20TH CENTURY CULTURE

حضارة القرن العشرين

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الفرقة الرابعة قسم اللغة الانجليزية-

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ENGLAND IN THE 20TH AND THE 21ST CENTURIES.

Key Words and Related Topics:

- The Suffragist movement.
- The two World Wars and the gradual decadence of the British Empire.
- The cultural revolution of the sixties
- Pop culture and music: Britpop, The Rolling Stones, the Punk Movement
- The evolution of the monarchy in the 20th century
- Post-imperial, multicultural Britain
- English national identity

Temario de la Guía Docente: 5. Aspects of English National Identity: The Monarchy, the Protestant Reformation, and Liberalism. 6. The Anglican Church, the Monarchy and Parliament: their historical origin, their evolution and their cultural roles today. 7. The British Empire and the Origins of a Global, English-Speaking Culture. 9. From the Political Reforms of the 19th Century to the Welfare State. 10. Britain after the Second World War: The Fall of the Empire and the Crisis in National Identity

Introduction:

The nineteenth century, and in particular the Victorian period, was a triumphant episode in the history of the British

Empire. It had defeated Napoleonic France, its main competitor and it had also managed to manoeuvre around the radicalism of the period through gradual and moderate political reforms that had quenched any revolutionary outbreaks. The British Empire dominated world trade, and its industrial and technological prowess situated it at the forefront of the Western advance over the nations that it colonized. The twentieth century would prove to be far less glorious: the gradual emergence of the United States as a world power would be confirmed first by its defeat of the aging and decadent remains of the Spanish Empire in Cuba and the Philippines in 1898, and then it would deal two fabulous blows to the British Empire as a result of the First and the Second World War. The outcome of these two wars debilitated the international standing of Britain, which led to a gradual process of decolonisation, and to the post-colonial world of today, when only the Commonwealth remains to remind us of what was once the largest empire the world had known.

The twentieth century also brought important social and cultural changes. In the first place, the political reforms implemented during the last years of the 19th century and the early decades of the 20th century—above all the extension of

the franchise to all males, and then to all women—brought about significant changes in the political landscape of the country. One of them was that the Labour party emerged as the representative of the urban working classes. Another one was that women gained an increasingly prominent role. After the suffragist movement, the cultural change brought about by the sixties also had an important impact in the way women were liberated from the traditional roles that had been ascribed to them, and have become more prominent in politics and in society in general.

The sixties brought about changes that affected all of society, not just women. The demographic boom of the post-war period had led to a situation in which a significant percentage of the population were under twenty. These young people were relatively affluent and did not identify with the spirit of discipline and self-sacrifice that had dominated the generation that had to live through the war—and in particular through the devastating effects of the Blitz, the German bombardment of the capital during the Second World War. Nor did they have to struggle, like their parents had done, through the hard post war period, when rationing and austerity imposed rather grim lifestyles. The young

generation in the sixties adopted a new style in clothes, and in music. In particular, the music they imported came from the United States of America: this was another significant case of trans-Atlantic transference or translation.

But the sixties brought with them changes that ran much deeper than mere clothes and music: a more relaxed moral and social code, far from strict 'Victorian' traditional values, a more relaxed attitude to social classes, and racial relations. The empire may have dissolved during the post-war period, but men and women from all the former colonies, immigrants from India to the Caribbean, from Hong Kong to Africa, or their British-born descendants, all became citizens. They have changed the social and cultural landscape of the country forever. This can be seen in politics, but also in music: some of the new music that Britain produced –and pop music has become one of the most profitable British exports after the sixties—was inspired by American Rhythm and Blues, but some other music produced by Britain was inspired by former colonies—for instance, the Caribbean counterpoint of Ska, or the influence of Reggae, among others, have made their presence felt in the many varieties of groups and songs

that Britain has been exporting since the sixties.

This racial, political, and cultural mix-up in an increasingly globalized world has posed serious changes to traditional patterns of English cultural identity. We shall close this unit with a couple of texts that approach multiculturalism and globalization, and how they have affected the traditional patterns of national identity whose history we have been tracing in this class.

TASK: Read texts [1] and [2] and answer the following questions:

1. Why do you think that, as Mrs Millicent Fawcett says, 'The war revolutionised the industrial position of women - it found them serfs and left them free.'?
2. Which was the traditional occupation of women? What sort of new jobs did they find?
3. Did this have an effect on the sort of wages that women were paid?
4. Which event led to the foundation of the London Society for Women's Suffrage?
5. Which was Queen Victoria's opinion about equal voting rights for women?

[1]

WOMEN ON THE HOME FRONT IN WORLD WAR ONE

By Professor Joanna Bourke

Did World War One actually improve women's lives in Britain? At the time, many people believed that the war had helped advance women politically and economically. Thus, Mrs Millicent Fawcett, leading feminist, founder of Newnham College Cambridge and president of the National Union of Women's Suffrage Societies from 1897 to 1918, said in 1918: 'The war revolutionised the industrial position of women - it found them serfs and left them free.' The war did offer women increased opportunities in the paid labour market. Between 1914 and 1918, an estimated two million women replaced men in employment, resulting in an increase in the proportion of women in total employment from 24 per cent in July 1914 to 37 per cent by November 1918.

The war bestowed two valuable legacies on women. First, it opened up a wider range of occupations to female workers and hastened the collapse of traditional women's employment, particularly domestic service. ... Working women who might previously have been enticed into service were being drawn away by alternative employment opening up to satisfy the demands of war. Thus, nearly half of the first recruits to the London General Omnibus Company in 1916 were former domestic servants. Clerical work was another draw card. The number of women in the Civil Service increased from 33,000 in 1911 to 102,000 by 1921. The advantages of these

alternative employments over domestic service were obvious: wages were higher, conditions better, and independence enhanced.

Trade unionism proved to be the second legacy of the war. Female workers had been less unionised than their male counterparts. ... World War One forced unions to deal with the issue of women's work. The scale of women's employment could no longer be denied and rising levels of women left unmarried or widowed by the war forced the hands of the established unions.

An English suffragist, around 1910 In addition, feminist pressure on established unions and the formation of separate women's unions threatened to destabilise men-only unions. The increase in female trade union membership from only 357,000 in 1914 to over a million by 1918 represented an increase in the number of unionised women of 160 per cent.

However, the war did not inflate women's wages. Employers circumvented wartime equal pay regulations by employing several women to replace one man, or by dividing skilled tasks into several less skilled stages. In these ways, women could be employed at a lower wage and not said to be 'replacing' a man directly. By 1931, a working woman's weekly wage had returned to the pre-war situation of being half the male rate in more industries.

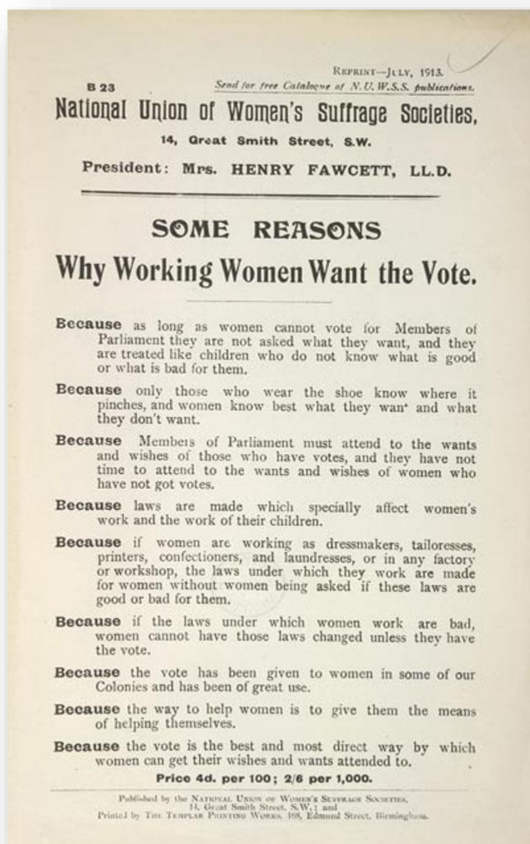
Finally, some historians believe that the war was a key element in the granting of the franchise to women over the age of 30 years who held property in 1918. But it was not until 1928 that women over the age of 21 were finally allowed to vote. In effect, this meant that in 1918, 8.5 million women were enfranchised, or 40 per cent of the

total number of women. In 1928, this was boosted to 15 million, or 53 per cent of total number of women.

[2]

THE NINETEENTH-CENTURY ROOTS OF THE SUFFRAGISTS

Source:
http://www.bl.uk/learning/histcitizen/21cc/struggle/suffrage1/suffragists.html



REPRINT—JULY, 1913.

B 23 *Send for free Catalogue of N.U.W.S.S. publications.*

National Union of Women's Suffrage Societies,

14, Great Smith Street, S.W.

President: Mrs. HENRY FAWCETT, LL.D.

SOME REASONS

Why Working Women Want the Vote.

Because as long as women cannot vote for Members of Parliament they are not asked what they want, and they are treated like children who do not know what is good or what is bad for them.

Because only those who wear the shoe know where it pinches, and women know best what they want and what they don't want.

Because Members of Parliament must attend to the wants and wishes of those who have votes, and they have not time to attend to the wants and wishes of women who have not got votes.

Because laws are made which specially affect women's work and the work of their children.

Because if women are working as dressmakers, tailoresses, printers, confectioners, and laundresses, or in any factory or workshop, the laws under which they work are made for women without women being asked if these laws are good or bad for them.

Because if the laws under which women work are bad, women cannot have those laws changed unless they have the vote.

Because the vote has been given to women in some of our Colonies and has been of great use.

Because the way to help women is to give them the means of helping themselves.

Because the vote is the best and most direct way by which women can get their wishes and wants attended to.

Price 4d. per 100; 2/6 per 1,000.

Published by the NATIONAL UNION OF WOMEN'S SUFFRAGE SOCIETIES, 14, Great Smith Street, S.W.; and
Printed by THE TEMPLAR PRINTING WORKS, 168, Edmund Street, Birmingham.

In 1866, a group of women organised a petition that demanded that women should have the same political rights as men. The women took their petition to Henry Fawcett and John Stuart Mill, two MPs who supported universal suffrage. Mill added an amendment to the Reform Act that would give women the same political rights as men. The amendment was defeated by 196 votes to 73.

In the wake of this defeat the London Society for Women's Suffrage was formed. Similar Women's Suffrage groups were formed all over Britain. In 1887, seventeen of these individual groups joined together to form the National Union of Women's Suffrage Societies (NUWSS).

The NUWSS adopted a peaceful and non-confrontational approach. Members believed that success could be gained by argument and education. The organisation tried to raise its profile peacefully with posters, leaflets, calendars and public meetings.

Steps towards equal rights came with the Married Woman's Property Acts of 1870, 1882, and 1884 (amended again in 1925). These enabled women to keep their property and money after marriage, where previously it was the automatic property of their husbands.

