolio.
- However, Una has been searching for Redcross and she meets Arthur, the man later to become the legendary King Arthur. Una and Arthur rescue Redcross from Orgolio and Una brings the knight to the house of Holiness to recover. Once healed, physically and spiritually, Redcross and Una finally journey to Una's home.
- Redcross battles the dragon, being mortally wounded three times. Each time he is resurrected, and on the third day of resurrection, Redcross kills the dragon.
- With much celebration, Una and Redcross are promised to be married and the land will be theirs after Redcross serves Gloriana for six more years.
- Archimago reappears once again to undo Redcross with lies and deception, but his falsehoods are easily uncovered and Archimago is imprisoned.

Book 2

- The second book features Sir Guyon, the knight of Temperance, as the hero. It begins with Archimago, recently escaped from imprisonment and disguised as a squire, tricking Guyon into fighting the Redcross Knight by claiming that Redcross ravaged his wife, who is Duessa in disguise.
- However, just before they engage in battle, Guyon stops. Using his level head, he speaks with Redcross and they part on good terms, Guyon's Temperance prevailing.
- Guyon, with his companion, Palmer, then finds a woman, Amavia, in the act of suicide. She laments that her lover has been taken to the Bower of Bliss by the witch Acrasia. The woman dies in his arms and he is left with her child.
- Guyon vows to protect the child and destroy the Bower of Bliss. After several encounters with villainous knights and enemies (**Pyrochles and Cymochles**), Guyon meets Arthur, who accompanies him through various encounters, and they part ways at the Bower of Bliss. He also resists the temptations of The Cave of Mammon- the money god.
- Guyon confronts the Bower, does not give in to temptation or indulgence, and destroys the Bower, freeing Amavia's lover.

Book 3

- Guyon, Arthur, and Arthur's squire Timias, meet Britomart (Chastity), and they see foresters pursuing the maiden Florimell. The men follow Florimell to help her and Britomart visits the Castle Joyeous in search of the knight Artegall, with whose image in a magic mirror she fell in love with.
- Merlin the wizard reveals Britomart is destined to marry Artegall and found the British monarchical lineage. Meanwhile, after the forester wounds him, Timias is helped by huntress Belphebe, with whom he falls in love. The story of her and her twin sister Amoret's birth is then told.

- Florimell is locked underwater in a cavern by Proteus the sea god because she rebuffed his advances. Following an encounter with Malbecco, Britomart meets Sir Scudamore. She joins his rescue operation for his bride Amoret from Busirane.
- Britomart is wounded by Busirane, but she bests him and binds him up, escaping with Amoret, only to find Scudamore has disappeared.

Book 4

- Scudamore's story continues with an explanation as to why he had left his lady at Busirane's castle. Sir Scudamore has been deceived by the hag Ate, becoming convinced that Amoret, his missing love, has run off with Britomart, who Scudamore believes to be male.
- Scudamore meets Britomart at a tournament and convinces Sir Artegall, also in attendance, to help him defeat Britomart in combat. However, Britomart's helmet is removed in battle, and Artegall immediately falls in love with her, surrendering at her feet.
- Britomart realizes that Artegall is the man she fell in love with in the mirror, and the two profess their love. Yet, Artegall must finish his quest before they can be together. Scudamore, realizing that Britomart is female, becomes desperate to find Amoret, who has since left Britomart's care.
- Britomart agrees to help him find Amoret. Meanwhile, Amoret is rescued by two squires from a wild man, Hairy Carl, who held her captive, where she is then joined by Arthur. They escape along with another hostage, Aemylia. Amoret and Arthur find Scudamore and Britomart and the lovers are reunited.

Book 5

- The fifth book places Sir Artegall, the knight of Justice, as its hero. Artegall is apprenticed as a boy to Astraea, goddess of justice. He is on a quest to deliver the lands of Lady Irena from the clutches of the vile giant Grantorto.
- Artegall travels with a metal squire named Talus who wields a wicked flail. After attending Florimell and Marinell's wedding, the pair encounter foes who are decidedly defeated by the duo, but Talus shows no restraint, willing to kill and destroy at a moment's notice.
- On their journey, Artegall is captured by Amazons and challenged to single combat. Artegall battles Radigund, Queen of the Amazons, but is defeated because he can't bring himself to kill her because of her beauty.
- She enslaves him and forces him to wear women's clothes and do women's chores. Talus flees and finds Britomart, enlisting her aid in freeing him. At night, they make a stop at the church of Isis, where she dreams of her future regal lineage.
- Britomart faces Radigund, beheads her, freeing Artegall and many other knights who had been imprisoned by the Amazon queen. Artegall and Talus depart with Britomart and travel to Irena's land to overthrow Grantorto.
- The pair battle through Grantorto's army and slay the evil giant, staying in Irena's land until he is called back to Gloriana's court.

Book 6

- The sixth book features Sir Calidore, the Knight of Courtesy. The book opens with Calidore meeting Artegall who is returning to Gloriana's court after completing his quest.
- Calidore tells Artegall that his quest is to slay the Blatant Beast and Artegall tells him where he may find said beast. Seeking the beast, Calidore helps different ladies and knights, aiding them while also pursuing the Blatant Beast.
- While pursuing the Blatant Beast, Sir Calidore meets and becomes charmed by Pastorella. She is soon abducted by a band of brigands. After recovering Pastorella, Calidore delivers

her to Sir Bellamoure and his wife for safekeeping while he continues his chase. Bellamoure discovers that Pastorella is his long-lost daughter, and Calidore captures the beast.

- The rest of the book follows Calidore as he answers the call of many others in need. Calidore finally tracks down the Blatant beast who is desecrating a monastery. Calidore subdues and chains the beast, leading it through Faerie Land like a pet.

The Shepheardes Calender

- First important work by Spenser (1579)
- Based on Virgil's *Eclogues* (An eclogue is a short pastoral poem in the form of dialogue or soliloquy)- Pastoral work
- Protagonist- Colin Clouts (from John Skelton) and his journey of life through 12 months of the year- Written a series of 12 eclogues.
- The work is greatly expanded by introductory matter and glosses, written by one E.K., and each eclogue is preceded by a carefully designed woodcut and followed by a motto or "emblem" summing up the attitude of each speaker.
- Models for the poem include Theocritus, Virgil, Mantuan, and Marot, and the style is influenced by, among others, Chaucer and Skelton. Chaucer, indeed, is the one poet to whom Spenser acknowledges a direct debt.
- This poem marked the beginning of English renaissance.
- The 1st and 12th eclogues are complaints by Spenser as Colin Clouts.
- Four of them deal with love, one is in praise of Elysa (Elizabeth), one, a lament for a 'mayden of greate blond', four deal with matters of religion or conduct one describes a singing match

and one laments the contempt in which poetry is held. Four of them deal with love, one is in praise of Elysa (Elizabeth), one, a lament for a 'mayden of greate blond', four deal with matters of religion or conduct one describes a singing match and one laments the contempt in which poetry is held.

- Heroine: Rosalinde
- The Calendars can be traced as Colin Clouts' and Rosalinde's love story with simpleton characters and pastoral dialogues on love, life and other contemporary issues.
- Four of them deal with love, one is in praise of Elysa (Elizabeth), one, a lament for a 'mayden of greate blond', four deal with matters of religion or conduct one describes a singing match and one laments the contempt in which poetry is held.
- Each eclogue is also a satirical view of contemporary European conventions.

Note: The term sarcasm (Sarcasmus) is first recorded in English in Spenser's poem (October).

Amoretti

- 1595
- About his courtship and marriage to Elizabeth Boyle
- Greatly inspired by Petrarchan sonnets.
- The poem ends with a note on Cupid.
- *"Amoretti and Epithalamion: Written not long since by Edmunde Spenser"*

Epithalamion

- An ode to celebrate his nuptial with his bride.

- The poem begins before the dawn and travels through the entire day of their wedding celebration and ends with the night falling upon the day and the newly-weds consummating their marriage.
- Invocation to the muse.
- In the end he asks blessings for their fertility.

Prothalamion

- *“Prothalamion; or, A Spousall Verse in Honour of the Double Marriage of Ladie Elizabeth and Ladie Katherine Somerset”*
- The poem begins with a mention of River Thames.
- “Sweet Thames run softly till I end my song” (later used by T.S. Eliot in *The Wasteland*).

