

UNIT-10**RESTORATION AGE-2 MAJOR WRITERS AND LITERARY WORKS****: STRUCTURE :****10.0 Objectives****10.1 Major Restoration writers and literary works****10.01 John Dryden (1631-1700)****10.0.2 Samuel Butler (1612-1680)****10.0.3 John Bunyan (1632-1704)****10.1.4 Samuel Pepys (1633-1703)****10.1.5 Sir John Locke (1632-1704)****10.1.6 William Congreve (1670-1729)****10.1.7 Sir John Vanbrugh (1664-1726)****10.1.8 George Farquhar (1678-1707)****10.1.9 William Wycherley (1641-1716)****10.1.10 Sir Isaac Newton (1642-1727)****10.1.11 Daniel Defoe (1660-1731)****10.2 Let Us Sum Up****10.3 Key Words****10.4 Books Suggested****Answers**

10.0 OBJECTIVES

This unit will make the students know about:

- The major restoration writers and their contribution to the field of English literature.
- How the restoration culture is represented in the major works of restoration writers.
- The development of restoration prose, poetry and drama at the hands of the restoration writers.

10.1 MAJOR RESTORATION WRITERS AND THEIR WORKS

10.1.1 John Dryden (1631-1700)

John Dryden stands as the greatest literary artist in England between 1660 and 1700. In addition to his achievements in drama, he did extremely well in poetry, translation, and literary criticism. He wrote some two hundred original English poems over a period of more than forty years, including the best poetic satires of his age, memorable odes,

and a variety of verse epistles, elegies, religious poems, panegyrics, and lyrics. His prologues and epilogues, attached to his dramas and those of his contemporaries, stand as the highest achievements in English in that minor poetic genre.

He translated two long volumes of prose from French originals—in 1684, Louis Maimbourg's *Histoire de la Ligue* (1684) and, in 1688, Dominique Bouhours's *La Vie de Saint François Xavier* (1683)—and he had a hand in the five-volume translation of Plutarch's *Bioiparalleloi* (c. 105-115; *Parallel Lives*, 1579) published by Jacob Tonson in 1683. The translations were usually well received, especially the editions of Juvenal and Persius (1693) and Vergil (1697).

Dryden's an essay of dramatic poesy was probably written in 1666 during the closure of London theatres due to plague. It was published in 1688, the essay can be seen as a defence of drama as an art form. The essay is structured as a dialogue /debate between four speakers—Eugenius, Crites, Lisideius and Neander. These stand for William Devenant, Robert Howard, Roger Boyle and Dryden respectively. The essay begins with a reference to a naval battle between the British and Dutch.

The above mentioned four speakers observe this battle from a barge floating on Thames. After the battle gets over and the English navy wins, the four speakers begin discussing English drama. Eugenius literally means 'a well-born genius'. He favours the moderns over the ancients, arguing that the moderns have excelled over the ancients because of having learned and profited from their example. The name Crites comes from the Greek word 'critic' or one who is able to express a reasoned judgment on something. He argues in favour of the ancients and applauds the observance of the three unities in drama. He considers Ben Jonson as the greatest English playwrights because he followed the ancients' example by adhering to the unities.

Lisideius' name is probably based on the royal emblem of France, the fleur-de-lis. He argues in favour of the modern day French playwrights. He believes that French drama is superior to English drama because of their adherence to the classical unities. The name Neander literally means 'the new man'. He favours the moderns, but does not disparage the ancients. He critiques 'the barrenness of the French plots' and praises the 'variety and copiousness of the English plays'.

Absalom and Achitophel (1681):

Published in 1681, *Absalom and Achitophel* (1681) is a political satire in heroic couplets. The political background of the poem revolves around the Popish Plot, the Exclusion crisis and the Monmouth rebellion. Dryden adopts a Biblical framework for this political story. The story of Absalom's revolt against King David in the Old Testament is taken as framework to narrate the contemporary political events of the time. David stands for King Charles II, Absalom for James, Duke of Monmouth, Charles II's illegitimate son, Achitophel for Anthony Ashley Cooper, the first Earl of Shaftesbury, who encouraged Monmouth to rebel and Zimiri stands for the second Duke of Buckingham.