The denial of equal voting rights for women was supported by Queen Victoria who, in 1870 wrote, 'Let women be what God intended, a helpmate for man, but with totally different duties and vocations'.

TASK. Read texts [3] and [4], and answer the following questions:

1. What happened to Britain's international standing after World War One? Did this situation change after the Second World War?

2. What happened for the first time in the 1920s?
3. How did the situation evolve for Britain after 1947 in Asia, Africa, and the Middle East. List the main episodes and describe the most important events.

[3]
OVERVIEW: BRITAIN, 1918 - 1945

By Rebecca Fraser

The expense of World War One destroyed British global pre-eminence. Territorially the British empire was larger than ever. In the Middle East, Britain and France had divided most of the former Ottoman Empire between them. But the underlying reality was that Britain could no longer afford to build the bases or ships to defend its empire as it had before 1914. It was the United States' overwhelming industrial might that had swung the balance against Germany during the war, and it was the American president whose ideas defined the peace. *Gandhi, leader of Indian*

The years between the world wars were Britain's last hurrah as the great imperial power it had been for the previous 200 years. This was a period of retraction abroad and social reform at home. A limited number of women were allowed to vote in 1918, but by 1927 all women over the age of 21 could vote and Britain had universal suffrage for the first time in history. The electorate trebled, bringing in the first government under the Labour party (first in 1924 and then again in 1929) to represent the views of the working class.

The late 1930s saw crisis follow crisis for Britain. In 1936, the new king Edward VIII, who wished to marry his American mistress Mrs Wallis Simpson, was persuaded to abdicate in favour of his brother the duke of York, who took the throne as George VI. In India, 100,000 people were imprisoned for taking part in the Indian leader

Mohandas Gandhi's civil disobedience campaigns for Indian independence. Nevertheless, Britain was reluctant to lose the centre of her imperial trade.

After the Second World War, the British Empire turned into a shadow of its former self. Anti-colonial feeling and independence was in the air among British possessions in Africa and Asia. After 1945, the Pacific Rim countries made treaties with America to protect them, for it was American troops who had saved Australia from invasion by the Japanese.

[4]

BRITAIN, THE COMMONWEALTH AND THE END OF EMPIRE

By Dr. John Darwin

Source:
http://www.bbc.co.uk/history/british/modern/endofempire_overview_01.shtml

The collapse of British imperial power - all but complete by the mid-1960s - can be traced directly to the impact of World War Two. The catastrophic British defeats in Europe and Asia between 1940 and 1942 destroyed its financial and economic independence, the real foundation of the imperial system. It also erased the old balance of power on which British security - at home and abroad - had largely depended. Although Britain was one of the victorious allies, the defeat of Germany had been mainly the work of Soviet and American power, while that of Japan had been an almost entirely American triumph. Britain had survived and recovered the territory lost during the war. But its prestige and authority, not to

mention its wealth, had been severely reduced. The British found themselves locked into an imperial endgame from which every exit was blocked except the trapdoor to oblivion.

An early symptom of the weakness of the empire was Britain's withdrawal from India in 1947. During World War Two, the British had mobilised India's resources for their imperial war effort. They crushed the attempt of Mahatma Gandhi and the Indian National
Congress to force them to 'quit India' in 1942. Nonetheless, in an earlier bid to win Congress support, Britain had promised to give India full independence once the war was over. Within months of the end of the war, it was glaringly obvious that Britain lacked the means to defeat a renewed mass campaign by the Congress. Its officials were exhausted and troops were lacking. But the British still hoped that a selfgoverning India would remain part of their system of 'imperial defence'.
For this reason, Britain was desperate to keep India (and its
army) united. These hopes came to

Mahatma Gandhi in the 1940s

nothing. By the time that the last
viceroy, Lord Louis Mountbatten, arrived in India, Congress and its leader Jawaharlal Nehru had begun to accept that unless they agreed to partition, they risked a descent into chaos and communal war before power could be transferred from British into Indian hands. It was left to Mountbatten to stage a rapid handover to two successor governments (India and Pakistan) before the ink was dry on their post-imperial frontiers.

Britain was now overshadowed by the United States and Soviet Union, its domestic economy

had been seriously weakened and the Labour government had embarked on a huge and expensive programme of social reform.

In the 1950s, British governments struggled to achieve this post-war imperial vision. They had already reinvented the Commonwealth in 1949 in order to let India remain a republic, overturning the old rule that the British monarch must be head of state in a Commonwealth country. … By the end of the decade, things were not going well. Staying in the Middle East had led step-by-step to the confrontation with President Gamal Abdel Nasser in Egypt, and the disastrous decision to seek his overthrow by force in collusion with Israel. The 1956 Suez Crisis was a savage revelation of Britain's financial and military weakness and destroyed much of what remained of Britain's influence in the Middle East. … Britain's position as the third great power and 'deputy leader' of the Western Alliance was threatened by the resurgence of France and West Germany, who jointly presided over the new European Economic Community (EEC). Britain's claim on American support, the indispensable prop of imperial survival, could no longer be taken for granted. And Britain's own economy, far from accelerating, was stuck in a rut.

[In the 1960s, and] to avoid being trapped in a costly struggle with local nationalist movements, Britain backed out of most of the remaining colonies with unseemly haste. As late as 1959, it had publicly scheduled a degree of self-government for Kenya, Uganda and Tanganyika. All became independent between 1961 and 1963. British leaders gamely insisted, and no doubt believed, that Britain would remain at the 'top table' of world power - a status guaranteed by its nuclear deterrent and its continuing influence in

the ex-colonial world, and symbolised by the Commonwealth which the ex-colonies had joined. … Meanwhile the British economy staggered from crisis to crisis and the burden became unsustainable. Devaluation of the pound in November 1967 was followed within weeks by the decision to withdraw Britain's military presence east of Suez.

When Britain finally entered the European Community in 1973, the line had been drawn under Britain's imperial age. But the ending of an empire is rarely a tidy affair. The Rhodesian rebellion was to last until the late 1970s, Britain fought a war to retain the Falkland Islands in 1982 and Hong Kong continued, with tacit Chinese agreement, as a British dependency until 1997. The British at home had to come to terms with an unforeseen legacy of their imperial past - the large inflow of migrants, mostly from South Asia. In the 21st century, old imperial links still survive, particularly those based on language and law, which may assume growing importance in a globalised world. Even the Commonwealth, bruised and battered in the 1960s and 1970s, has retained a surprising utility as a dense global network of informal connections, valued by its numerous small states. As the experience of the empire recedes more deeply into Britain's own past, it has become the focus of more attention than ever from British historians.

The 19th-century liberal tradition – social and political continuity and change in England after the Second World War

As Britain lost its traditional international standing, at home the post-War Labour governments embarked on an ambitious project of social reform. These policies were the continuation of the reforms that had been implemented late in the nineteenth century and during the early decades of the twentieth century. The result was the establishment of a comprehensive welfare system, which improved health and education, and also provided an overall system of social protection for the unemployed and other sectors of society that could be undergoing duress. As Britain retreated from its imperial positions abroad, back at home the immigrants that originally came from its global dominions— all of whom enjoyed special status as British citizens—contributed to the emergence of a new a multicultural, racially mixed society. In spite of the economic crises, the postwar years and their harsh austerity were left behind and a new generation came to replace those who had to fight through the First and the Second World Wars. This new generation would soon contribute to bring about significant social and cultural changes that would change the face of England.

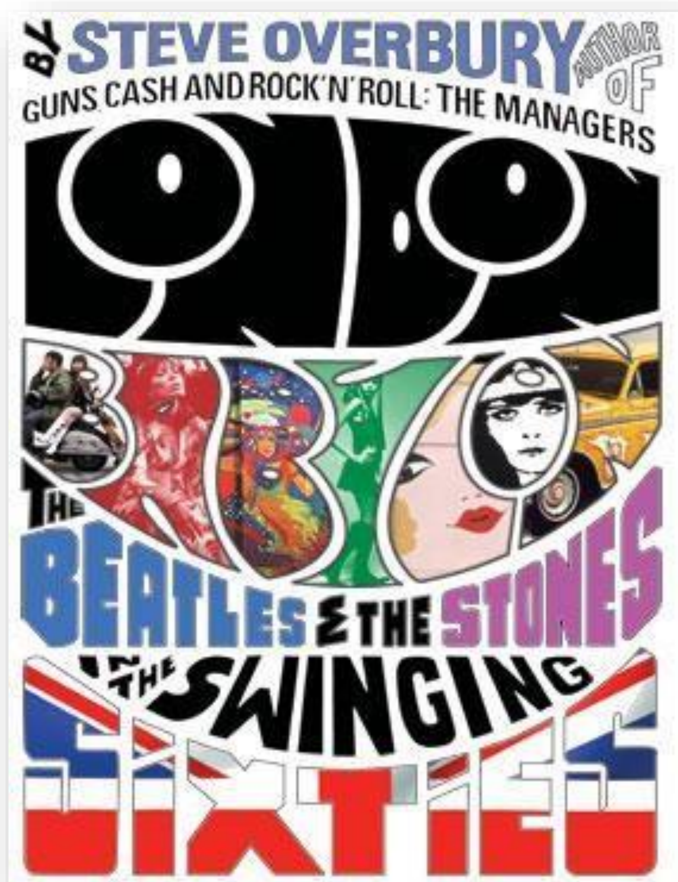
TASK. Read text number [5] and answer the following questions:

1. Which changes had taken place—according to the text—between the 1930s and the 1960s?
2. What does the text mean by this expression 'the British must be Greeks in a world in which the Americans were the Romans'? How does this describe the situation of post-imperial Britain in the new global geopolitical situation?

[5]

'The nineteenth-century liberal tradition had not disappeared but the political parties continued to be divided primarily on economic issues. **The Labour party supported greater equality helped by state action and on the whole it had inherited Mill's belief in giving people a wide range of freedom in issues where their actions did not affect other people**; **the Conservative party stood for greater individual freedom to prosper in a less controlled economic system, but it was more likely to say that certain moral principles ought to be expressed in legislation on crime even if it did mean restricting people's freedom of action**. At the beginning of the century the moral attitudes of the unenfranchised people at the bottom of the social scale were less restrictive than those of the classes concerned about respectability who made up the great bulk of the electorate. By the 1930s the ideal of respectability was accepted throughout society, but by the 1960s it was much less universally accepted and some sections of the middle class, especially around London, were consciously uninhibited and regarded freedom from restraint as a good thing for its own sake. The greater

freedom, or laxer sense of social discipline, showed itself in fashions and styles.