William Shakespeare Poems

Shakespeare is widely recognised as the greatest English dramatist in the world. But he also penned 154 sonnets, two long narrative poems and a few other minor poems in his very productive career.

In Shakespeare's active era or the Elizabethan age (1564-1616), it was not profitable but very fashionable to write poetry. It appears that writing poetry was an activity that he greatly enjoyed and did primarily for himself at times when he was not consumed with writing or acting in a play. It also gave credibility to his talent as a writer and facilitated to enhance his social standing as a great literary personality.

The two longest works that scholars agree were written by Shakespeare are entitled “Venus and Adonis” and “The Rape of

Lucrece". Both the poems were dedicated to the Honorable Henry Wriothesley, Earl of Southampton, who seems to have acted as a patron and benefactor of Shakespeare's work for a brief time.

Both of these poems comment on the degeneracy of unsolicited sexual advances, exhibiting themes of uncontrollable lust, guilt, and moral confusion. In "Venus and Adonis" (1693), an innocent Adonis must reject the sexual advances of Venus. Conversely in "The Rape of Lucrece" (1694), the honorable and virtuous wife Lucrece is raped a character overcome with lust, Tarquin. The dedication to Wriothesley is much warmer in the second poem, suggesting a deepening of their relationship and Shakespeare's appreciation of his support.

Venus and Adonis

"Venus and Adonis" was published in 1593 and is probably the first publication by Shakespeare. It recounts the tale of Venus, the goddess of Love- of her attempted seduction of Adonis, a handsome young man, who would rather go hunting and her unrequited love.

The poem consists of 199 stanzas or 1,194 lines. Its stanzas are written in sestet form (six lines) of iambic pentameter with rhyme scheme ABABCC. Today this stanza structure is known as Sesta Rima or the *Venus and Adonis* stanza. This form was later even used by Edmund Spenser and Thomas Lodge in their poems.

It was published originally as a quarto pamphlet. The printer was Richard Field, who, like Shakespeare, was from Stratford. It was written when the London theatres were closed for a time due to the plague. It was reprinted fifteen times before 1640.

The poem begins with a brief dedication to Henry Wriothesley, 3rd Earl of Southampton. It finds its inspiration from Ovid's Metamorphoses. Venus is the goddess of love. Adonis is the most beautiful young man in the world, but he has no interest in

love; he would rather spend his time hunting. When Venus sees Adonis for the first time, she falls in love with him and comes down to earth to meet him. When they meet, Adonis is about to set out on a hunt. She wants him to get down from his horse and talk to her for a little while, but he is not interested in doing so. She forces him to get off the horse, and all Venus wants is for Adonis to kiss her. All Adonis wants is for Venus to leave him alone so that he can go hunting. Almost when he is about to leave, Adonis's horse becomes interested in a mare and the two animals gallop off together, ruining Adonis's plans to go hunting.

Venus sees this as the right opportunity and she walks over to Adonis and starts talking to him again about love. He listens for a while but is not interested in having a conversation with her and turns away. Heartbroken over Adonis's apathy, Venus faints. Looking at her in this condition, He kneels down and, succumbs to her and eventually kisses her. She gains consciousness at the feel of his kiss, and she asks for one kiss more, which also Adonis reluctantly gives.

Venus wants to see Adonis again, but he refuses because he has to go hunting for a wild boar. Venus sees a vision in which Adonis is killed by the boar that he is hunting. She tells him of her vision and warns him not to go out on the hunt, but he dismisses her.

The following morning, scared due to her vision, she searches the woods for Adonis. She hears dogs and hunters in the distance and assumes it is his hunting party. But it doesn't take her long to find Adonis's hunting dog lying severely injured on the ground. Adonis lies a little way away from his dog; he is dead, killed by the wild boar after all.

Because she is the goddess of love, she decrees that from that moment on love will be tormented with suspicion, jealousy, sadness, and pain. Adonis's blood has dyed the flowers around him dark purple. She leaves the earth to return to the heavens, bereaved and filled with sadness.

The Rape of Lucrece

"The Rape of Lucrece" (1594) begins with a prose dedication addressed to the Earl of Southampton, which begins as, "The love I dedicate to your Lordship is without end." The dedication is followed by "The Argument", a prose paragraph that summarizes the historical context of the poem. The poem contains 1,855 lines, divided into 265 stanzas of seven lines each. The metrical structure of the poem is iambic pentameter. The rhyme scheme for each stanza is ABABBCC, also known as rhyme royal. The poem is set in 509 BCE and the locations are Rome, Ardea and Collatium. Composer Benjamin Britten based an opera on the poem in 1946.

Soldier Collatine of Collatium had bragged about the beauty of his wife Lucrece before his fellow soldier and friend Tarquin. One day, Tarquin feels the urge to behold her so while Collatine was away Tarquin sneaks into his house. He tells Lucrece about his stories of the battle-field and gathers her attention. He decides to spend the night at Lucrece's place.

Tarquin is overcome with lust at night; therefore, he enters Lucrece's chamber at night. On his first touch, Lucrece awakens and is frightened to see him. He asks her to give herself to him or else he would kill her and defame her by showing that she was sleeping with one of the slaves and thus Tarquin killed them both. Lucrece pleads for mercy but Tarquin doesn't accept. He rapes her and leaves her place.

Lucrece is overcome with shame and anger. She writes a letter to her husband and asks him to come home soon. She narrates her predicament to him. Overcome by grief and guilt, she stabs herself with a knife and dies. Collatine wants to die as well in the grief of his wife but he decides to avenge his wife's dishonor and death. He has Tarquin and his family banished from the kingdom at last.

A Lover's Complaint

A third and shorter narrative poem, "A Lover's Complaint". It was printed in the first collection of Shakespeare's sonnets in the 1609 quarto, published by Thomas Thorpe. The poem narrates the tale of a young woman who is driven to misery by a persuasive suitor's attempts to seduce her. The poem contains 47 seven-line stanzas written in rhyme royal (rhyme scheme ABABBCC) of iambic pentameter lines.

The poem begins with a description of a young woman weeping at a river banks, into which she throws such tokens of love as torn-up letters and rings. An old man approaches the woman and asks the reason for her mourning. She tells him of a former lover who pursued her but eventually abandoned her. The narrative of the poem is basically the speech her lover gave her which led to her falling for him. She concludes her tale by confessing that if it came to that, she would fall for his false love again.

The Phoenix and The Turtle

Another short poem is "The Phoenix and the Turtle", an allegorical poem, which despairs the death of a legendary phoenix and his faithful lover, the bird turtle(dove). It is an allegorical poem that suggests the death of true love in a widely superficial world.

The phoenix is a mythical bird that burns into flames every 500 years and rises again from its own ashes. The turtle (dove) is a bird that is symbolic of love and loyalty. The poem begins with a number of birds like owl, eagle, swan, crow, etc. gathering to commemorate the Phoenix and the Turtle. The screech-owl and other birds of prey are banned from the gathering because they symbolize death.

The next section of the poem is an “Anthem” that recounts the mystical and ideal love of the Phoenix and the Turtle. In the third and last section of the poem, Reason, in personified, form sings a “Threnos” (funeral elegy) for the lovers. Reason cannot understand the mystery of how the Phoenix and the Turtle managed to be two and one at the same time. A love like theirs will never be possible again. With their death, loyalty, devotion and the rarity of love have also escaped this mortal world. Reason asks the mourners to say a little prayer for the canonized lovers, who are now immortalized in an urn.

The Sonnets

154 of Shakespeare’s sonnets are included in the volume *Shakespeare’s Sonnets*, published by Thomas Thorpe in 1609. They are followed by the long poem 'A Lover's Complaint', which first appeared in that same volume after the sonnets. Six additional sonnets appear in his plays *Romeo and Juliet*, Henry V and Love's Labour's Lost. These sonnets focus on the themes of love and life. Shakespeare writes to a young man and a dark woman, who may or may not be attainable, but they arouse feelings of desire and awe in the speaker at the same time.

The first 126 are directed to a young man (fair youth) who is the speaker’s object of desire. The last 28 sonnets are addressed to an older woman (dark lady). However, many of the sonnets appear gender-neutral as well.