The poem satirizes the Whig Party, which sought to prevent the succession of James, Duke of York, to the English throne. Dryden ridicules the Whigs and present favourable portraits of James' supporters. In the end, the Whigs succeed, and Charles II takes the throne. Dryden turns his wit on the Whigs, a political party that tried to break the traditional line of succession and prevent James, Duke of York, from ascending to the throne.

Mac Flecknoe (1682):

Macflecknoe or A satyr upon the True-Blew-Protestant poet, T.S is a mock-heroic poem published in 1682. The poem is an attack on Thomas Shadwell, a well-known playwright and an indifferent poet. There were several reasons for enmity between Shadwell and Dryden. Both had different political affiliations-Dryden was a Tory and Shadwell was a Whig. Both had different religious affiliations- Shadwell satirized Catholic and Anglican priests in a play entitled *The Lancashire-Witches* (1649), and *Tegue o Divelyl the Irish-Priest* (1682) and offended Dryden at a time, when he was considering conversion to Catholicism. Both also had different literary ideals and preferences, while Dryden preferred Shakespeare, Shadwell idolized Jonson. Dryden preferred comedy of wit while Shadwell comedy of humours.

Dryden had criticized Shaftesbury in his satirical poem entitled *The Medal* (1682) provoked Dryden's opponent. Thomas Shadwell to write the *Medal of John Bayes* (1682) as the answer for the satire. This was followed by the publication of *Mac Flecknoe* (1682) in answer.

10.1.2 Samuel Butler (1612-1680)

Butler's *Hudibras* (1684) is a pointed satire on Puritans. It was influenced by the satires of Rabelais and Cervantes. It has genuine flashes of comic insight. It is a great piece of satirical poetry and it stands next to Dryden's *Absalom and Achitophel* (1681). Butler is a remarkable figure in the poetic development of the Restoration period.

Hudibras (1684) is a travesty, or a burlesque. It takes a serious subject, humiliates it by using a low style, and distorts it by grotesque exaggeration. Butler carried this mode into his verse also. He reduced the iambic tetrameter line to something approaching doggerel, and his boldly comic rhymes add to the effect of broad comedy that he sought to create. Burlesque was a popular form of satire during the seventeenth century, especially after the French poet Paul Scarron published his *Virgile Travesti* (1648), which retells the *Aeneid* in slang. Butler's use of burlesque expresses his contempt for the Puritans and their commonwealth; the history of England from 1642 to 1660 is made to appear mere sound and fury.

Butler took his hero's name from Spenser's *Faerie Queene* (1590), where Sir Huddibras appears briefly as a rash adventurer and lover. The questing knight of chivalric romance is degraded into the meddling, hypocritical *Hudibras*, who goes out, like an officer in Cromwell's army, against the popular sport of bear baiting. The knight and his squire,

Balph, suggest Don Quixote and Sanch Panza, but the temper of Butler's mind is as remote from Cervantes's warm humanity as it is from Spenser's ardent idealism. Butler had no illusions; he was sceptical in philosophy and conservative in politics, distrusting theoretical reasoning and the new science, disdainful of claims of inspiration and illumination, contemptuous of Catholicism and dubious of bishops, Anglican no less than Boman. It is difficult to think of anything that he approved unless it was peace, common sense, and the wisdom that emerges from the experience of humankind through the ages.

10.1.3 John Bunyan (1632-1704)

Bunyan wrote two prose allegories, *The Pilgrim's Progress* (1678) and *The Life and Death of Mr. Badman*. Bunyan (1680). He is called the pioneer of English novel. *The Pilgrim's Progress* is remarkable for impressive characters, presentation of contemporary life and dramatic interest. Bunyan's style is simple, clear, lucid, Biblical and colloquial.