(…)

England in the mid 1960s set the fashions for the young and provided stars for popular entertainment. It was not quite what Macmillan had meant when he said the British must be

Greeks in a world in which the Americans were the Romans, but the Greeks had been entertainers for the Roman Empire, and it looked for a moment as though the English were going to take up the same role by providing popular singing groups such as the Beatles and women's fashions for the young such as the miniskirt. This was not likely to give complete satisfaction to anyone in England; the people who worried about the country's role in the world were serious-minded men and women who wanted the country to be influential in some more dignified way, and the young people who set the new fashions were much less interested in the question. They had grown up in a country which was not in fact a great power, and they probably did not expect it to go round behaving as one. Life would have been easier for political leaders if there had been a more widespread relaxation of the feeling that the world's problems, wherever they might be, were problems for the British government to solve. But even though people realized that British power was less than in the past, there were still pressures for England to take an interest in faraway places.'

(T. O. Lloyd, *Empire, Welfare State, Europe. English History 1906*-1992, Oxford University Press, 1993, pp. 403-4)

THE SIXTIES AND BEYOND: CHANGING TRENDS AND POP CULTURE: FROM THE ROLLING STONES AND THE BEATLES TO THE SEX PISTOLS' 'GOD SAVE THE QUEEN'

In the 1960s London became a fashionable city. This was the decade of 'swinging London', when the English capital led the world in fashion and also in music. After absorbing the influence of American R&B (Rhythm & Blues), and Rock'n Roll, young English musicians started to produce their own music, which would in turn become a global phenomenon. If in unit 7 we saw how the cultural influence went from Britain to the United States, during the middle of the 20th century, Britain came first under the influence of the youth culture of America, and then relaunched it to the rest of the world after giving it its own particular spin.

The

post-war period saw high birth rates in the West (not just in the USA or the UK) which in the sixties led to a majority of young people who were politically restless, who did not have to go through the austerity years of the post-war period, and who were relatively affluent consumers. On both sides of the Atlantic, the sixties saw the cultural apotheosis of the baby boomers: affluent and fun-loving, but also idealistic and free from the prejudices of traditional moral and social standards, this generation produced

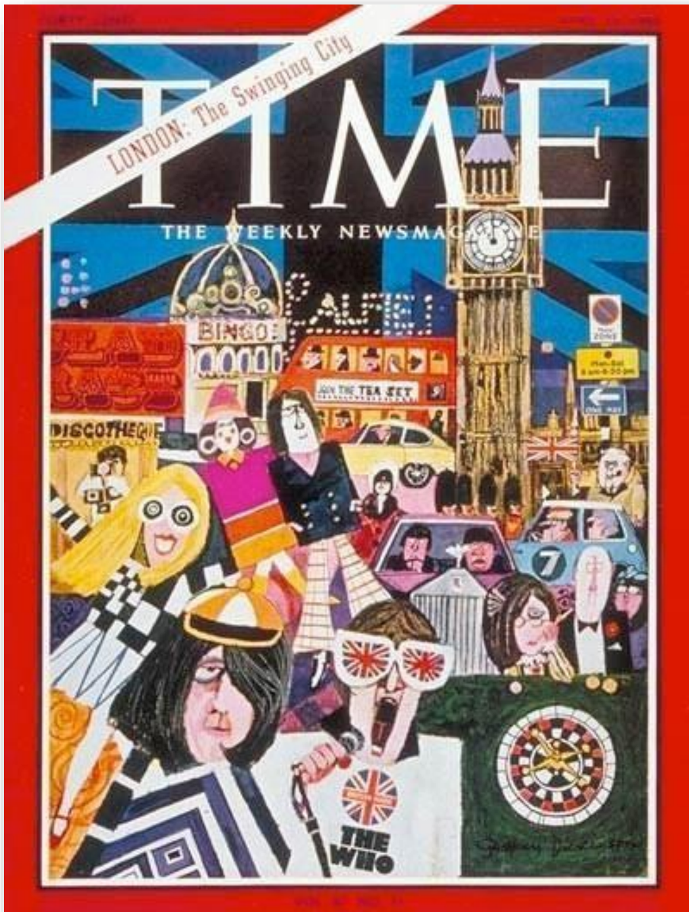
a significant cultural change that has come to define to a large extent the world we live in.

The 1960s created two of the most successful post-war British products in popular culture: music and fashion. In the realm of fashion, this was the decade of new and groundbreaking (frequently outrageous too) designs. If there is an outfit that represents the fresh, young and liberating spirit of the sixties, it is the mini-skirt, which scandalized traditional moralists, with the designer Mary Quant and the model Twiggy as its most representative icons. In this section we shall look at some texts that deal with the Rolling Stones, one of the most important groups in the 1960s. The Stones represented a new type of Englishness, uninhibited and full of provocation. By becoming an international phenomenon, they outgrew their British origins to become first a typical trans-Atlantic, Anglo-American phenomenon, and consequently, a global one.

Twiggy, the iconic model of the sixties, wearing a design by Mary Quant

This translational dimension of groups like the Rolling Stones exemplifies the evolution of Englishness, and they constitute an interesting case study of how the cultural changes of the sixties recycled previously established ideas

about the national character, now within an international trans-Atlantic dimension. They prove that in today's world few phenomena represent the global preeminence of Anglo-American popular culture as clearly as Rock'n Roll does. These were tendencies, fashions and attitudes that were promoted for the first time in the sixties. In that respect, our current musical and youth culture is the offspring of the rebellious provocations of the sixties: the spirit of rebellion and social outbreak has been successfully tamed, assimilated, and put at the service of international corporations which use sophisticated techniques of advertising and marketing to manufacture the icons of youth, sexual liberation, and a rebellious spirit as very profitable commodities.



The situation changed in the seventies: after growing out of the post-war slump into the affluence of the sixties, the West went through a serious economic crisis after 1973 (the so-called oil crisis) that produced inflation and unemployment.

The disenchantment of the younger generation found an outlet in punk rock: a cynical, violent, and radical movement that rejected the pacifism and feel-good mood of the hippy movement. Punk is best exemplified by the Sex Pistols, whose provocative emergence coincided with the 25th anniversary of Queen Elizabeth's coronation. They epitomized the disenchantment of the new generations, its nihilistic impulse, and its cynical pursuit of fame and money under the guise of a radical, alternative popular musical movement.

HISTORY OF LONDON. SWINGING SIXTIES: CAPITAL OF COOL

Source: http://www.history.co.uk/explore-history/history-of-london/swinging-london.html

TASK. Read text [6] and summarize the main factors, and the main players who turned
London into the 'world capital of cool' in the 1960s

[6]

For a few years in the 1960s, London was the world capital of cool. When Time magazine dedicated its 15 April 1966 issue to London: the Swinging City, it cemented the association between London and all things hip and

fashionable that had been growing in the popular imagination throughout the decade.

London's remarkable metamorphosis from a gloomy, grimy post-War capital into a bright, shining epicentre of style was largely down to two factors: youth and money.

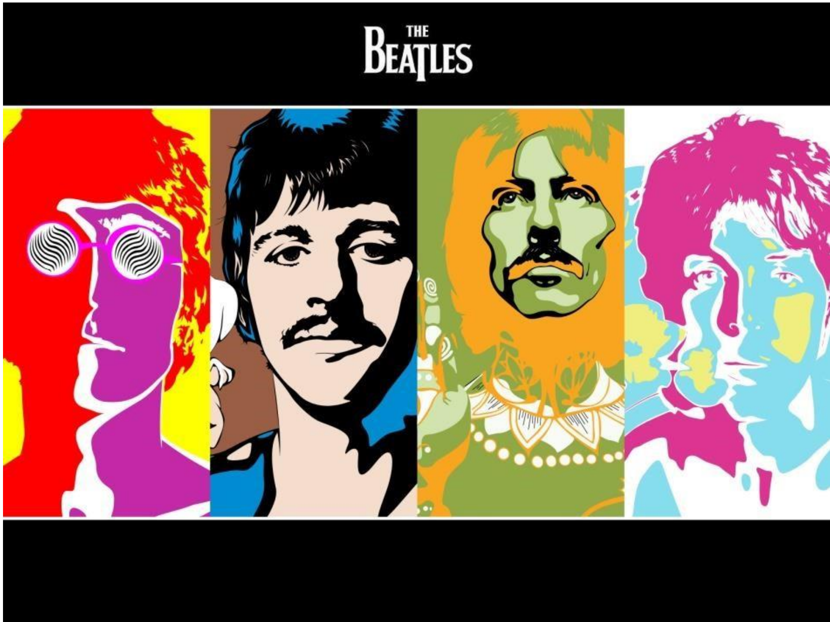
The baby boom of the 1950s meant that the urban population was younger than it had been since Roman times. By the mid-60s, 40% of the population at large was under 25. With the abolition of National Service for men in 1960, these young people had more freedom and fewer responsibilities than their parents' generation. They rebelled against the limitations and restrictions of post-War society. In short, they wanted to shake things up…

Added to this, Londoners had more disposable income than ever before – and were looking for ways to spend it. Nationally, weekly earnings in the '60s outstripped the cost of living by a staggering 183%: in London, where earnings were generally higher than the national average, the figure was probably even greater.

This heady combination of affluence and youth led to a flourishing of music, fashion, design and anything else that would banish the post-War gloom. Fashion boutiques sprang up willy-nilly. Men flocked to Carnaby St, near Soho, for the latest 'Mod' fashions. While women were lured to the King's Road, where Mary Quant's radical mini skirts flew off the rails of her iconic store, Bazaar.

Even the most shocking or downright barmy fashions were popularised by models who, for the first time, became superstars. Jean Shrimpton was

considered the symbol of Swinging London, while Twiggy was named The Face of 1966. Mary Quant herself was the undisputed queen of the group known as The Chelsea Set, a hard-partying, socially eclectic mix of largely idle 'toffs' and talented working-class movers and shakers.



Music was also a huge part of London's swing. While Liverpool had the Beatles, the London sound was a mix of bands who went on to worldwide success, including The Who, The Kinks, The Small Faces and The Rolling Stones. Their music was the mainstay of pirate radio stations like Radio Caroline and Radio Swinging England.

Creative types of all kinds gravitated to the capital, from artists and writers to magazine publishers, photographers, advertisers, film-makers and product designers.

But not everything in London's garden was rosy. Immigration was a political hot potato: by 1961, there were over 100,000 West Indians in London, and not everyone welcomed them with open arms. The biggest problem of all was a huge shortage of housing to replace bombed buildings and unfit slums and cope with a booming urban population. The badly-conceived solution – huge estates of tower blocks – and the social problems they created, changed the face of London for ever. By the 1970s, with industry declining and unemployment rising, Swinging London seemed a very dim and distant memory.

THE ROLLING STONES

Source: Colin Larkin, ed. *Encyclopedia of Popular Music*, 4th ed.

TASK. Read text [7] and answer the following questions

1. What sort of music influenced the two main founders of the Rolling Stones? What does this say about the cultural origins of their music?
2. Why did some people find the Rolling Stones shocking (when compared, for instance, with The Beatles)?
3. Which is the Rolling Stones's most famous song, and one of their greatest hits? What does it say about them, according to the text?