What is now known as the Shakespearian sonnet is the English sonnet form brought into England by Henry Howard, Earl of Surrey and Sir Thomas Wyatt. This is composed of fourteen lines of iambic pentameter. The stanza break is as such- three quatrains (four lines each) and a couplet (two lines). Before the couplet, a change of tone or idea occurs, that is known as *caesura*.

Within the sonnets, there seems to appear two deliberate series: one describing his all-consuming lust for a married woman with a dark complexion, and one about his confused love feelings for a handsome young man.

The Passionate Pilgrim

- Published in 1599
- An anthology of 20 poems- only five are considered Shakespearean
- Published by William Jaggard
- Poems-
 - “When my love swears that she is made of truth”- later appears as Sonnet 138
 - “Two loves I have, of comfort and despair”- later appears as Sonnet 144
 - “Did not the heavenly rhetoric of thine eye”- appears in Love’s Labour Lost
 - “If love makes me forsworn, how shall I swear to love?” - appears in Love’s Labour Lost
 - “On a day (alack the day)- appears in Love’s Labour Lost

The Age of Milton (1625-1660)

The “Age of Milton” is also known as the “Puritan Age” because this period witnessed the growth of Puritanism as a religious, social and moral force in England. The foundations of Puritanism were laid in the Jacobean Age (1603-1625) during the reign of James I, but it reached its peak in the Caroline Age (1625-1649) during the reign of

Charles I. With the victory of Oliver Cromwell in the Commonwealth Period or the Interregnum (1649-1660), the Puritan regime also championed. Its effect on the life and thought of the English society was profound.

Socio-Political & Religious Background

- **Civil War-**

This entire period was dominated by the civil war, which divided people into two blocs- the ones loyal to the King (Tories) and the other opposed to him (Whigs). The English Civil Wars comprised three wars, which were fought between Charles I and Parliament between 1642 and 1651(1642-48; 1648; 1650-1651). These wars were part of a wider conflict involving Wales, Scotland and Ireland, known as the “Wars of the Three Kingdoms”.

The causes of the wars were complex and many-layered. At the centre of the conflict were differences about religion, and dissatisfaction over the king’s use of power and his economic policies.

In 1649, the victorious Parliamentarians sentenced Charles I to death. His execution resulted in the only period of republican rule in British history, during which military leader Oliver Cromwell ruled as the “Lord Protector of the Commonwealth”. The Puritans, who had become a potent force in the social life of the age, heralded the movement for constitutional reforms during this period.

This period is known as the Interregnum or the Commonwealth, and it lasted for 11 years until 1660 when Charles’s son, Charles II, was restored to the throne. The Civil Wars saw the beginning of the modern British Army tradition with the creation of the New

Model Army – the country's first national army, which incorporated trained, professional soldiers. Many castles were besieged during the wars, resulting in severe damage. Others were deliberately destroyed, or 'slighted', after the fighting.

- **The Puritan Movement-**

The Renaissance, which had immense influence on Elizabethan literature, was essentially non-didactic and abstract. It did not concern the moral nature of man, and it brought little relief from the tyranny of the ruling class. "The Puritan movement" addressed these concerns. It had two chief objects- the first was virtue & the second was civil and personal liberty. In other words, it aimed to make men honest and to make them free.

The term "Puritan" was initially applied to those who advocated changes in the form of worship of the reformed Anglican Church under Queen Elizabeth I. As King Charles I, his councillors, as well as some of the clergymen, were opposed to this movement, Puritanism in course of time became a national movement against the tyrannical rule of the monarchy, and stood for the liberty of the people.

From a religious viewpoint Puritanism included all shades of belief. In course of time it became a great national movement. It included English clergy, and other sects of Christianity as the Calvinists, Covenanters, Catholic noblemen, etc. All these various groups bound together in resistance to totalitarianism in Church and State, with a spirit for liberty and personal freedom.

During the Puritan rule of Cromwell severe laws were passed, simple pleasures were forbidden, theatres were closed (on September 2, 1642, just after the First English Civil War had begun, the Parliament ordered the closure of all London theatres), and a rigid standard of living was forced upon unwilling English people. This led to rebellion

against Puritanism, which ended with the Restoration of King Charles II.

Though during the Restoration period the Puritans began to be looked down upon as narrow-minded, gloomy dogmatists, who were against all sorts of recreations and amusements, in fact they were not so. Moreover, though they were profoundly religious, they did not form a separate religious sect. It would be a grave travesty of facts if we call Milton and Cromwell, who fought for liberty of the people against the tyrannical rule of Charles I, as narrow-minded fanatics. They were the real champions of liberty and stood for toleration.

Literary Characteristics of the Age of Milton

- **Influence of Puritanism:**

The influence of Puritanism upon English life and literature was profound. The spirit which it introduced was noble but it was hard and stern. Sombreness and pensiveness pervaded poetry of this period. The spirit of joviality, youthful vigour and vitality was noticeably omitted. "The spiritual gloom which sooner or later fastens upon all writers of this age, and which is unjustly attributed to Puritan influence, is due to the breaking up of accepted standards in religion and government. This so-called gloomy age produced some minor poems of exquisite workmanship, and one great master of verse whose work would glorify any age or people, —John Milton, in whom the indomitable Puritan spirit finds its noblest expression."

Puritan Poetry

The Puritan poetry, also called the Jacobean and Caroline Poetry during the reigns of James I and Charles I respectively, can be divided into three parts-

1. The School of Spenser

The Spenserians were the followers of Elizabethan sonneteer Edmund Spenser. The most loyal disciples of Spenser during the reign of James I were Phineas Fletcher and Giles Fletcher. They were both priests and Fellows of Cambridge University. Other poets who wrote under the influence of Spenser were William Browne, George Wither and William Drummond.

2. The School of Metaphysical Poetry

The metaphysical poets were John Donne, Herrick, Thomas Carew, Richard Crashaw, Henry Vaughan, George Herbert, Abraham Cowley and Andrew Marvel. They are called the metaphysical poets because their poetry is full of conceits and exaggerations, filled with display of learning and far-fetched similes and metaphors. It was Dr. Johnson who in his essay on Abraham Cowley in his *Lives of the Poets* used the term 'metaphysical'. He wrote:

“About the beginning of the seventeenth century appeared a race of writers that may be termed the metaphysical poets. The metaphysical poets were men of learning, and to show their learning was their whole endeavour: but, unluckily resolving to show it in rhyme, instead of writing poetry, they only wrote verses and very often such verses as stood the trial of the finger better than of the ear; for the modulation was so imperfect that they were only found to be verses by counting the syllables.”

One important feature of metaphysical school which Dr. Johnson mentioned was their “discovery of occult resemblances in things apparently unlike.” Interestingly, they show the spiritual and moral fervour of the Puritans as well as the frank amorous tendency of the Elizabethans.

3. The Cavalier Poets

The cavalier poets followed Ben Jonson. Jonson followed the classical method in his poetry as in his drama- he imitated Horace by writing satires, elegies and epistles like him. Although 'Cavalier' means a royalist—one who fought on the side of the king during the Civil War, the followers of Ben Jonson were not all royalists, but this label once used has stuck to them.

Poets of both Cavalier and Metaphysical schools turned away from the long, old-fashioned works of the Spenserians, and focused their efforts on short poems and lyrics dealing with the themes of love and God. The Cavalier poets normally wrote about trivial subjects, while the Metaphysical poets wrote generally about serious subjects.

The important Cavalier poets were Robert Herrick, Richard Lovelace, Sir John Suckling and Thomas Carew.

- **Lack of Vitality**

The Seventeenth Century was marked by the decline of the Renaissance spirit, and the writers either imitated the great masters of Elizabethan period or followed new paths. We no longer find great imaginative writers like Shakespeare, Spenser and Sidney. There is a marked change in temperament that leads to decline in joviality in verse. Though during the Elizabethan period, the new spirit of the Renaissance had broken away with the medieval times, and started a new modern development, in fact it was in the seventeenth century that this task of breaking away with the past was completely accomplished, and the modern spirit, in the fullest sense of the term, came into being. This spirit may be defined as the spirit of observation and of preoccupation with details, and a systematic analysis of facts, feelings and ideas. In other words, it was the spirit of science popularized by such great men as Newton, Bacon and Descartes.

In the field of literature this spirit manifested itself in the form of criticism, which popularized in latter half of 17th century. During the Sixteenth Century England expanded in all directions; in the Seventeenth Century people took stock of what had been acquired.