John Bunyan is one of the most remarkable figures in seventeenth-century literature. The son of a poor Bedfordshire tinker, he received only meagre schooling and then learned his father's craft. Nothing in the circumstances of his early life could have suggested that he would become a writer known the world over. *Grace Abounding to the Chief of Sinners* (1666), his spiritual autobiography, records his transformation from a self-doubting sinner into an eloquent and fearless Baptist preacher. Preachers, both male and female, often even less educated than Bunyan, were common phenomena among the sects during the Commonwealth. They wished no ordination but the "call," and they could dispense with learning because they abounded in inspiration, inner light, and the gifts conferred by the Holy Spirit. In November 1660, the Anglican Church began to persecute and silence the dissenting sects. Prisons filled with unlicensed Nonconformist preachers, and Bunyan was one of the prisoners. Refusing to keep silent, he chose imprisonment and so for twelve years remained in Bedford jail, preaching to his fellow prisoners and writing religious books. Upon his release, he was called to the pastorate of a Nonconformist group in Bedford. It was during a second imprisonment, in 1675, when the Test Act was once again rigorously enforced against Nonconformists that he wrote his greatest work, *The Pilgrim's Progress*.

The Pilgrim's Progress is the most popular allegory in English. Its basic metaphor—life is a journey—is simple and familiar; the objects that the pilgrim Christian meets are homely and commonplace: a quagmire, the highway, the bypaths and shortcuts through pleasant meadows, the inn, the steep hill, the town fair on market day, and the river that must be forded.

10.1.4 Samuel Pepys (1633-1703)

Samuel Pepys (pronounced "Peeps") was the son of a London tailor. With the help of a scholarship, he took a degree at Cambridge; with the help of a cousin, he found place in the Navy Office. His defence of

the Navy Office and himself before Parliament in 1668 won him a reputation as a good administrator, and his career continued to prosper until it was broken, first by false accusations of treason in 1679 and finally by the fall of James II in 1688. But Pepys was more than a bureaucrat. A Londoner to his core, he was interested in all the activities of the city: the theatre, music, the social whirl, business, religion, literary life, and the scientific experiments of the Royal Society (which he served as president from 1684 to 1686). He also found plenty of chances to indulge his two obsessions: chasing after women and making money.

Pepys kept his diary from 1660 to 1669. Writing in shorthand and sometimes in code, he was completely frank in recording the events of his day, both public and private, the major affairs of state or his quarrels with his wife. Altogether, he wrote about 1.3 million words. When the diary was first deciphered and published in the nineteenth century, it made him newly famous. As a document of social history, it is unsurpassed for its rich detail, honesty, and immediacy.

10.1.5 Sir John Locke (1632-1704)

Laurence Sterne in *The Life and Opinions of Tristram Shandy Gent.* In Three Volumes John (1779) mentions, that Locke's *Essay Concerning Human Understanding* (1690) is "a history-book". Like Montaigne's essays, it aims to explore the human mind in general by closely watching one particular mind. When Locke analyzed his ideas, the ways they were acquired and put together, he found they were clear when they were based on direct experience and adequate when they were clear. Usually, it appeared, problems occurred when basic ideas were blurred or confused or did not refer to anything determinate. Thus, a critical analysis of the ideas in an individual mind could lead straight to a rule about adequate ideas in general and the sort of subject where adequate ideas were possible. On the basis of such a limitation, individuals might reach rational agreement with one another and so set up an area of natural law, within which a common rule of understanding was available.