[7]

Originally billed as the Rollin' Stones, the first line-up of this immemorial English 60s unit was a nucleus of Mick Jagger (b. Michael Philip Jagger,

26 July 1943, Dartford, Kent, England; vocals), Keith Richards

The Rolling Stones in their sixties

(b. 18 December 1943, Dartford, Kent, England; guitar), Brian Jones (b. Lewis Brian Hopkin-Jones, 28 February 1942, Cheltenham, Gloucestershire, England, d. 3 July 1969, Hartfield, Sussex, England; rhythm guitar) and Ian Stewart (b. 18 July 1938, Pittenweem, Fife, Scotland, d. 12 December 1985; piano).

Mick Jagger and Keith Richards were primary school friends who resumed their camaraderie in their closing teenage years after finding they had a mutual love for Rhythm & Blues and particularly the music of Chuck Berry, Muddy Waters and Bo Diddley.

Their first record was promoted on the prestigious UK television pop programme *Thank Your Lucky Stars*. After supporting the

The Rolling Stones in the Sixties

Everly Brothers, Little Richard, Gene Vincent and Bo Diddley on a Don Arden UK package tour, the Rolling Stones released their second single, a gift from John Lennon and Paul McCartney entitled 'I Wanna Be Your Man'. The disc fared better than its predecessor climbing into the Top 10 in January 1964. That same month the band enjoyed their first bill-topping tour supported by the Ronettes. The early months of 1964 saw the Rolling Stones catapulted to fame amid outrage and controversy about the surliness of their demeanour and the length of their hair. This was still a world in which the older members of the community were barely coming to terms with the Beatles neatly-groomed mop tops. While newspapers asked 'Would you let your daughter marry a Rolling Stone?', the quintet engaged in a flurry of recording activity which saw the release of an EP and an album both titled *The Rolling Stones*. The discs consisted almost exclusively of extraneous material and captured the band at their most derivative stage. Already, however, there were strong signs of an ability to combine different styles. The third single, 'Not Fade Away', saw them fuse Buddy Holly's quaint original with a chunky Bo Diddley beat that highlighted Jagger's vocal to considerable effect. The presence of Phil Spector and Gene Pitney at these sessions underlined how hip the Rolling

Stones had already become in the music business after such a short time.

There was an ugly strain to the Rolling Stones' appeal which easily translated into violence. At the Winter Gardens Blackpool the band hosted the most astonishing rock riot yet witnessed on British soil.
Frenzied fans displayed their feelings by smashing chandeliers and demolishing a Steinway grand piano. By the end of the evening over 50 people were escorted to hospital for treatment. Other concerts were terminated within minutes of the band appearing on-stage and the hysteria continued throughout Europe. A return to the USA saw them disrupt the stagey *Ed Sullivan Show* prompting the presenter to ban rock 'n' roll groups in temporary retaliation.

1965 proved the year of the Rolling Stones' international breakthrough and three extraordinary selfpenned number 1 singles. 'The Last Time' saw them emerge with their own distinctive rhythmic style and underlined an ability to fuse R&B and pop in an enticing fashion. America finally succumbed to their spell with '(I Can't Get No) Satisfaction', a quintessential pop lyric with the still youthful Jagger sounding like a jaundiced roué. Released in the UK during the 'summer of protest songs', the single encapsulated the restless weariness of a band already old before its time. The distinctive riff, which Keith Richard invented with almost casual dismissal, became one of the most famous hook lines in the entire glossary of pop and was picked up and imitated by a generation of garage bands thereafter.

There was also some well documented bad boy controversy when Jagger, Jones and Wyman were

arrested and charged with urinating on the wall of an East London petrol station. Such scandalous behaviour merely reinforced the public's already ingrained view of the Rolling Stones as juvenile degenerates.

The Rolling Stones in the seventies, at their transatlantic best

SEX PISTOLS BIO

These are excerpts from the history of the Sex Pistols (taken from their official website at http://www.sexpistolsofficial.com/bio/)

TASK. Read texts [8] and [9], and answer the following questions

1. Which is the main source of inspiration for the Sex Pistols, according to the text?
2. What sort of music did they reject? Which music inspired them?
3. How did the Sex Pistols gain popular notoriety? Do you think that this sort of

behaviour has become an easy strategy to gain attention?

4. What sort of events were triggered by the release of their single 'God Save the Queen'? When was this record launched?
5. Text [8] is taken from the website of the Sex Pistols, so in a way, we can say that they are telling their own story. Text [9] is from a different source: how does text [9] describe punk rock? Which are its main features?
6. Is there any contrast between the descriptions of punk in text [8] and text [9]?

[8]

Amidst the chaos that was the Sex Pistols, it's often overlooked just what a great band they are, and what great records they made. The Sex Pistols are no ordinary band; their story is long and complicated, and not without its casualties. Without them popular culture in the last 30+ years would be very, very different. The Pistols didn't just kick down doors; they kicked them off the wall. For a band who (really) only released one album and four singles, they spawned a sea of imitators; and still do to this day. Not bad for a band that supposedly couldn't play. Yeah right! The Sex Pistols could certainly play; one listen to their ferocious slab of raw rock and roll will soon tell you that.

Despite claims from New York, the Sex Pistols are the true originators of punk; no one else had their attitude, balls, or honesty. The Pistols were inspired by anger and poverty, not art and poetry. *"An imitation from New York, you're cheese and chalk..."*

There never was a punk movement. There was the Sex Pistols and there was the rest. The Sex Pistols ARE punk; the rest are "punk rock". Big difference…

The band that would become the Sex Pistols originally began in 1972 when school-friends Steve Jones and Paul Cook decided to form a band; Glen Matlock later joined in 1974. Disillusioned by the bloated progressive-rock and hippie music scene of the time, the fledgling Pistols took their musical inspiration from the 60s mod and rock n roll of The Who and The Small Faces. However, it wouldn't be until 1975 and the arrival of John Lydon that the band took on a whole new level. Steve Jones had spotted someone who looked *"a bit different"* in Malcolm McLaren's clothes shop. Bernie Rhodes, one of McLaren's associates, spotted the same guy on London's Kings Road; complete with hacked green hair and a homemade "I HATE Pink Floyd" T-shirt. Sacrilege at the time.

December 1st, 1976 changed the Sex Pistols and the music scene forever. After the group Queen had to cancel at short notice, EMI booked the Pistols to appear on the 'Today' TV show, hosted by one Bill Grundy. A notorious drunk, Grundy had no time for these young upstarts. Treating the Pistols and their entourage with nothing short of thinly veiled contempt, he proceeded to goad them into swearing. Preempted by an apparent slip from Rotten, Steve Jones called Grundy's bluff and launched into a stream of F-words. Unbeknownst to the band, the show was being broadcast live throughout London. Not that it would have stopped them anyway. Grundy was one of the first people to learn not to fuck (sorry, rude word) with the Sex Pistols… The following day the Pistols were headline news up and down

the country. “Punk-Rock”, as it had been christened, had reached the masses. By early January 1977, EMI had buckled to internal pressure and sacked the Pistols. Honoring their £40,000 contract in full.

A&M Records became the Pistols’ new label, and their next single was to be ‘God Save The Queen‘, John Rotten’s alternative National Anthem. To announce the A&M deal, the band staged a mock signing outside Buckingham Palace. However, after a drunken celebration at the A&M offices – and probably another mixture of cold feet – the band soon found themselves without a record deal yet again. Only ten days after they signed to A&M, the Sex Pistols were sacked! Finding them £75,000 richer in the process.
The next record company headhunt ended with them reluctantly signing to Richard Branson’s Virgin Records in May 1977. Just in time for the Queen’s 25th Silver Jubilee. The nation was gripped by Royal fever. The Queen was a national treasure. Everyone loved her, everyone except the Sex Pistols. Or did they? *“We love our Queen…”*

The release of ‘God Save The Queen’ sent shockwaves up and down the country. The band also had a perfect collaboration with Jamie Reid on artwork. This was Britain 1977 long before Diana, Fergie,
Edward and the likes had exposed the Monarchy for what they were. No one had ever spoken up so publicly about them. The nation was up in arms. Government Members of Parliament even called for the band to be hung at London’s Traitors’ Gate!

Since the Bill Grundy controversy, the band had been public enemy #1, but that all paled into insignificance by the protest that met them after

Jubilee week. Even though it technically out-sold the Number 1 record of the week – 'The First Cut is the Deepest' by Rod Stewart – 'God Save The Queen' peaked at Number 2. The powersthat-be refused to acknowledge it but the Sex Pistols *were* Number 1. This wasn't a conspiracy theory, this was for real.

On the album's release, more controversy surrounded the band when police took exception to its title being displayed in a shop window. The band were charged with the obscure Indecent Advertising Act of
1889! "Bollocks" is a slang name for testicles; however, the Pistols' lawyer

proved that it was actually derived from a *The 1977 Top of the Pops Chart, during the Queen's Silver Jubilee, when* nickname for clergymen! Bollocks was *the Sex Pistols released their single 'God Save the Queen', which was* legal! *should have been listed as number two, a position that here appears blankbanned from the airwaves, and also airbrushed from the list—where it.*

PUNK MUSIC.

(Source: *Oxford Encyclopedia of the Modern World*, ed. by P.N. Stearns)

[9]

Punk music—more commonly known as **punk** rock—is a form of popular music with origins in the United States and United Kingdom, though wider influences can also be traced across a number of underground scenes in Australia and Europe. Often described as antiestablishment and nihilistic, in fact **punk** embraced a wide range of styles and codes, including shock tactics, political protest, calls for social change, satire, and black humor. **Punk** came to international prominence between 1976 and 1977, with a host of new groups playing their own brand of fast, simple, and loud rock 'n' roll music, harking back to what they saw as the original ethos of rock music in the 1950s and 1960s, which had been replaced by slick musicianship and production values. Well-known early **punk** groups include the Ramones, the Sex Pistols, the Damned, and the Clash, though the movement spawned a host of new artists around the world over the ensuing decades, in turn influencing groups such as Green Day, Rancid, and the Offspring in the 1990s.

The **punk** movement between 1977 and 1984 represented a distinctive period in the development of British youth culture, and was to have far-reaching consequences worldwide. Paralleling earlier generations and youth movements, notably the 1960s mod movement and the underground hippie scene of the early 1970s, **punk**'s implicit “anyone can do it” ideology and overtly nihilistic attitude toward the music industry resulted in a deluge of independent, do-it-yourself records, concerts, and networks of activity, threatening to disrupt, albeit temporarily, the commercial stability of the popular music business.

GOD SAVE THE QUEEN – ANARCHY IN THE UK – QUEEN ELIZABETH'S SILVER JUBILEE

TASK. Read texts [10], [11] and [12]. Listen to the songs too

1. Describe the celebrations of Queen Elizabeth's Silver Jubilee and compare with the spirit and the lyrics of these two songs by the Sex Pistols. For an account of the events of the day the Queen's Silver Jubilee was celebrated, in parallel with the Sex Pistols's own 'celebration' on a boat sailing down the river Thames, see the BBC website 'This day in history' (June 7 1977) - http://news.bbc.co.uk/onthisday/hi/dates

/stories/june/7/newsid_2562000/2562633.stm

[10]

SEX PISTOLS – ANARCHY IN THE UK

http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LOy8zvmIgvo

Right now ha, ha!