John Milton Poems

L'Allegro

- Published in 1645.
- Italian title; means “The happy man”.
- Contrasted with the mirror poem *Il Penseroso* which means “the sad man”.
- They both denote the contrasted pictures of Milton’s scholarly life soon after he left Cambridge University- one gay and one graver.
- Lyrical poem
- Rhymed verse
- Written in the classical structure of a hymn.
- In the beginning of the poem, Divine Mirth is invoked.

Milton borrows a lot of characters from the Greek mythology-

- Aurora (dawn)
- Orpheus- descends into underworld to bring back his wife Eurydice but returns back alone.
- Bacchus- The god of intoxication and mirth
- Hymen- goddess of marriage festivities and ceremonies.

He also employs pastoral imagery-

- Corydon and Thyrsis- stock shepherd couple
- Imagery of bells ringing in a “hamlet”
- “Elysian flowers”

Use of folk imagery-

- Faery Mab- Queen of fairies (from folklore)
- “goblin’s sweat”

Poet geniuses are also referred to-

- If Jonson's learned sock be on,
Or sweetest Shakespeare, Fancy's child,
Warble his native wood-notes wild.
- The poem outlines the experiences, visions and thoughts that the poet has on a day when he is in the countryside.
- The poem can be conveniently placed in the pastoral category for its rich and sensual use of natural imagery.
- He asks Mirth to bring “Jest and Youthful Jollity”.
- The imagery then shifts to the joys of a musical night in the city with its masques and the court-

“Tower'd cities please us then,
And the busy hum of men,
Where throngs of knights and barons bold,
In weeds of peace high triumphs hold,”

- The poem ends with-
“These delights if thou canst give,
Mirth, with thee I mean to live.”

Il Penseroso

- Both the poems *L'Allegro* and *Il Penseroso* have been written around 1631, but were not published until 1645 in a collection called *Poems*.
- The poem adopts a more melancholic and somber tone, in contrast with the cheerful and gleaming tone of the first part.
- The poem opens with “deluding Joys” and “brood of Folly”.
- Here also mythological characters are invoked like-
 - Morpheus- God of sleep
 - “hail divinest Melancholy”
 - Memnon- the Ethiopian king of equal merit as Achilles
 - Saturn
 - Jove
 - Cynthia
 - Hermes- god of trade and commerce
 - Folklore-
 - Philomela and her “saddest plight”
- Both the poems are written in octosyllabic couplets.
- Melancholy is associated with color Black- something that is beyond the capacity of human senses to perceive.
- Hence, the sensuality of the previous poem is rejected in this one.

- The poet is not saddened by the bleakness of his surroundings but is enjoying the loneliness and melancholy.
- Melancholy is treasured and solitude of a renounced world gives pleasure.
- The scene takes place in the night, away from the humanity.
- But as the dawn breaks, the speaker wants to retire even further from the world of nature- the bees humming, the water flowing, the floating air- into the world of sleep.
- Towards the end of the poem, the heavenly Muse is invoked, so that she can bless the poet for all the midnight lamps that he burns with divine visions-

“And may at last my weary age
 Find out the peaceful hermitage,
 The Hairy Gown and Mossy Cell,
 Where I may sit and rightly spell
 Of every Star that Heav'n doth shew,
 And every Herb that sips the dew;
 Till old experience do attain
 To something like prophetic strain.
 These pleasures Melancholy give,
 And I with thee will choose to live.”

- Hence the ending concludes that a life of melancholy, solitude and solitary retirement is acceptable to the poet if that is rewarded by visions and knowledge of divinity.

Comus

- *Comus, or a Masque Presented at the Ludlow Castle, 1634*, is a masque written in honor of the Earl of Bridgewater, on his appointment as the Governor of Wales.
- Unlike other masques in which songs and spectacle is primary, this masque is didactic- it celebrates the triumph of virtue.
- This was also published in *Poems* in 1645.
- The music for the masque was composed by Henry Lawes.
- A girl and her two sisters lose their way in the forest.
- So the brothers decide to go find a guide, and leave their sister behind.
- Milton invents a pagan god- Comus, son of Circe the enchantress and Bacchus the god of intoxication.
- The young girl falls into the enchantment of Comus.
- Meanwhile, the two brothers find the Attendant Spirit, who warns the brothers of a magic potion that is given by Comus to his captives, which turns their heads into heads of wild beasts.
- The brothers, along with the Attendant Spirit, rush towards where they left their sister.
- To their relief, the virtuous lady had escaped the enchantment of Comus, though she is held captive in an enchanted Chair.
- The Spirit invokes Goddess Sabrina of the river Severn to help save the girl.
- Sabrina saves the young lady and the three march towards Castle of Ludlow.

- The Attendant Spirit offers her thanks to Goddess Sabrina in the form of a hymn.
- The moral of this masque is that “Virtue may be assailed” by “self-fed and self-consumed” evil, but it will “be never hurt”.
- The poem also borders on epic scales of Paradise Lost in the opening speech of the Attendant Spirit, which she delivers in Blank verse-

“Love Virtue, she alone is free,
 She can teach you how to climb,
 Higher than the Sphery chime;
 Or if virtue feeble were,
 Heav’n itself would stoop to her.”

- Important quotes-

“Mortals that would follow me,
 Love virtue, she alone is free”

“Come let us haste, the stars grow high,
 But night sits monarch yet in the mid sky.”

“Beauty is Nature's coin, must not be hoarded,
 But must be current, and the good thereof
 Consists in mutual and partaken bliss.”

“So dear to heaven is saintly chastity”

Lycidas

- A pastoral elegy.
- Written for his friend Edward King who drowned in sea on his way to Ireland in 1637.

- The poem got published in 1638 in a collection *Justa Edouardo King Naufrago*, a collection of elegies.
- It is written in irregular rhymed lines.
- The speaker is a shepherd, who sings for his dead friend Lycidas.
- In the last 8 lines the meter of the poem changes suggesting a change in the speaker – ottava rime (a stanza of 8 lines with 10 or 11 syllables in each line ABABABCC).
- The poem can be divided into a Prologue, 4 main parts and an Epilogue.
- Muse is invoked to explain to him the reasons for writing the poem, though his poetic qualities haven't matured yet.
- Then Edward's time with Milton at Cambridge is described in pastoral imagery.
- But loss of Lycidas puts the speaker in a pensive mood and he delves into all sorts of philosophical questions about life, death, fate, fame etc.
- Hard work-fame-fate intervenes
- Then a procession comes for Lycidas' funeral, led by Triton, herald of the sea.
- In the following lines Milton also criticizes the dismal state of Protestant church in England.
- He moves back to Lycidas and expresses his faith in the transitory nature of grief and sorrow and eternal nature of soul.
- He is pleased that when Lycidas will rise again in the heaven he will be welcomed by sweet singing saints.
- The poem ends on a note of revived faith in life and hope in greater poetic genius.

- Important quotes-
 - "Comes the blind Fury with th' abhorred shears, And
slits the thin-spun life..."
 - "Yet once more, O ye laurels, and once more, Ye myrtles
brown, with ivy never sere, I come to pluck your berries harsh
and crude, And with forced fingers rude, Shatter your leaves
before the mellowing year."
 - "And now the sun had stretch'd out all the hills, And now was
dropp'd into the western bay; At last he rose, and twitch'd his
mantle blue: To-morrow to fresh woods, and pastures new."

On the Morning of Christ's Nativity

- Also called "nativity ode"
- He wrote the piece in celebration of his 21st birthday and in commemoration of the Nativity of Jesus. The poem talks about not only Christ's nativity but also about the themes of "coming of age"- his own entry into the adult world.
- In Milton's retelling of the nativity scene, the birth of Christ is a model for revolutionaries, and a roadmap for his own life's work.
- Written in 1629 and published in 1645 in his Poems of Mr. John Milton (the first poem in the collection)
- Its thirty-one stanzas are divided into two sections- a four-stanza introduction that is followed by the twenty-seven stanzas long "Hymn".
- The introductory stanzas follow a structured rhyme scheme of ABABBCC and also conform to a specific metrical pattern.

Each line, except for the last, is written in iambic pentameter. The final line of every stanza is written in iambic hexameter.