Locke's new "way of ideas" strikes a humble, antidogmatic note, but readers quickly perceived its far-reaching implications. By basing knowledge on the ideas immediately "before the mind", His approach also alarmed some divines who argued that the foundation of human life could never be reduced to clear, distinct ideas. Locke the Christian scriptures in *The Essay* (1982) in the midst of his famous critique of "enthusiasm," the belief in private revelation, but his main impulse is to restrain rather than to encourage religious speculations. The *Essay* also contains an unsettling discussion of personal identity Locke argues that a person's sense of selfhood derives not from the "identity of soul" but rather from "consciousness of present and past actions"

10.1.6 William Congreve (1670-1729)

William Congreve's parents came from prominent county families. His father, a younger son, obtained a commission as lieutenant in the army and moved to Ireland in 1674. There our future playwright was

educated at Kilkenny School and Trinity College, Dublin; at both places, he was a younger contemporary of Swift. In 1691, he took rooms in the Middle Temple and began to study law, but soon found he preferred the wit of the coffee houses and the theatre. Within a year, he had so distinguished himself at Will's Coffee house that he had become intimate with the great Dryden himself, and his brief career as a dramatist began shortly thereafter.

The success of *The Old Bachelor* (1693) immediately established him as the most promising young dramatist in London. Dryden declared it the best first play he had ever read. *The Double Dealer* (1693) was a near failure, though it evoked one of Dryden's most graceful and gracious poems, in which he praised Congreve as the superior of Jonson and Fletcher and the equal of Shakespeare. *Love for Love* (1695) was an unqualified success and remains Congreve's most frequently revived play. In 1697 he brought out a well-received tragedy, *The Mourning Bride*. Congreve's most elegant comedy of manners, *The Way of the World*, received a brilliant production in 1700. The dialogue is epigrammatic and brilliant, the plot is an intricate puzzle, and the characters shine with surprisingly complex facets. During the rest of his life, he wrote no more plays. Instead, he held a minor government post, which, although a Whig, he was allowed to keep during the Tory ministry of Oxford and Bolingbroke; after the accession of George I, he was given a more lucrative government sinecure. Despite the political animosities of the first two decades of the century, he managed to remain on friendly terms with Swift and Pope, and Pope dedicated to him his translation of the *Iliad*.

10.1.7 Sir John Vanbrugh (1664-1726)

He was born about 1666, and had a varied career, being in turn soldier, herald and architect. His first play, *The Relapse*, was performed in 1697. This was followed in the next year by *The Provoked Wife* (1697), while the *Confederacy* was not produced until 1735. With the exception of these three plays, there are no writings of any note to his credit. In character, he was forceful, energetic, and rugged. He was knighted in 1734 and died twelve years later. In Vanbrugh's first two plays, we have all the familiar puppets of Restoration comedy, the fops and the fools being treated with more naturalness if less wit than by Congreve, and with far less coarseness. Most important point to all perhaps, to the modern reader, his plays show a fresher handling of the life of the day than we find usually in the Restoration drama, and the eighteenth century novelists are certainly indebted to him in their characteristics.

10.1.8 George Farquhar (1678-1707)

He was born at Londonderry in 1678. Like Congreve, he went to Trinity College, Dublin and afterwards joined the army. In personality he is the most volatile and inconsequential of the three later dramatists, as is shown in amorous intrigue or military adventure, loving the good things

of life yet meting misfortunate with an excellent front. He died in 1707. He is noted for his contributions to late Restoration comedy, particularly for his plays *The Recruiting officer* (1706) and *The Beaux' Stratagem* (1707).

10.1.9 William Wycherley (1641-1716)

The Country Wife (1675) by William Wycherley is the other play, after *The Way of the World* (1700), most commonly set for Advanced level. Its central character, Horner, pretends to be sexually incapable, as a device whereby he may lull husbands into a sense of false security and seduce their wives. He finds little difficulty in overwhelming the 'honour' that is so marked a feature of Restoration comedy; it did not stop a woman sleeping with a man, but it did make both partners paranoid about that fact becoming known. Horner's part in the play is central. He avoids condemnation or punishment, and can thus be seen to render the play wholly immoral. A major factor on the other side of the argument is that Horner is not really a character at all, but more of a satiric exposure of other people's vice. In other words his importance in the play is not as a personality, but as a means whereby the author can reveal the features of other people.

It is also true that hypocrisy is condemned severely in the play, and that the vast majority of characters who suffer in it thoroughly deserve to do so. There is a tendency to ask about characterization, with a quotation or leading statement to the effect that Wycherley's good characters are dull, and his bad ones full of life, but also corrupt beyond the level of normality.