I am an anti-Christ
I am an anarchist,
Don't know what I want But I know how to get it.
I wanna destroy the passer by
'Cos I wanna be anarchy,

Ho dogs body

Anarchy for the UK
It's coming sometime and maybe
I give a wrong time stop a traffic line.
Your future dream is a shopping scheme
Cause I wanna be anarchy,
It's in the city

How many ways to get what you want
I use the best I use the rest I use the NME[1].
I use anarchy
'Cause I wanna be anarchy,

It's the only way to be

Is this the MPLA
Or is this the UDA
Or is this the IRA[2]
I thought it was the UK Or just another country
Another council tenancy.

I wanna be an anarchist
(Oh what a name)
And I wanna be an anarchist
(I get pissed destroy)

[11] *Johnny Rotten, the Sex Pistols lead singer, during their 1977 Riverboat performance, which coincided with the*

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[1] The NME (pronounced as the noun 'enemy') was also the New Musical Express, a popular music magazine.

[2] The MPLA was the *Movimento Popular de Libertação de Angola* (in Portuguese), i.e. the People's Movement for the Liberation of Angola; the UDA was the Ulster Defence Association (a Northern-Irish Protestant Movement) and the IRA was the Irish Republican Army: these were all paramilitary groups that resorted to violence to defend their ideas.

Sex Pistols – God Save the Queen *celebrations of Queen Elizabeth II's Silver Jubilee*

http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=yqrAPOZxgzU

God save the queen
The fascist regime
They made you a moron
Potential H-bomb

God save the queen
She ain't no human being
There is no future
In England's dreaming

Don't be told what you want
Don't be told what you need
There's no future, no future,
No future for you

God save the queen
We mean it man
We love our queen
God saves

God save the queen
'Cause tourists are money
And our figurehead
Is not what she seems

Oh God save history
God save your mad parade
Oh Lord God have mercy
All crimes are paid

When there's no future
How can there be sin
We're the flowers in the dustbin
We're the poison in your human machine
We're the future, your future

God save the queen
We mean it man
We love our queen
God saves

God save the queen
We mean it man
And there is no future
In England's dreaming

No future, no future,
No future for you
No future, no future,
No future for me

No future, no future,
No future for you
No future, no future
For you

[12]

DESCRIPTION OF THE QUEEN'S SILVER JUBILEE, 1977

Source: the Official Website of the British Monarchy (http://www.royal.gov.uk/HMTheQueen/TheQueenandspecialanniversaries/TheQueensSilverJubilee1977.aspx)

In 1977 The Queen's Silver Jubilee was marked with celebrations at every level throughout the country and Commonwealth.

The actual anniversary of The Queen's accession on 6 February 1952 was commemorated in church services throughout that month. The Queen spent the anniversary weekend at Windsor with her

family and the full jubilee celebrations began in the summer of 1977.

On 4 May at the Palace of Westminster both Houses of Parliament presented loyal addresses to The Queen, who in her reply stressed that the keynote of the jubilee was to be the unity of the nation.

During the summer months The Queen embarked on a large scale tour, having decided that she wished to mark her jubilee by meeting as many of her people as possible. No other Sovereign had visited so much of Britain in the course of just three months - the six jubilee tours in the UK and Northern Ireland covered 36 counties. The home tours began in Glasgow on 17 May, with greater crowds than the city had ever seen before. The tours continued throughout England and Wales - in Lancashire over a million people turned out on one day - before culminating in a visit to Northern Ireland.

Queen Elizabeth during the celebrations of her Silver Jubilee in 1977

Official overseas visits were also made to Western Samoa, Australia, New Zealand, Tonga, Fiji, Tasmania, Papua New Guinea, Canada and

the West Indies. During the year it was estimated that The Queen and The Duke of Edinburgh travelled 56,000 miles.

The climax of the national celebrations came in early June. On the evening of Monday 6 June, The Queen lit a bonfire beacon at Windsor which started a chain of beacons across the country. On Tuesday 7 June, vast crowds saw The Queen drive in the Gold State Coach to St Paul's Cathedral for a Service of Thanksgiving attended by heads of state from around the world and former prime ministers of the UK.

Afterwards The Queen and members of the Royal Family attended a lunch at the Guildhall, in which The Queen made a speech. She declared, "My Lord Mayor, when I was twenty-one I pledged my life to the service of our people and I asked for God's help to make good that vow. Although that vow was made in my salad days, when I was green in judgement, I do not regret nor retract one word of it."

An estimated 500 million people watched on television as the procession returned down the Mall. Back at Buckingham Palace The Queen made several balcony appearances. Street parties and village parties started up all over the country: in London alone 4000 were reported to have been held.

The final event of the central week of celebrations was a river progress down the Thames from Greenwich to Lambeth on Thursday 9 June, emulating the ceremonial barge trips of Elizabeth I. After The Queen had opened the Silver Jubilee Walkway and the new South Bank Jubilee Gardens, the journey ended with a firework display, and a procession of lighted carriages took

The Queen back to Buckingham Palace for more balcony appearances to a cheering crowd.

THE QUESTION OF NATIONAL IDENTITY. CHANGES IN THE TRADITIONAL HISTORY OF ENGLISH CULTURE AND CHALLENGES FOR THE 21ST CENTURY.

The coincidence of the official celebrations of the Silver Jubilee with the release of 'God Save the Queen' by the Sex Pistols epitomizes the sort of challenges that traditional English values and culture faced towards the end of the 20th century. These challenges have intensified as we entered into a globalized, multicultural 21st century. The following two texts describe these changes, and point to the possible evolution that English culture may undergo in the future.

[13]

TRADITIONAL ENGLISH NATIONAL IDENTITY: CHANGES AND CHALLENGES

1. Why are the forces of global capitalism described as 'homogenizing'?
2. Why are the forces of mass emigration and immigration described as 'heterogenizing'?
3. Identify and describe the following, in the light of what we have studied in this course so far. Why does the text list them as common projects in the past idea of Britain?
   a. Empire
   b. Parliament
   c. Monarchy
   d. Protestantism
   e. The spirit of the Blitz
   f. The welfare state
   g. Social democracy
4. What sort of national identity was fostered by the Falklands War? Why is it associated with Churchill?
5. What sort of national identity did Margaret Thatcher have, which is described in the text both as 'as an alternative national identity or as an alternative to national identity'? Why do you think it is described thus? Explain.
6. How did the death of Princess Diana trigger another new type of national identity? Describe the new type of national identity, and its difference from previously held views about the English character. Was there a certain political dimension to this 'new sense of national character'?
7. What do opinion polls say about people's sense of identity, and the fate of

national identity? What sort of conclusions does the text provide regarding the contrast between national identity and universal values?

"Over the last twenty-five years, journalists, intellectuals and politicians have continued to chart—and decry—the remorseless decay of British 'national identity'. They have also continued, if anything with mounting purposefulness, to try to reverse it. It seems sometimes as if the only point on which the 'chattering classes' of all political and ideological stripes agree is that British national identity has diminished, is diminishing, and ought to be increased. The alleged sources of decay are multiple and slightly contradictory. In the background are the internationally homogenizing forces of global capitalism (in certain versions, American capitalism), and the heterogenizing forces of mass emigration and immigration. These affect everyone in the west and are, at least, therefore not a peculiarly British affliction. For Europhobes especially, the rise of a sense of Europeanness threatens national identity across the Continent, although there is less evidence of this Europeanness in Britain than elsewhere.

Britain is also thought to suffer from some identity problems peculiar to itself. Although Britain has not in fact broken up as had been widely predicted since the 1970s, the idea of Britain apparently has. The common projects represented in the past by the idea of Britain—empire, Parliament and monarchy, Protestantism, the spirit of the Blitz, the welfare state, social democracy—all have been discredited. The
Scots and the Welsh are going their own way, leaving the English on their own and uncertain of 'who they are'. Often it is said that the English

have never had a very strong sense of ‘who they are’ because they have been hiding for so long behind these largely institutional constructs of ‘Britishness’

(…)

Margaret Thatcher had a strong conviction that Britain needed a kind of cultural revolution in which a restored national identity would play a leading role. Of the three different versions with which Thatcher became associated over the next decade the most obvious was a traditional Tory patriotism that she had inherited from, among other influences, Churchill and Powell, and in which she believed much more intuitively than her immediate predecessors in the Conservative leadership. Although in the first years of her premiership it was not at all clear how she might rebuild patriotic attachment to traditional institutions, in 1982 she found, fortuitously or not, the ideal vehicle in the Falklands War. Mobilization for this war and celebration of the victory afterwards at least temporarily fixed the people’s loyalties onto some traditional national institutions—the armed forces, mostly, but also Parliament, though not the monarchy—and restored for a time a sense of common purpose in pursuit of traditional British values— self-determination, support for the underdog, resistance to bullying, perseverance in adversity.

(…)

Margaret Thatcher had another agenda which was, if anything, more prominent and which could be viewed either as an alternative national identity or as an alternative to national identity: her strong streak of individualism, manifesting itself in policy as a hostility to economic

collectivism but also to collectives of all sorts. Her most notorious statement of this part of her philosophy came in a September 1987 interview with *Woman's Own* magazine where she lambasted people for looking to 'Government' or, worse, 'society' for solutions to their personal problems '[W]ho is society?' she demanded. 'There is no such thing! There are individual men and women and there are families and no government can do anything except through people and people look to themselves first'. In Thatcher's own view, this individualism was perfectly compatible with patriotism and with a specifically English—Tory variety that went back to Edmund Burke. The state provided a fundamental, possibly minimal, moral order within which the 'little platoons' of individuals, families and voluntary organizations got on with the business of living otherwise unmolested and unmobilized.

(…)

Another fortuitous event seized upon by New Labour to promote a new sense of national identity was the death of Princess Diana in late summer 1997, and most particularly the public reaction to her death. Towards the end of her life the mass media had already been portraying Diana as an alternative national character in waiting, 'the People's Princess' with the common touch, a natural expressiveness and emotionality, to counterpoise the stiffness, formality and traditionalism of her husband and mother-in-law (a rerun, it might be thought, of the Angry Young Man campaign against the 'gentleman', although with a very novel appeal to women). The intense emotional release that was held to characterize the national reaction to her death merged this characterization of the princess with the

characterization of the nation. For his part, Tony Blair did his level best to merge this characterization of the nation with his own 'New Britain'

(…)

There is a good deal of evidence that people in Britain today, while continuing to feel pride in 'Britain', do not 'identify' themselves with it as they might once have done. On those rare occasions when people are asked not how they identify with their country but whether they identify with their country, their answers are not always very positive. A 1996 survey asked people what were 'the most important components of identity': the most common answers were 'my principles and values' (66 per cent), 'my interests' (61 per cent), 'being a parent' (59 per cent), 'emotions and feelings' (57 per cent), 'circle of friends' (55 per cent), and 'my intelligence' (52 per cent), with national identifications just behind. When asked what was 'most important to your sense of self-identity', only 'being a parent' was mentioned by even half of respondents, and nation came far behind, around 20 per cent, clustering with many other bases of identity. Condor's studies into the meanings of 'England' and 'Britain' have been inhibited by the reluctance of many of her respondents, especially the young, to identify with either. In one sample of students, a fifth said they had no national identity at all and 70 per cent said that it was not very important to them. A majority of a sample of skilled workers from the north-west also said that national identity was of uncertain personal significance to them.