- The hymnal stanzas are different but still make use of iambs. They follow a rhyme scheme of AABCCBDD. The first, second, fourth, and fifth lines of these stanzas are tercets. The third and sixth lines are traditional pentameter lines. Milton ends the stanza with a couplet, the first line of which contains tetrameter, and the second with hexameter.
- The poem takes the reader through a series of natural images at the beginning of the poem. The speaker elaborates what the sun, stars, moon, and nature were doing at the time of Christ's birth and what their reactions were.
- The poem then moves into a prediction of what the future is going to be like- filled with peace and mutual love for other creatures but first, Christ has to die. Suddenly, darkness takes over the poem briefly but is quickly lifted to make way for a series of pagan images. These old gods are described as leaving their abodes and traveling hastily to Hell. That is where they must stay forever. In the last stanza the poet returns to the image of the crib of Christ.
- Important quotes-
 - "Son of Heav'n's eternal King"
 - "Our great redemption from above did bring"
 - "That glorious Form, that Light unsufferable, And that far-beaming blaze of Majesty"

- “This is the month, and this the happy morn”
- "The Star-led Wizards Haste With Odors Sweet"

Paradise Regained

- Published in 1671
- Considered to be a “brief-epic”
- Deals with the temptation of Christ as recounted in the Gospel of Luke
- 4 books and 2,065 lines- about one-fifth the length of *Paradise Lost*.
- Written in plain style- Blank verse
- principal character, Jesus, is tempted by Satan in the wilderness to forgo his faith in God and to cease exercising patience and fortitude in the midst of ongoing and ever-increasing adversity.
- Milton dramatizes how Jesus embodies Christian heroism.
- Christian heroism is a continuous reaffirmation of faith in God and is manifested in renewed prayer for patience and strength to endure adversities.
- Christian Hero resists temptations- pleasure, worldliness, and power. Satan as the tempter in *Paradise Regained* fails in his unceasing endeavours to subvert Jesus by various means.
- Book 1- Jesus is baptized by Saint John and he enters the wilderness and fasts there for 40 days. Satan comes in the disguise of an old man with the temptation of “bread”.
- Book 2- Jesus finds a fair man and a banquet waiting for Him, but He again resists. Satan next tries to tempt with money, but Jesus resists that as well.
- Book 3- Satan flatters Christ, praising His wisdom, then taunts Him with his lack of achievement (trying to hurting his ego). Jesus rejects gaining glory as well. Satan next tries provoking him with duty but Jesus sees suffering as the path he must tread. Next, Satan takes Christ to a high mountain, showing Him the kingdoms of the world but Jesus resists that too.

- Book 4- Satan next shows Christ Rome, and offers it to Him. Christ once more rejects. Satan angrily forces him to spend a cold night in the middle of a hellish storm. Christ endures this. Satan, frustrated, takes Christ to Jerusalem and tells him to throw himself off the pinnacle of the Jewish Temple, quoting a Psalm, but even here Satan falls. Angels help Jesus, singing of his victory over the devil, feeding Him, and returning him to Mary.

Samson Agonistes

- A tragic dramatic poem in blank verse
- Appeared with *Paradise Regained* in 1671
- Combines Greek tragedy with Hebrew Scripture
- In his introduction, Milton discusses Aristotle's definition of tragedy- Aeschylus, Sophocles, and Euripides
- Dramatis Personae-
 - Samson
 - Manoa
 - Dalila
 - Harapha
 - Public Officer
 - Messenger
 - Chorus
- The biblical Samson is a man of superhuman strength whose Achilles' heel is his hair. Samson's wife Dalila has cut his hair, robbing him of his strength. He's imprisoned in Gaza, blinded by his enemies- the Philistines.
- The chorus visits him in prison but doesn't help. His father Manoa & wife visit him too but nothing helps. Harapha of Gath, a giant, ridicules Samson in prison but on incitation, he runs off.
- The story's climax comes with off-stage violence. Samson goes off to show his feats of strength in the Philistines' festival- in

honor of Dagon, one of the gods they worship. and himself dying in the end.

On His Blindness

- Alternative title- "When I Consider How My Light is Spent"
- Published in *Milton's 1673 Poems*
- The title *On His Blindness* was assigned a century later by Thomas Newton in his 1761 edition of Milton's poetry
- sonnets to which Milton assigned higher numbers.
- The sonnet is in the Petrarchan form- ABBAABBACDECDE
- This poem was written in 1655; three years after Milton become completely blind, and was marked by a gloomy sense of hopelessness arising out of his blindness.
- The poem can be divided into two parts. In the first half of the poem, he expresses his sadness at the loss of his eye-sight. He finds himself alone in this dark and wide world. God has given him the talent of writing poetry but this gift is lying useless within. The second part of the poem expresses Milton's feeling of resignation and his undiminished faith in God's justice. The poet's inner faith consoles him and stops his murmur.
- Theme- God judges humans on whether they labor for Him to the best of their ability- "they also serve who only stand and wait".
- *"my days in this dark world and wide"*

On Shakespeare

- Though composed in 1630, first appeared anonymously in the Second Folio of Shakespeare's plays (1632) - Milton's first published poem in English.
- 16-line poem in a single stanza- an epigram
- Heroic couplets

- Also an “Occasional Lyric”
- The poem begins with the speaker asking why Shakespeare would ever have a need for his bones to be entombed in a pyramid-like structure. His legacy extends far beyond the physical. Milton draws attention to the fact that physical structures and emblems are not enough to remember Shakespeare by. The only true tomb worthy of Shakespeare exists within his readers. Those who have read and viewed his work make within themselves a thumb that will last for the rest of time.
- “What needs my Shakespeare for his honoured bones, The labor of an age in pilèd stones”
- “Thou in our wonder and astonishment, Hast built thyself a live-long monument”
- “Thy easy numbers flow”

Arcades

- Performed on 4 May 1634
- To celebrate Alice Spencer- sister of Edmund Spenser, the Countess Dowager of Derby on her 75th birthday
- The masque draws upon pastoral elements and has a strong central female character
- The title is intended to recall images of classical Arcady, a region of Greece imagined as full of shepherds, nymphs, and pastoral poetry.
- Milton praises the virtues of motherhood, wisdom, and celestial beauty through the use of numerous classical allusions
- He also introduces Platonic cosmology, Pythagorean doctrine of the Music of the Spheres and The Genius- a pagan element

Paradise Lost

- ▶ An epic poem in Blank verse- unrhymed lines of iambic pentameter.
- ▶ Originally published in 10 books- 1667
- ▶ 1674- Book 7 and Book 10, each split in 2 parts- Total 12 Books (Inspiration- Virgil's *Aeneid*)
- ▶ Poem is written in epic standards-
 - ▶ Poem begins- *In Media Res* (in the middle of the story).
 - ▶ Invocation of the muse.
 - ▶ Grand theme.
 - ▶ Eloquent lines.
 - ▶ Epic scale.
 - ▶ Christian theme.
 - ▶ Book I of *Paradise Lost* begins with a prologue in which Milton performs the traditional epic task of invoking the Muse- he invokes the classical Muse, Urania and the Christian "Heav'nly Muse" who resides on Mt. Sinai. He says that the poem will deal with "Of man's first disobedience" and that he will attempt to justify "God's ways to men".

The poem is particularly famous for grand Satanic speeches-

- ▶ "The mind is its own place, and in itself can make a heaven of hell, a hell of heaven.."
- ▶ "Better to reign in Hell, than to serve in Heaven.
- ▶ "Awake, arise or be for ever fall'n."
- ▶ "All is not lost, the unconquerable will, and study of revenge, immortal hate, and the courage never to submit or yield."

- ▶ “What is dark within me, illumine.”

{The Romantic poets William Blake and P.B. Shelley saw Satan as the real hero of the poem and much-admired his rebellion against the tyranny of Heaven}

- ▶ Milton wrote a companion piece, *Paradise Regained*, in 1671, which dramatizes the temptation of Christ.
- ▶ Joseph Haydn’s oratorio *The Creation* (1798)
- ▶ John Keats’s long poem *Endymion*.

Book-wise summary

Book 1

- ▶ Setting- Hell
- ▶ Satan rallies the fallen angels.
- ▶ Satan has been in Hell for 9 days, lying on a burning lake.
- ▶ He and his companions have been thrown by God and his angels.
- ▶ He sighs to his companion Beelzebub about their terrible fate, but he resolves to continue his fight against God.