10.1.10 Sir Isaac Newton (1642-1727)

Isaac Newton was the son of a Lincolnshire farmer. As a boy, he invented machines; as an undergraduate, he made major discoveries in optics and mathematics; and in 1667 he was elected a fellow of Trinity College, Cambridge. Two years later, his teacher, Isaac Barrow, resigned the Lucasian Chair of Mathematics in his favour. By then, in secret, Newton had already begun to re think the universe. His mind worked incessantly, at the highest level of insight, both theoretical and experimental. He designed the first reflecting telescope and explained why the sky looks blue; he invented calculus; he revolutionized the study of mechanics and physics with three basic laws of motion; and as everyone knows, he discovered the universal law of gravity. Although Newton's *Principia* (*Mathematical Principles of Natural Philosophy*, 1687) made possible the modern understanding of the cosmos, his *Opticks* (1704) had a still greater impact on his contemporaries, not only for its discoveries about light and color but also for its formulation of a proper scientific method.

Newton reported most of his scientific findings in Latin, the language of international scholarship; but when he chose, he could express himself in crisp and vigorous English.

10.1.11 Daniel Defoe (1660-1731)

By birth, education, and occupations Daniel Defoe was a stranger to the sphere of refined tastes and classical learning that dominated polite literature during his lifetime. Middle class in his birth, Presbyterian in his religion, he belonged among the hardy Nonconformist trades folk who, after the Restoration, slowly increased their wealth and toward the end of the seventeenth century began to achieve political importance.

He began adult life as a small merchant and for a while prospered, and in 1692, he found himself bankrupt, with debts amounting to £17,000. This was the first of his many financial crises, crises that drove him to make his way, like his own heroes and heroines, by whatever means presented themselves. However double his dealings; he seems always to have found the way to reconcile them with his genuine Nonconformist piety. His restless mind was fertile in "projects," both for himself and for the country, and his desire for politics made the role of passive observer impossible for him. An ardent Whig, he first gained notoriety by political verses and pamphlets, and for one of them, *The Shortest Way with the Dissenters* (1702), in which he ironically defended Anglican oppression, he stood in the pillory three times and was sentenced to jail. He was released through the influence of Robert Harley (later earl of Oxford), who recognized in Defoe, as he was to do in Swift, a useful ally. For the next eleven years Defoe served his benefactor secretly as a political spy and confidential agent, travelling throughout England and Scotland, reporting and perhaps influencing opinion. As founder and editor of the *Review*, he endeavoured to gain support for Harley's policies, even when, in 1710, Harley became head of a Tory ministry. It is characteristic of Defoe that, after the fall of the Tories in 1714, he went over to the triumphant Whigs and served them as loyally as he had their enemy.

When he was nearly sixty, Defoe's energy and inventiveness enabled him to break new ground, indeed to begin a new career. *Robinson Crusoe*, which appeared in 1719, is the first of a series of tales of adventure for which Defoe is now admired, but which brought him little esteem from the polite world, however much they gratified the less cultivated readers in the City or the servants' hall. In *Robinson Crusoe* and other tales that followed, Defoe was able to use all his greatest gifts: the ability to re-create an environment vividly, a special skill in writing easygoing prose and the language of actual speech. In the fictitious autobiographies of adventurers or rogues—*Captain Singleton* (1720), *Moll Flanders* (1722), *Colonel Jack* (1722), and *Roxana* (1724)—Defoe spoke for and to the members of his own class. Like them, he was engrossed by property and success, and his way of writing made, all he touched seem true.

CHECK YOUR PROGRESS 1

Answer The Following Questions.

1. John Dryden is considered to be the most important figure in Restoration literature. Why do you think he was so influential?

2. Amongst many other things, Daniel Defoe wrote about the Black Death in London in his historical fiction "A Journal of the Plague Year". What was the author's main interest in doing so?