If these quantitative measures have not been matched by qualitative investigations, that may

have a lot to do with the investment of social scientists and journalists in the presence rather than the absence of national identity. People continue to display a commitment to certain values—individuality, diversity, tolerance, fair play, the rule of law—that have in the past been coded as 'English' or 'British'. But the same values have in the past also been coded as universal human values, and may now be re-emerging in that form. Whereas once a commitment to universal human values seemed easier and more authentic when conceptualized as 'peculiarly' English, now defining these values as 'English' makes them seem more problematic and less sincere. The whig 'progress narrative', which saw universal values being realized most perfectly in national contexts, has to some extent been displaced by a new 'progress narrative', which sees universal values being realized on a global scale. After national character, after nation—humanity, just as the Enlightenment imagined things before national character? Maybe so. Yet history is full of surprises."

(Excerpted from Peter Mandler, *The English National Character. The History of an Idea from Edmund Burke to Tony Blair*. New Haven & London: Yale University Press, 2006, pp. 229-242)

Supporters of the English rugby team

TASK: Read text [14] and answer the following questions:

1. Why does Diane Abbott say that ‘From the days when the Norman French invaded Anglo-Saxon Britain, we have been a culturally diverse nation’? Go back to our unit 1, and explain this statement.
2. What does the author of the text say about slavery? How does this agree with the traditional Whig view of history, and with the traditional narrative of English cultural and political identity?
3. What does she say about empire? How, and in which terms, does her account

challenge received narratives of colonization?

4. What does the text say about the history of popular music in the 20th century? Compare with the previous texts on the development of British pop music in the sixties.

[14]

MULTI-RACIAL BRITAIN

By Diane Abbott MP

As a woman of African descent, I have got used to the surprise on some people's faces when they find out I am also a British MP. For some people, it is a surprise that I am British at all. Particularly if they are not themselves from Britain and have never heard my name.

For millions of people all over the world, Britain is the land of tradition, the Royal Family, Beefeaters, Bobbies on the beat and, above all, white people. In much of middle America, it comes as a shock for them to hear that there any black people in Britain at all. But even if people can get their head around the idea that I might be British, the notion that I could be an MP often perplexes them.

An MP? Surely, I can see their eyes say, a British MP must be white. There are many lifetimes of war, conquest, history, literature, culture and myth behind the idea that Britain is a racially pure society. And in the study of history, myth is just as important as reality. But the racial purity of the British has always been a myth.

From the days when the Norman French invaded

Diane Abbott is a Labour Member of Parliament

Anglo-Saxon Britain, we have been a culturally diverse nation. But because the different nationalities shared a common skin colour, it was possible to ignore the racial diversity which

always existed in the British Isles. And even if you take race to mean what it is often commonly meant to imply - skin colour- there have been black people in Britain for centuries. The earliest blacks in Britain were probably black Roman centurions that came over hundreds of years before Christ. But even in Elizabethan times, there were numbers of blacks in Britain. So much so that Elizabeth I issued a proclamation complaining about them. Throughout the seventeenth and eighteenth century, black people make fleeting appearances in the political and cultural narrative of the British Isles. Black people can be seen as servants in the prints of Hogarth. And in many paintings of the era. In Thackeray's 'Vanity Fair', Ms Schwartz, the West Indian heiress is obviously supposed to be of mixed race. She is gently mocked but her colour is not otherwise remarked on.

British schoolchildren are taught about the abolition of slavery. They hear less about the key role that slavery played in the British economy in the eighteenth century. Britain was the centre of the triangular traffic whereby British ships took goods to Africa which were exchanged for slaves which the same British ships transported to the Caribbean and North America before returning home. The majority of these slaves worked in the plantations of the Caribbean and North America. But some came to Britain to be personal household servants. Over time, they inter-married with native born Britons. It would be interesting to know how many British people who consider themselves racially pure have an African slave generations back in their family. And, of course, between the wars, black
seamen turned ports like Liverpool and Cardiff into multi-racial areas. Yet there was tendency for the black areas of these seaports to be cut off from

the rest of the city. It was possible until not so long ago to visit Liverpool for the day and not be aware it had a sizeable black community. Such was the de facto segregation that still existed.

So in the literal sense, multi-racialism is nothing new. Britain has always been a multi-racial society. What is new is the visibility of its racial diversity. And what is newer still is a willingness to accept that all the races can have parity of esteem. For a long time, even when it was acknowledged that there were people of different racial origin within the British Isles, there was an assumption that the white race and culture was, and should, be dominant.

The creed of racial superiority was very much part and parcel of the culture of the empire. The British Empire was built on a theory of racial inferiority. The great Victorian writer and poet, Rudyard Kipling, wrote extensively on the supposed superiority of the British and talked about 'lesser breeds without the law'. It was the alleged superiority of the non-white races that supposedly legitimised taking over their countries and subordinating them to second class status. So even until quite recently British text books talked about Europeans 'discovering' countries like America, Australia and the source of rivers like the Nile. Whereas in fact there were plenty of non-white people who were in America and Australia all along who knew perfectly well where the source of the Nile was. And until recently writers talked about the Europeans bringing civilisation to Africa and the Indian sub-continent. As if these countries had not seen highly sophisticated Empires and societies long before the Europeans came.

When you read in the old textbooks about the supposedly civilising mission of the British, one is reminded of the comment of Gandhi. He was asked what he thought about British civilisation. He paused for a long time and then said thoughtfully 'It would be a good idea'. So fixed in the British mind, was the racial inferiority of the people whose lands they took over that for a long time archaeologists believed that the sculpture and carvings of the city of Benin in Nigeria could not have been done by black people. And similarly that the great 'lost' city of Zimbabwe in southern Africa could not have been built by black men. In direct line of descent of that kind of thinking is Prince Phillip's idea that poor quality electrical work must have been done by Indians.

To have a genuinely multi-racial society there needs to be genuine economic equality between the races. I do not believe that you can talk about a multi-racial Britain or anywhere else unless there is a measure of economic empowerment for all groups within Society. This means making sure that there is genuine equality of opportunity in education for all races. And that the barriers for black and ethnic minority advancement in business and in the profession are taken down. But economic empowerment for minorities is a necessary precondition but not sufficient to bring about a genuinely multi-racial society. Because nationhood and society is as much about ideas as anything else, the role of culture, literature, philosophy and the arts in building a mult-racial society is key. The first step is that the influence of black and ethnic minorities in the culture of a country like Britain is properly acknowledged.

There is no doubt the history of twentieth century popular music is very much the history of African music as it has been mediated through North

America. There is almost no sort of pop music that doesn't owe something to black American influence. And in art, the influence of African art has long been acknowledged on modern abstract painters like Picasso. More recently, the literary establishment has been willing to acknowledge the contribution of black and ethnic minority writers like Ben Okri, Alice Walker, Gabriel Garcia Marquez, Arundathi Roy, Salman Rushdie and Nobel prize winning Toni Morrison. And at the level of popular culture, different races have enriched British life greatly.

There is no doubt that the presence of ethnic minorities in Britain and much more foreign travel have transformed the British diet for the better. Noticeably fish and chips have been overtaken by curry as the most popular British takeaway. For many years, Britons have got used to seeing black athletes like Linford Christie representing them internationally. And much of the famous "Cool Britannia" that mix of music and fashion which is admired internationally derives from different ethnic street styles. We are also seeing an unprecedented level of intermarriage between the races. It is noticeably more common to see mixed race couples in Britain than in the U.S. which has had a larger black population for longer. There can be no doubt that as more and more British either have a black person in their family or at least knows someone that has a black person in their family, ideas about the desirability of racial purity will have to be examined by even the most die hard conservative.

So multi-racialism is easy to talk about but hard to achieve. Britain is a more open, more multi-racial society than ever before. And one where different races and cultural influences are

beginning to be positively acknowledged and given equal respect. We have come some way but there is still further to go. Martin Luther King dreamed of an America where a man's character would be more important than the colour of their skin. I suspect that we will know that Britain has become a genuinely multi-racial society, when the skin colour of a British MP is no more significant than the colour of their eyes.

Somalian-born athlete, Mo Farah, who won the 10,000 metres gold medal at the 2012 Olympic Games for

England. This picture, and the text below, is taken from an article published in the Mail

Online (a conservative newspaper), titled 'How glorious, after years of our national identity being denigrated, to see patriotism rekindled'. The journalist proudly proclaimed:

> "In many ways, the most heartening moment of the Games came at Mo Farah's post-race press conference, when an African journalist asked him whether he would rather have competed for Somalia, where he was born. 'Look, mate,' Farah said firmly. 'This is my country. When I put on the Great Britain vest, I feel proud. Very proud.' Farah — whose victory in the 10,000 metres was, for me, the defining and most emotional moment of the Games — came to this country from Somalia at the age of eight. He did not speak a word of English. But here he was, a proud Londoner and a proud Briton, suffused with joy after winning in front of his home crowd. What better symbol could there be of a united, inclusive country in the post-imperial age? What better advert for British identity: confident and colour-blind? What better answer to those who insist that Britishness is dead, and multi-culturalism is the future? And what better rebuke to the narrow-minded nationalists who want to break up our country and reduce it to a handful of petty fragments?"

Source: http://www.dailymail.co.uk/debate/article-2186815/The-rebirth-Britishness-How-glorious-years-national-identitydenigrated-patriotism-rekindled.html#axzz2KKhww54S

Final task: what do you think, in view of what we have read so far, this excerpt can tell us about the current state of British identity?

TASK: Read text [15] and answer the following questions:

1. What consequences would an independent Scotland bring about in Britain?
2. What was the situation in Britain around the 1950s and 60s?
3. What role did the welfare state play in this situation, according to the text?
4. What had provided the union, historically, with stability, up until 1973, when Britain joined the European common market?
5. Which other sort of identities and components were in competition with each other during the 20th century, in England, Scotland and across the United Kingdom?
6. What sequence of events has led to the current situation?