Book 2

- ▶ Setting- Hell
- ▶ The council in Pandemonium.
- ▶ He and Beelzebub raise themselves painfully from the lake and gather the fallen angels on the shore, where they build a great hall called Pandemonium.
- ▶ They hold a great council meeting about their next move.

- ▶ One suggests open war; two others oppose the idea, saying they've had enough of God's fury and will make the best of it in Hell.
- ▶ Satan tells them of a rumor he had heard in Heaven that another kind of being was to be created.
- ▶ In order to find out how this creature could be corrupted for their purposes, he plans to go on a spying mission.
- ▶ As he leaves, he meets Sin, who is his lover and daughter, and Death, his son and grandson, who guard the gate. They let him out into Chaos, the fundamental material of the universe from which God has fashioned Hell and the World.
- ▶

Book 3

- ▶ Setting- Heaven
- ▶ The council in Heaven; Limbo and the Sun; Satan's journey.
- ▶ In Heaven God foretells what is to happen and asks which of the angels will offer to die for man.
- ▶ The Son takes on the task and is praised for his sacrifice.
- ▶ Satan flies to the top of the World (Universe) and looks up into Heaven and down into planets.
- ▶ He flies down to the sun, where he asks directions of Uriel, the angel who guards the sun.

Book 4

- ▶ Setting-Paradise
- ▶ Satan spies on Adam and Eve.

- ▶ As Satan watches Adam and Eve in the Garden of Paradise, Uriel flies down to warn the angel Gabriel that Satan has deceived them both and is on earth.
- ▶ Satan overhears Adam telling Eve that they are forbidden to eat the fruit of the Tree of Knowledge.
- ▶ He hides himself until night, when he becomes a toad and sits beside Eve's ear.
- ▶ Two guardian angels, Ithuriel and Zephon, find him and bring him to Gabriel.
- ▶ Gabriel threatens to drag Satan in chains to Hell if he's found in the garden again.
- ▶ Eve tells Adam her dreadful dream, which was actually induced by Satan.
- ▶ She dreamed that she ate the fruit and became a goddess; she is very frightened.
- ▶ When they go out to their daily chores in the garden, they find the archangel Raphael there.

Book 5

- ▶ Setting- Paradise
- ▶ Raphael arrives and gives flashback of War in Heaven.
- ▶ In a long flashback, Raphael tells Adam what happened before he was created.
- ▶ He warns Adam against Satan.
- ▶ Satan was actually Lucifer, one of the highest angels in the heaven's hierarchy.
- ▶ On the occasion of the Great Year, which comes every 36,000 years, God proclaims his Son equal to him.

- ▶ Lucifer's pride is so hurt that he steers away one-third of the angels with him into the North, where they prepare to rebel against God.
- ▶ Abdiel, is horrified at Satan's rebellion and refuses to be part of it.
- ▶ He runs back to the Mount of God, where he finds that the faithful angels already know about the rebellion and are preparing for war.

Book 6

- ▶ Setting- Paradise
- ▶ Raphael continues the flashback of Satan's rebellion and the war.
- ▶ The War in Heaven lasts three days.
- ▶ On the 1st day, the rebel angels lose; they experience pain for the first time, although they are immortal.
- ▶ On the second day, they bring out cannons and introduce gunpowder into Heaven.
- ▶ At first the heavenly angels are taken aback, but they recover and throw hills and mountains at the rebel angels.
- ▶ On the third day God sends out his Son in his war chariot.
- ▶ The angels are driven over the edge of Heaven into Hell. This brings Raphael back to the point where the poem began.

Book 7

- ▶ Setting- Paradise
- ▶ Flashback of the Creation of the world.
- ▶ Raphael continues the story.
- ▶ He tells Adam about God's creation of the earth.

Book 8

- ▶ Setting- Paradise
- ▶ Raphael tells Adam of his creation at a time when the earth was still void, forming him from the earth's dust and breathing into his nostrils "the breath of life".
- ▶ Adam tells Raphael about the making of Eve from his own rib.
- ▶ He tells Raphael about his great love for her.
- ▶ Raphael cautions him against worshipping her excessively and then leaves them in Paradise.

Book 9

- ▶ Setting- Paradise.
- ▶ The Fall.
- ▶ The next morning Eve suggests that they should work separately in order to get more work done in the garden.
- ▶ Adam is reluctant, though he agrees.
- ▶ Satan tempts Eve in the form of a serpent to eat fruit from the Tree of Knowledge, using the argument that he, an animal, received the gift of speech after eating it and still God hasn't killed him.
- ▶ She falls in and finally eats the fruit.
- ▶ She then persuades Adam to eat some from the fruit as well.
- ▶ Because he loves her so much and does not want to be parted from her, he eats it as well.
- ▶ The Fall has finally happened.
- ▶ Adam and Eve have intercourse like wild animals and drowse off like drunkards.

- ▶ When they awaken. they realize for the first time that they are naked, and they begin to quarrel, frantically accusing each other.

Book 10

- ▶ Setting- Heaven, Chaos, Hell, Paradise.
- ▶ The chapter on Judgment; Sin and Death build bridge; Fallen angels turn into snakes; Adam and Eve quarrel.
- ▶ The universe reacts to the grave event with groans.
- ▶ God sends down the Son to judge Adam and Eve.
- ▶ The Son pronounces that their happiness and immortality are taken off from them.
- ▶ Adam must work and Eve must suffer the pain of childbirth, and both must die.
- ▶ The serpent is punished by being made the forever enemy of man.
- ▶ Satan, at the top of the World, meets Sin and Death, who have built a road leading from the gate of Hell to the World.
- ▶ Satan joyfully shows them their prey down on earth.
- ▶ He returns to Pandemonium, where the fallen angels are waiting for him in council.
- ▶ He announces his triumph, but they all immediately become snakes and the entire hall is filled with hissing.
- ▶ Although they eventually regain their shapes, they must each year become snakes for a time to remind them that Satan became a snake to deceive man.
- ▶ Sin and Death move into their new abode.

- ▶ God has the angels make the World as it is now- with extremes of weather, seasons, and bad planetary influences.
- ▶ Surveying the wreck of the beautiful World they have known, Adam and Eve throw themselves on God's mercy.

Book 11

- ▶ Setting- Paradise
- ▶ Sentence on Adam and Eve and flash-forward of The World until Noah's flood.
- ▶ God responds to their prayers and the Son's pleas for them by agreeing that Death shall not strike them immediately, but they must leave Paradise.
- ▶ Michael, the warrior archangel, is sent down to escort them out of Paradise and to leave a guard on the gate so that no one can enter.
- ▶ Michael gives them some comfort.
- ▶ He shows Adam what is to happen in the generations following- Noah's flood, the descent into Egypt, the coming into the Promised Land, and the incarnation of God as Jesus Christ.
- ▶ Adam is happy because his sin is a "happy fault," since ultimately it will bring so much good to man.

Book 12

- ▶ Setting-Paradise.
- ▶ Adam and Eve leave for the earth, though apprehensively but calmly.
- ▶ As they walk away, they look back to see the weapons of the angels guarding the gate.
- ▶ They look forward to their new life ahead.

Metaphysical Poets

- A group of poets of the 17th century who used far-fetched metaphors and complex themes in their poetry.
- Includes John Donne, George Herbert, Richard Crashaw, Henry Vaughan, Andrew Marvell and Abraham Cowley.
- Term was first time used for **Donne by Dryden-**

“he affects the Metaphysics...in his amorous verses, where nature only should reign; and perplexes the mind of the fair sex with nice speculations of philosophy , when he should engage their hearts.”