3. Discuss the contribution of Samuel Pepys in the restoration literature.

4. Write a critical note on the Restoration Comedy of Manner with reference to the works of William Congreve.

5. Write short notes on:

(a) Absalom and Achitophel as a political satire

(b) Hudibras and religious sectarianism

CHECK YOUR PROGRESS 2

CHOOSE THE APPROPRIATE OPTION

1. In which type of writing Restoration writers are often engaged?

- a) Satirical
- b) Tragic
- c) Hyperbolic
- d) Lyric

2. Which of these is one of the major themes of Restoration literature?

- a) Childhood
- b) Nature
- c) Social Life
- d) Solitude

3. What did comedies of Manners often focus on?

- a) Sexual deceit
- b) Fidelity
- c) Happiness
- d) Punishment

4. Which literature influenced Restoration writers?

- a) German literature
- b) Italian literature
- c) Greek literature

- d) French literature
- 5. Who wrote *Mac Flecknoe*?
 - a) William Wycherley
 - b) John Donne
 - c) John Dryden
 - d) William Congreve
- 6. Who among the following did NOT write during the Restoration period?
 - a) John Milton
 - b) Thomas Otway
 - c) Sir Walter Scott
 - d) John Dryden
- 7. Which poet, critic and translator brought England a modern literature between 1660 and 1700?
 - a) Addison
 - b) Bunyan
 - c) Crabbe
 - d) Dryden
- 8. Which of the following is not an example of Restoration comedy?
 - a) Etherege's *The Man of Mode*
 - b) Wycherley's *The Country Wife*
 - c) Behn's *The Rover*
 - d) Shakespeare's *A Midsummer Night's Dream*
- 9. When was John Dryden born?
 - a) 2 February 1641
 - b) 15 May 1636
 - c) 19 August 1631
 - d) 15 December 1628
- 10. 'Lady Wishfort' is a character in:
 - a) *The Country Wife*
 - b) *The Provoked Wife*
 - c) *The Way of the world*
 - d) *All For Lover*

10. 2 LET US SUM UP

In this unit, we studied the important writers of the restoration period. John Dryden established himself as the leading poet and literary critic of his day. Other important writers that we studied are Samuel Butler, John Bunyan, Samuel Pepys, Sir John Locke William Congreve and Daniel Defoe. We also witnessed the development of various literary genres including the restoration comedy of manners in the major works of William Congreve.

10.3 KEY WORDS

- **Political satire:**

Political satire is satire that specializes in gaining entertainment from politics; it has also been used with subversive intent where political speech and dissent are forbidden by a regime, as a method of advancing political arguments where such arguments are expressly forbidden.

- **Heroic couplet:**

A heroic couplet is a traditional form for English poetry, commonly used in epic and narrative poetry, and consisting of a rhyming pair of lines in iambic pentameter.

- **Comedy of Manners:**

The comedy of Manners is a form of comedy that satirizes the manners and affectations of contemporary society and questions societal standards

10.4 BOOKS SUGGESTED

1. Daniel Defoe, *The Complete English Gentleman*, ed. K.D. Bulbring (London, 1890)
2. Daniel Defoe, *The Complete English Tradesman* (Gloucester, 1987).
3. John Locke, *Some Thoughts Concerning Education* eds J.W and J.S. Yolton,(Oxford, 1989)
4. G.W. Leibnitz, *New Essays on Human Understanding* trans. P Remnant and J. Bennett (Cambridge, 1982)
- 5 John Locke, *An Essay concerning Human Understanding*, 2 vols, ed. J.W Yolton (London, 1965),
6. Bonamy Dobree. *English Literature in the Early Eighteenth Century, 1700-1740* , (Oxford, 2011)
7. Bonamy Dobree.. *Restoration Tragedy* (Roman books, 2014)
8. William Henry Hudson. *An Outline History of English Literature*, (Atlantic, 2008)

ANSWERS

1- A ,2 - C ,3- A ,4- D , 5- C , 6- C ,7- D ,8- D ,9 -A ,10 - C