[15]
SCOTTISH NATIONALISM AND THE SCOTTISH REFERENDUM

How history turned against Tory-voting Scotland

When the unionists won a famous election victory in 1955, the SNP was an irrelevant sect. Then came Thatcher and the 1980s

Tom Devine – *The Guardian*, Sunday 14 September 2014

In four days' time, we may see the end of Britain as we and our ancestors have known it for generations. If some of the polls are to be believed, Scotland the nation will once again become a sovereign nation state. It is difficult to overestimate the colossal historical significance of such an extraordinary development.

Its consequences for the British archipelago and Britain's place in the world will be incalculable for many years to come. A third of the UK land mass will immediately cease to be British territory. "South Britain" beckons as the presumptive name for the remainder of the UK. Even if the no campaign manages to achieve a narrow victory, the crisis in the union will continue unabated. The evidence to date suggests that Westminster politicians do not yet possess the imaginative capacity to deal with it.

All this presents a major intellectual challenge for the historian. Little more than a generation ago, in the 1950s and early 60s, the union could not have been

more secure. The Scottish Unionist party (only becoming the Conservative party in Scotland in 1965) had won a famous and overwhelming victory in the general election of 1955. The SNP at the time was but an irrelevant and eccentric sect rather than a mainstream political party. Indeed, despite the mythology of Red Clydeside, Scotland had voted mainly for the Tories in the 1920s and 1930s. The Labour landslide victory of 1945 can be seen as an aberration in that context.

The memory of the collective British sacrifice of the second world war lived on for the postwar generation in comics, books and films. The empire, in which the Scots were so fundamentally involved, started to dissolve with the independence of India in 1947. Yet, contemporaneously, the welfare state was established and soon became the new sheet anchor of the Anglo-Scottish union. Nationalisation of key industries further strengthened the idea of a British-wide collective economic enterprise.

Yet all this can be seen in retrospect as the quiet before the storm. Winnie Ewing's surprise victory for the SNP at the Hamilton byelection of 1967 was a small but significant portent of what was to come. By then, and even more so in subsequent decades, the age-old stability of the union state was being undermined by developments both within Britain and beyond.

The crucial historic importance for Scotland of maintaining free access to English markets ceased to be of such importance when the UK joined the

European common market in 1973. A primary factor affording the union stability had long been the perception of a collective existential threat from a foreign foe: France and Spain in the 18th century, Nazi Germany and a nuclear-armed Soviet Russia in the 20th. The end of the cold war removed the fear of the Other, although whether that will return depends in the future on Putinesque sabre-rattling and Islamist fanaticism.

A shared English and Scottish commitment to Protestantism in the past had provided much of the ideological glue of union. This is no longer so in the age of secularisation. The Church of Scotland has lost two-thirds of its membership since the 1960s. That working-class Protestant culture of the Kirk, the Boys' Brigade and Rangers Football Club, long a bulwark of unionism and the Tory vote, is in decay. With that has withered the old sectarian voting patterns, of Protestants supporting the Conservatives and Catholics giving automatic allegiance to Labour.

That sectarian electoral pattern, especially significant in the west of Scotland, derived from the age-old hostilities between Protestant and Catholic that had reached a crisis between the wars, when the Church of Scotland leadership petitioned the UK government to prohibit Irish Catholic immigration. That policy failed but left deep scars. As late as the 1970s, labour market discrimination against Catholics remained endemic in several economic sectors.

Working class adherence to the two political parties most committed to the union left little space for the growth of nationalism. Moreover, Catholics had at that time a profound suspicion of the SNP, believing it to be dominated by Presbyterians, as well as having a few notorious bigots in its senior ranks.

The experience of Scotland in the 1980s is a critical factor in this narrative. Between 1976 and 1987 the nation lost nearly a third of its manufacturing capacity. The great heavy industries that had made Scotland's global economic reputation over more than a century disappeared in a matter of a few years. A post-industrial economy did emerge in the 1990s, but the crisis left behind a legacy of social dislocation in many working class communities and created a political agenda north of the border in marked contrast to that of the south of England. Rightly or wrongly, the devastation was blamed on the Conservative governments led by Margaret Thatcher. Scotland soon became a Tory-free zone in electoral terms. Another bastion of the union passed into history.

Equally fundamentally, state involvement and public spending became even more important to many Scots, in some parts of the west, accounting for as much as three-quarters of the local economy. As Lord Sumption, justice of the supreme court, argued in a notable 2013 lecture, these levels of public expenditure inevitably had profound effects on attitudes to the state in

Scotland, which differ significantly from "the rather more equivocal view of the state taken by most Englishmen". Herein lay much of the basis of the divergence in political cultures and voting patterns that has emerged between the two nations, imposing much stress and strain on the union.

It is also the root of those Scottish political attitudes that seem to favour Scandinavian-type social policies, and which strongly oppose neoliberal market economics, associated in the public mind with the alien ideology imposed during the Thatcher years. Despite the mythology, the nation only became leftwing in its electoral choices during recent decades – and this transformation in large part derives directly from the experience of the 1980s.

The foundation of the Scottish parliament in 1999 and the referendum were not directly linked causally. But the parliament did eventually become the vehicle for a transformed SNP to gain political power and then trigger the referendum process. As old Labour became New Labour, the SNP adopted left-of-centre policies of considerable appeal to the electorate. Its reputation for competent government was established during the first minority administration. This, then, became the basis of the historic SNP victory in 2011.

There may well be a no vote on Thursday. But a victory for unionism will be far from decisive or definitive. Nearly half the Scottish electorate will almost certainly vote yes and may not be easily satisfied by post-referendum devo

max concessions that are also likely to further fuel resentments south of the border. If the yes campaign wins, Britain will never be the same. Three centuries and more of political union between England and Scotland will be consigned to history. It's the possible end of an old political union rightly thought by many Scots to be no longer fit for purpose.

Twentieth-century drama

The late nineteenth century witnessed a revolution in the European theatre. The Norwegian dramatist, Henrik Ibsen (1828–1906), broke through the slick conventionalities of the theatrical norm—ingenious plots, easy dialogue well tuned to the contemporary ear, and themes undemandingly congenial to the theatregoing public. His plays analysed the social and moral prejudices of small-town life and the frustrations they imposed on men and women of spirit and integrity. His attack was widened into a judgement on the social and political fabric of nineteenth-century society, with its pseudo-respectabilities, its corrupt go-getters and its denial of love.

The theatrical revolution was reflected in England in the change from the theatre of the early Pinero to that of Shaw. Sir Arthur Wing Pinero (1855–1934) was a master of dramatic construction with a fine theatrical sense. His early plays were highly successful farces and comedies. Later, in *The Second Mrs Tanqueray* (1893) for intance, he showed some susceptibility to the new interest in themes involving social comment, but he remains best known for his more sentimental *Trelawny of the Wells* (1898), whose story harks back evocatively to the theatrical life of the 1860s. Another dramatist who gently probed the social consciousness was Henry Arthur Jones (1851–1929). In *Michael and His Lost Angel* (1896) the wealthy and forceful Mrs Lesdon seduces the young priest, Michael Faversham, with inner consequences that even a public confession cannot resolve.

The most celebrated dramatist of the 1890s was Oscar Wilde, whose comedies abound in polished wit and epigram that compel the reader to make direct comparison with the work of Sheridan 100 years earlier. *Lady Windermere's Fan* (1892) trembles on the edge of serious social criticism; for Mrs Erlynne, the woman who is 'absolutely inadmissible

into society', self-sacrificingly pretends to have brought Lady Windermere's fan by mistake when its discovery at Lord Darlington's incriminates the woman who dropped it there; and in *A Woman of No Importance* (1893) Lord Illingworth's questionably motivated attempt to make reparation by marriage, after twenty years, to the

unimportant woman who bore his son meets with a dignified and moving rebuff. But Wilde, unlike Sheridan, does not satirize hypocrisy and selfishness, foible and eccentricity, against a background of implicit respect for moral values and social proprieties. His wit and irony are exercised at the expense of worthless and worthy postures alike: the clever mind scintillates where scintillation is an end in itself. 'You should study the Peerage, Gerald,' Lord Illingworth advises his son. 'It is the one book a young man about town should know thoroughly, and it is the best thing in fiction the English have ever done.' Thus Wilde's masterpiece, *The Importance of Being Earnest* (1895), is the product of sheer virtuosity in the exploitation of farcical situations and of vivid characters whose entertaining vagaries make no concessions to psychological subtlety or seriousness. But the glittering wit, with its characteristic exploration of amoral paradox, keeps the play alive from beginning to end.

George Bernard Shaw (1856–1950) was born in Dublin but came to London at the age of twenty. He embraced the cause of socialism and joined the Fabians. As a music critic he advertised Wagner (*The Perfect Wagnerite,* 1898) and as a dramatic critic he advertised Ibsen (*The Quintessence of Ibsenism,* 1891). From the start his plays tackled social problems—slum-landlordism in *Widowers' Houses* (1892), the false glamorization of war in *Arms and the Man* (1894), and living indirectly on the profits of prostitution in *Mrs Warren's Profession* (production delayed by the censor until 1902). Ibsen's influence is evident in Shaw's study of Candida Morell *(Candida),* the wife of a muscular socialist clergyman, genial and popular, who is doing good work among the London poor but is heavily dependent on his wife. The young poet, Marchbanks, loves Candida and rebukes Morell for taking her for granted. At the crisis Morell's assurance is shaken and when Candida is bidden to choose between the two men, she sticks to her husband on the grounds that he is the weaker of the two and needs her more. Of course the dice are heavily loaded against expected conventionalities, so that the investigation of contrived relationships is less effective than the entertainment, but the rival spokesmen are lively specimens from the Shavian casebook and the spokeswoman is made in her maker's image. In *You Never Can Tell* well-worn comic situations are reinvigorated by the intrusion of the theme of how to educate children and uphold women's rights. Mrs Clandon has brought up her children away from the infection of an old-fashioned, dictatorial husband; but her daughter Gloria, supposedly insulated by her upbringing as the New Woman, proves an easy victim of an

impecunious dentist. The comedy runs riot, swamping the message, and one feels that it is all to the good.

Polished as the Shavian comic apparatus may be, one must not forget that Shaw's drama of ideas compelled his audiences to think. There is fusion of social economic theory with human interest in *Major Barbara* (1905). Barbara Undershaft is the daughter of a wealthy armament manufacturer and she holds office in the Salvation Army. She resigns over the discovery that tainted money made from munitions and whisky is sustaining Army social work. The central theme is that poverty, not sin, is the cause of evil. Medical men are entertainingly baited in *The Doctor's Dilemma* (1906), where Sir Colenso Ridgeon has to choose between saving a poor GP with his new cure for tuberculosis or saving Dubedat, a talented, amoral artist. Shaw achieved a brilliant and still reverberating success by working on a story from Smollett's *Peregrine Pickle* in *Pygmalion* (1913). Higgins, a professor of phonetics, accepts a challenge to turn Eliza Doolittle, a cockney flower girl, into a lady indistinguishable from a duchess within six months. The interference with a living girl's personality on the basis of phonetic experimentation produces an emotional backlash, and Shaw once more displays the supposedly dominant male in some bewilderment before the roused powers of womanhood. The turning of the tables is comedy's most basic device, and Shaw exploits it in novel ways, often in struggles between the sexes, but also in displaying unselfishness and heroism in the supposedly wicked (Dick Dudgeon in *The Devil's Disciple*) and weakness in the supposedly strong (Morell in *Candida*).