- These poets were clubbed together in a school of poetry by **Dr. Samuel Johnson** in his ***The Lives of the Poets (“Life of Cowley”)-***
- **“about the beginning of the 17th century appeared a race of writers that may be termed the metaphysical poets”** in whose poetry **“the most heterogeneous ideas were yoked by violence together.”**
- Johnson said that these writers only wanted to **“show their learning”**.
- Main characteristics-
 - Simple thought expressed in complex imagery.
 - Dissimilar images are put together- metaphysical conceits.
 - Intellectual robustness.
 - Various fields of knowledge like geography, science, astronomy, navigation, mathematics, etc. are exploited.
 - Thought and emotion is put together; “association of sensibility”- **‘The Metaphysical Poets’ by T.S. Eliot.**

Poets

John Donne (1572-1631)

- University of Oxford and University of Cambridge
- But received no degree from either university because he refused to take "Oath of Supremacy".
- He became a priest of the Anglican Church in 1615 and the Dean of St. Paul's Cathedral in 1621, where he is currently buried.
- **Works-**
 - Pseudo-Martyr (1610)
 - Ignatius his Conclave (1611)
 - An Anatomy of the World (1611)
 - The Second Anniversarie of The Progress of the Soule (1612)
 - A Sermon Upon the XV Verse of the XX Chapter of the Book of Judges (1622)
 - A Sermon Upon the VIII Verse of the I. Chapter of The Acts of the Apostles (1622)
 - Encaenia. The Feast of Dedication. Celebrated at Lincolnes Inne, in a Sermon there Upon Ascension Day, 1623 (1623)
 - Devotions Upon Emergent Occasions (1623)- a prose work dedicated to Charles I.
 - Deaths Duell or A Consolation to the Soul (1623)
 - Songs and Sonnets (1633)

- Biathanato: A Declaration of that Paradoxe or Thesis that Selfe-homicide is not so Naturally Since, that it may never be otherwise (1647).
- **Famous Poems-**
 - “A Valediction: Forbidding Mourning”
 - “The Good-Morrow”
 - “The Flea”
 - “The Sun Rising”
 - “Holy Sonnet X Death Be Not Proud”
 - “Holy Sonnet XIV Batter My Heart, three-person’d God”
 - “Elegy XX To His Mistress Going To Bed”
 - “The Canonization”
 - “The Ecstasy”
 - “Good Friday, 1613. Riding Westward”

George Herbert (1593-1633)

- Oratio Qua auspicatissimum Serenissimi Principis Caroli (1623)
- Memoriae Matris Sacrum (1627)
- The Temple, Sacred Poems and Private Ejaculations (1633)
- Herbert’s Remains Or, Sundry pieces of that sweet Singer of the Temple- consisting of his collected writings from Priest to the Temple...(1652)

Famous Poems

- “The Affliction I”
- “The Altar”
- “The Collar”
- “Church Monuments”
- “The British Church”
- “Easter Wings”

- “Death”
- “The Elixir”

Richard Crashaw (1613-1649)

- A Catholic.
- Lived in Exile.
- Was helped by his friend George Herbert.
- Proponent of **Marinism** or **Secentismo**- a 17th century literary movement that used overboard metaphors, hyperboles, wordplay etc.

Works

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

Henry Vaughan (1621-1695)

- Poems, with the tenth Satyre of Juvenal Englished (1646; Volume II in 1647)
- Silex Scintillans: or Sacred Poems and Private Ejaculations (1650)
- Olor Iscanus: A Collection of Some Select Poems, and Translations (1651)
- The Mount of Olives: or, Solitary Devotions (1652)

- Hermetical Physick: Or, the right way to ppreserve, and to restore Health...(1655)
- Thalai Rediviva: The Pass-Times and Diversions of a Country-Muse In Choice Poems On several Occasions (1678)

Poems

- "Christ's Nativity"
- "The Retreat"
- "They are all Gone into the World of Light"
- "The Morning-Watch"
- "The Evening-Watch: A Dialogue"

Andrew Marvell (1621-1678)

- **Garden Poems**
 - *"The Garden"*
 - *"Bermudas"*
 - *"Upon Appleton House"* (First Topographical poem)
- **Love Poems**
 - *"To His Coy Mistress"*
 - *"The Unfortunate Lover"*
 - *"The Nymph Complaining for the Death of her Fawn"*
 - *"Daphnis and Chloe"*
- **Spiritual Poems**
 - *"A Dialogue Between the Soul and Body"*
 - *"The Coronet"*
 - *"A Dialogue between the Resolved Soul, and Created Pleasure"*

- **Political Poems**

- *"An Horatian Ode upon Cromwell's Return from Ireland"*
- *"The First Anniversary of the Government Under His Highness The Lord Protector"*
- *"A Poem upon the Death of His Late Highness the Lord Protector"*

- **Mower poems**

- *"The Mower's Song"*
- *"The Mower, against Gardens"*
- *"Damon the Mower"*
- *"The Mower to the Glo-Worms"*

Cavalier Poets

- The Cavalier poets, members of the aristocracy, wrote in the 17th century and supported King Charles I, who was later executed as a result of a civil war. They were known as Royalists.
- Many of the cavalier poems centered around sensual, romantic love and also the idea of carpe diem, which means to 'seize the day.' To the Cavalier poet, enjoying life was far more important than following moral codes. They lived for the moment.
- Cavalier poetry mirrored the attitudes of courtiers. The meaning of cavalier is showing arrogant or offhand disregard; dismissive or carefree and nonchalant. This describes the attitude of Cavalier poets.
- Some of the most prominent Cavalier poets were **Thomas Carew, Richard Lovelace, Robert Herrick, and John Suckling**. They emulated Ben Jonson, a contemporary of Shakespeare. These poets opposed metaphysical poetry, such as that of John Donne.
- The Cavalier lyricists came under the influence of Ben Jonson and John Donne. Most of them felt proud of calling themselves, "Sons of Ben". They derived from Ben Jonson, the clarity and lucidity of expression, control of emotions and sophistication of tone.

- Under the influence of Donne, they used a conversational tone, metaphysical conceits etc. in their poems. Thus, both Ben Jonson and John Donne were their role models.
- While poets like John Donne wrote with a spiritual, scientific, and moral focus, the Cavalier poets concentrated on the **pleasures of the moment**. Metaphysical poets also wrote in figurative, lofty language, while the Cavaliers were simple, being more apt to say what they meant in clear terms.
- They also spoke about political issues & used classical allusions.
- The Cavalier poet wrote **short, refined verses**, and the tone of Cavalier poetry was generally easy-going.
- **Characteristics-**
 - The Cavalier poets wrote short lyrical poems but did not like sonnets.
 - Cavalier lyricists did not write as professionals for publicity. They wrote carelessly and their poetry was immature.
 - They used direct language in the poetry which expressed a highly individualistic personality. In more detail, the Cavaliers, while writing, accepted the idea of the Renaissance.
 - They avoided the subject of religion, apart from making one or two graceful speeches.
 - They avoided discovering the depths of the soul.
 - Cavalier poetry's main thematic concern is the pleasure. Many poems favour living in moments and are often erotic in nature. Moreover, as Cavalier poets were aristocrats, Cavalier poetry focuses on the cultural life that aristocrats led.
 - The tone of Cavalier poetry is light. It focuses on eroticism and matters of culture. Cavalier poetry is often written from the perspective of a military or aristocratic person, giving it a graceful flair.

Poets

- **Robert Herrick:** a lyric poet who is best-known for this work *Hesperides*. It includes some of the best examples of carpe diem, or seize the day, poems. Such as '*To the Virgins, to Make Much of Time.*' He wrote over 2,500 poems during his lifetime and most of these appear in *Hesperides*. Often, they reference love, lovemaking, and the female body. As his writing progressed, he moved on to more spiritual themes. Scholars have defined the overall message of his work as one about the brevity of life and how beautiful and full of wonder the world is.
- **Sir John Suckling:** rose to prominence during the 17th century for his witty poems. He is best known for '*Ballade upon a Wedding*' and his joyful attitude toward life. His collection, *Fragmenta Aurea* first appeared in 1646. He's also noted for his dramatic works, like "*Aglaura.*"
- **Richard Lovelace:** another important cavalier poet. He fought for Charles I during the English Civil War. His best-known poems are '*To Althea, from Prison*' and '*To Lucasta, Going to the Warres.*' When he returned from the war, he served as a gentleman and justice of the peace. He was imprisoned several times and released in April 1649 after Charles I was executed.
- **Thomas Carew:** a notable cavalier poet whose work was not adequately studied and appreciated until the 20th century. His best-known work, '*A Rapture,*' is a great representative of his broader piece. His poems were generally short and dealt with themes of love, female beauty, and sex.

Restoration Age

JOHN DRYDEN

- Studied at King's School at Westminster where he wrote his first poem "Upon the death of Lord Hastings" - an elegy.
- It was published in *Lachrymae Musarum* (1649)- a collection of elegies written on the death of Lord Hastings.
- Was associated with Cromwell's secretariat; hence, wrote "*Heroic Stanzas on the Death of Oliver Cromwell*" (1659) on his death.
- After the restoration, he wrote a panegyric poem celebrating the return of Charles II to the throne, called *Astraea Redux* (1660).
- (Note- a Panegyric is a poem written in praise of somebody; also called an Eulogy)
- "*To His Sacred Majesty: A Panegyrick on his Coronation*" (1661) won him the title of Poet Laureate in 1668 and of Royal Biographer in 1670.
- He was removed as the Poet Laureate in 1688 when William III became the king of England and Dryden refused to sign the oath of allegiance to him.
- James II was a Catholic ruler, hence unpopular among the Protestant majority English.
- William III was supported by various politicians and Protestant leaders to lead the Glorious Revolution against James II.

Chronology of Dryden's Poems

- ***Heroic Stanzas on the Death of Oliver Cromwell (1659)***- Dryden's poem was first published in *Three poems upon the death of his late Highnesse Oliver Lord Protector of England, Scotland, and Ireland (1659)* alongside verses by Edmund Waller and Thomas Sprat.
- ***Astraea Redux (1660)***- A Panegyric for the comeback of Charles II; Heroic couplets.
- ***To His Sacred Majesty, A Panegyrick on His Coronation (1661)***
- ***To My Lord Chancellor (1662)***
- ***Annus Mirabilis: The Year of Wonders (1667)***- a celebration of two victories by the English fleet over the Dutch and the Londoners' survival of the Great Fire of 1666. In this work Dryden was once again gilding the royal image and reinforcing the concept of a loyal nation united under the best of kings.
- ***Absalom and Achitophel (1681)***
- ***The Second Part of Absalom and Achitophel (1682)***
- ***The Medal : A Satire Against Sedition (1682)***- against the Whigs, prefaced by a vigorous and plainspoken prose "Epistle to the Whigs."
- ***Mac Flecknoe: A Satire Upon the Trew-Blue Protestant Poet T.S. (1682)***
- ***Religio Laici; Or, a Layman's Faith (1682)***- Verse essay published as a premise to the Hind and the Panther; proclaims his adherence to the Anglican Church.
- ***Threnodia Augustalis: A Funeral Pindarique Poem, Sacred to the Happy Memory of King Charles II (1685)***

- ***The Hind and The Panther (1687)***- Allegorical poem; Beast Fable; Heroic couplets; Written after Dryden's conversion to Catholicism in 1685;
 1. Roman Catholics- Hind
 2. Anglicans- Panther
 3. Quakers- Hare
 4. Presbyterians- Wolves
 5. Independents- Bears
 6. Anabaptists- Boar
 7. Free Thinkers- Apes
- ***A Song for St. Cecilia's Day (1687)***- She was a Christian Martyr (Roman Catholic). This poem, along with *Alexander's Feast* (1697) celebrates the martyrdom of this priestess. Cecilia's Day' describes the divine features of music and how St. Cecilia mesmerized heaven with her music. Dryden separated this poem into eight sections- 7 stanzas and a grand chorus. In each stanza, he talks about different aspects of music and classical musicians. Music is personified in the poem.
- ***Britannia Rediviva: A Poem on the Birth of the Prince (1688)***
- ***Eleonora: A Panegyric Poem (1692)***
- ***An Ode, on the Death of Mr. Henry Purcell (1696)***
- ***Alexander's Feast, or the Power of Music (1697)***- The main body of the poem describes the feast given by Alexander the Great at the Persian capital Persepolis, after his defeat of Darius in 331 BC. Alexander's bard Timotheus sings praises of him. Timotheus glorifies him as a god, puffing up Alexander's pride. He then sings of the pleasures of wine, encouraging Alexander to drink. Seeing Alexander becoming too boisterous, he sings of the sad death of

Darius; the king becomes quiet. He then lauds the beauty of Thaïs, Alexander's lover, making the king's heart melt. The poem then moves ahead in time to describe Saint Cecilia, "inventress of the vocal frame", who is traditionally supposed to have created the first organ and to have instituted Christian sacred music.

- ***Fables Ancient and Modern (1700)***
(Paraphrases and translations from Homer, Ovid, Boccaccio, and Chaucer, as well as original poems by Dryden himself.)
- ***Poems on Various Occasions (1701)***

Absalom and Achitophel

- 1681
- A political satire
- Heroic Couplets
- Revolves around the Popish Plot (1678)- a plot of the Catholics to kill Charles II; the Exclusion Crisis (to keep James I, a catholic, away from the throne) and Monmouth Rebellion (to put James, Duke of Monmouth, an illegitimate son of Charles', to the throne; led by Earl of Shaftesbury).
- The story adopts the allegorical framework of Old Testament.
- Absalom's rebellion against King David is used.
 - David- Charles II
 - Absalom- James, Duke of Monmouth
 - Achitophel- Earl of Shaftesbury
 - Zimri- Duke of Buckingham
 - Shimei- Sherrif of London
 - Corah- Titus Oates

- Barzillai- Duke of Ormond
 - Zadoc- The Archbishop of Canterbury
 - The Sagan of Jerusalem- The Bishop of London
 - Adriel- The Earl of Mulgrave
 - Jotham- The Marquis of Halifax
 - Hushai- Laurence Hyde
 - Amiel- Edward Seymour
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- ***Important character sketches-***
 - In the first rank of corrupt, disloyal men is Zimri, a man full of all the wrong opinions. He takes on numerous professions and is lecherously obsessed with women. He is prone to railing, praising, and squandering riches; he is characterized by extremes.
 - There is Balaam, dull and well-hung, the cold Caleb, the canting Nadab, and the bull-faced Jonas. None of these men has titles, and God gave them no grace. They are “below the dignity of verse.”
 - Shimei, in his youth seemed promising but soon broke the Sabbath for gain and had plenty of oaths for the government. He amasses a great deal of wealth by cheating, and for that, the city chooses him as the magistrate. He wears a chain of gold around his neck as he pretends to uphold justice. During his time in office, even treason is not a crime, and the sons of Belial—wicked men—have a delightful time. Shimei loves his wicked neighbor as he loves himself, and he is quick to gather with others in criticizing the king. He puts dissenting Jews on his juries to make sure his friends are

acquitted, for he knows that “laws are only made to punish those / Who serve the king, and to protect his foes.” If Shimei has any leisure time, he spends it writing persuasive diatribes against the king. He has a spare, dull table and puts all the warmth of his brain into his malice.

- Corah is a Levite with sunken eyes and a loud voice, and his prodigious memory lets him repeat “plots exceeding man’s belief.” Sometimes these plots have lies in them, but he is persuasive; as a priest, he seems to have power. There is a certain latitude allowed him as well.
- Barzillai, a man of great honor. He withstood rebels in the wasteland, and he yokes himself to David’s fate. He has wealth but also a large heart. Barzillai suffers because his eldest son was sadly snatched by death in his prime. This young man was honorable and brave, and everyone knew his worth.
- There is Zadoc, a priest who desires neither fortune nor fame; he gives himself to David.
- The Sagan of Jerusalem, a high priest, is eloquent and has a “hospitable soul and noble stem.” He helps lead the Prophet’s sons in their learning.
- Adriel, the “Muse’s friend,” is loyal to David and a keen judge.
- Jotham is observant and learned, and he chooses to stay on David’s side.
- Hushai has long been a steadfast friend of David’s, helping the throne with “frugal care.”
- Amiel is noble and dexterous in defending the crown.

Mac Flecknoe

- *Mac Flecknoe; Or, A Satyr upon the True-Blew-Protestant Poet, T.S.*

- 1682
- Mock-heroic poem
- An attack on Thomas Shadwell, a poet and playwright.
- He was a Whig and had satirized Catholic and Anglican priests in his play *The Lancashire-Witches, and Tegue o Divelly the Irish Poet*.
- Dryden wrote it as a reply to *The Medal of John Bayes*, which was in turn a reply to Dryden's *The Medal*.
- In the poem Shadwell is the son of Richard Flecknoe, a very dull poet, who chooses Mac, his dullest son to take over his throne of dull and lifeless poetry.
- Throughout the poem Mac's dullness, stupidity and lack of poetic talent is mocked and ridiculed.
- He is expected to take his father's throne to levels of "new impudence, new ignorance".
- His addiction to opiates and his big, round belly is also ridiculed.
- The poem ends with the Biblical story of *Elijah and Elisha*.