Shakespeare's mature queen of Egypt becomes a kittenish young girl in Shaw's *Caesar and Cleopatra,* while his unimpressive Julius Caesar becomes a superman strong in his own natural virtue; but a meatier and more shapely exercise in the historical chronicle is *St Joan* (1923). The saint is transmuted into a premature Protestant challenging the Church's authority where it conflicts with the guidance of her conscience, and paying the price of the progressive thinker who threatens established institutions with peril. It is good polemics and good theatre, but it does not plumb tragic depths or move wholeheartedly into the religious dimension. Indeed, though potent in putting the brain to work, Shaw was a great humorist rather than a profound teacher. His social thinking is important because it provides such a fine basis for the interplay of human relationships, such excellent material for thoughtful and witty conversation. Human beings are more interesting when they have ideas and beliefs,

programmes and platforms, as well as contacts at the level of meeting and mating, loving and hating. Men and women who read books and espouse causes are enriched human material for the writer to work on. Shaw's instinct as artist is often sounder than his polemical purpose, and his humour saner than his seriousness. That is why *Back to Methuselah* (1921), a vast panoramic forecast of evolutionary developments on the human scene, does not have the irresistible appeal of the light-hearted comedies: nor does *Man and Superman* (1905), in which woman and the Life Force catch up with the longresistant revolutionary Jack Tanner, for all his fervent rationality. It might be argued that Shaw's serious judgement on his age is at once most powerful and most palatable in dramatic terms when it is allegorized behind the witty comedy of wayward love relationships in *Heartbreak House* (1913–16); for the household of heartbreak portrays the national drift towards the abyss of war. However that may be, Shaw certainly gave the English theatre a much-needed shot in the arm from the needle of his intellect. An important name in the story of his success was that of the actor and stage director Harley Granville-Barker (1877–1946) who played many Shavian characters on the stage and who produced plays by Shaw, Galsworthy, Yeats, Ibsen and others in London. No mean dramatist himself, he contributed to the current output of thoughtful problem plays with *The Voysey Inheritance* (1905), which presents the dilemma of a son who succeeds to an apparently successful solicitors' business only to find that clients' funds have been misappropriated and that to right this wrong will bring ruin to many other trusting clients. Similarly *Waste* (1907) tackles the issue of a promising political career destroyed by connection with a death from abortion.

John Galsworthy (1867–1933) also put immediate social problems before his audience and compelled them to feel as well as to think about them. *Strife* (1909) gives a disturbing picture of the bitterness engendered by a strike at a Welsh tin plate works. Galsworthy registers the moods and attitudes of employers and workers alike with a scrupulous impartiality, laying stress on the stubbornness of the two protagonists, each in his way a man of principle and fortitude. That suffering weighs more heavily on the starving men and their families is forcefully brought home; yet the emphasis on those aspects of underlying humanity and vulnerability common to opponents across the barriers of social class is strong here, as it is in *The Skin Game* (1920), where the struggle is between Hillcrist, the aristocrat, and his neighbour, the newly rich manufacturer, Hornblower, a crude,

uncultivated fellow who threatens to ruin the locality with a factory. Unease with class conflicts and divisions is tellingly probed in *The Eldest Son* (1912). Sir William Cheshire orders his under-keeper to marry a pregnant village girl or get out. But Sir William's own son Bill has made the lady's maid pregnant and proposes to marry her. 'I utterly forbid this piece of nonsense', Sir William says and, when the obvious parallel is drawn, adds, 'I don't see the connection.' Galsworthy uncovers disquiets deeper still in *Justice* (1910) where the machinery of justice ruins a clerk who is trying to rehabilitate himself after a prison sentence. And in *The Silver Box* (1906) a drunken young gentleman and an unemployed labourer are both involved in what are technically 'thefts' but only the latter carries the can. Galsworthy's compassion, his sensitivity to suffering, his sympathy for the under-dog, and his alert awareness of the precarious equilibrium of the social fabric make his message a compelling one, and his insight is matched by a telling economy of expression and a deft management of substantial casts through tidily engineered situations. If Shaw put problems on the stage, Galsworthy put people there.

A lighter vein of social satire is discernible in some of the plays of J.M.Barrie (1860–1937), the Kirriemuir weaver's son whose early overpostured sketches of Scottish life and sentimentalization of its characters gained him a place in what was called the 'Kailyard school'. *The Admirable Crichton* (1902) shows Lord Loam's party shipwrecked on a desert island, and it is the butler, Crichton, who has the resourcefulness and authority to take charge of the situation, while the peer turns handyman. Rescue, of course, restores the *status quo*—with a difference. Irony and humour give freshness to the work. But Barrie's most vital play is perhaps *What Every Woman Knows* (1908) in which the menfolk of a prosperous Scottish family finance the studies of a poor but clever young man on the understanding that sister Maggie will have first refusal of him as a future husband. Maggie is winningly and sturdily portrayed. Barrie's reputation has suffered in consequence of the reaction against his taste for fantasy and whimsy. In *Dear Brutus* (1917) a number of people are magically granted the opportunity to live their lives over again: but they do not thereby answer their dissatisfactions ('The fault, dear Brutus, is not in our stars but in ourselves'). *Mary Rose* (1920) takes us to a magic island and *Peter Pan* (1904) is a riot of escapism from the threat of adulthood to a Never-Never Land, whither the elfin boy who never grows up and Tinker Bell the fairy waft the children of the Darling family.

Meantime there had been a vastly different break with naturalism on the other side of the Irish Sea. William Butler Yeats (1865–1939) turned to the heroic cycle of Cuchulain and Conchubar in *On Baile's Strand* (1904) for a tragic instance of a challenge reluctantly taken up that leads to Cuchulain's slaughter of his son (and we are reminded of *Sohrab and Rustum*). Gaelic legend was again tapped in *Deirdre* (1907). King Conchubar lures back Deirdre and her husband Naoise with a promise of forgiveness for the marriage that deprived him of his young bride-to-be. Naoise is treacherously murdered, but Deirdre defeats Conchubar by suicide. Before these verse plays (though the former contains some prose), Yeats had already written the forceful nationalistic one-acter, *Cathleen ni Houlihan* (1902) largely in prose. Cathleen, a poor and mysterious old woman, symbolizes Ireland. She promises glory to those who can assist in recovering her land from strangers, and lures young men to forsake home and sweetheart in her cause. Many years later Yeats asked the moving question:

Did that play of mine send out Certain men the English
shot?

Prose was used again in *The Words Upon The Window-Pane* (1934), in which a Dublin spiritualist seance brings the conversation of Swift, Vanessa and Stella to us through the voice of the medium.
Yeats worked in a crusading spirit. In collaboration with Lady Gregory (1852–1932) and Edward Martyn (1859–1923) he founded the Irish National Theatre Company, and the group established itself eventually at the Abbey Theatre in Dublin in 1904. Lady Gregory was herself a writer and Yeats admitted that she supplied much of the dialogue of *Cathleen ni Houlihan*. Her competence in presenting emotional situations formed in the backwash of momentous events is evident in her *Devorgilla* and *The White Cockade,* the one revealing the remorseful queen of Breffny at Mellifont forty years after her infidelity, and now an octogenarian near to death, and the other picturing James II escaping ignominiously after the Battle of the Boyne. Lady Gregory's comic playlets are neat and lively. The backchat of the two old men in their beds in *The Workhouse Ward,* with its repetitious circularities, reminds us that Beckett is her compatriot. Edward Martyn's play, *The Heather Field,* was performed alongside Yeats's *The Countess Cathleen* at the launching of the Irish National Theatre in 1899. Martyn's play portrays an idealistic Irish landowner who ruins himself in schemes of

landreclamation. Yeats's play caused a sensation by portraying a noble and compassionate Countess who sells her soul to demons when it becomes the only way to feed her starving peasantry.
John Millington Synge (1871–1909), whom Yeats's persuasions won for the Irish movement, proved to be its most gifted dramatist. He immersed himself in the peasant life of the Aran Islands and emerged with stories, characters, and a vital oral idiom at his fingertips. His famous one-act tragedy, *Riders to the Sea* (1904), is a deeply moving study of an old woman, Maurya, who has lost her husband at sea and now loses her two sons in turn. Synge's most popular play is the comedy, *The Playboy of the Western World* (1907). Christie Mahon arrives at a village inn in County Mayo. He is on the run, having, as he thinks, fatally struck his father. The villagers are fascinated by the privilege of harbouring a real live 'murderer', he is lionized by the girls, and it is the making of him. 'In a good play every speech should be as fully flavoured as a nut or an apple', Synge wrote in his preface, and the vitality and poetic richness of the dialogue are as irresistible as the theme; but the play provoked riots at the Abbey Theatre, so offensive did it seem to the good name of Irish women. (The trouble seems to have lain partly in the assumption that Irish girls like parricides and partly in the public utterance of the fiveletter word 'shift'.) Synge's last play was left completed but unpolished when he died, and it was one more recasting of the Deirdre story, *Deirdre of the Sorrows*. Another collaborator in the Irish movement had also taken up the story. AE (George William Russell, 1867–1935) had written his *Deirdre* (1902) for the group from which the National Theatre was formed. A writer of somewhat mistily visionary poetry, AE had a unique position in Dublin life as literary mentor and encourager of the young.
The next milestone in the literary history of the Abbey Theatre was the work of Sean O'Casey (1880–1964) which followed after the war. *Juno and the Paycock* was put on in 1924. The action takes place in a Dublin tenement against the background of the civil war between Free Staters and republicans in 1922. Juno Boyle's practicality and fortitude in hardship is set against her husband's showy thriftlessness and drunkenness (he is the 'Paycock'). Apprised of a surprise bequest, lazy 'Captain' Boyle spends freely and piles up debts. When the will in question is discovered to be worthless, bailiffs cart the furniture away. By this time daughter Mary is pregnant and her schoolmaster lover has left her. Finally son John, one-armed and neurotic after action with the republicans, is shot by his own comrades for

informing. The play is a rich tapestry of action and emotion, for the sharp contrasts between human worth and worthlessness in confronting disaster comprehend both the humorous and the tragic. O'Casey was brought up in the Dublin slums and the dialogue has vitality and pathos. If 'Captain' Boyle, with his crony, Joxer, becomes an almost pantomimic symbol of empty show and self-deception, wasting all he lays hands on, Juno is the archetype of suffering Irish womanhood, remembering at the end that a casualty is not 'a Diehard or a Stater, but only a poor dead son', and praying, 'Sacred heart o' Jesus, take away our hearts o' stone, and give us hearts o' flesh! Take away this murdherin' hate, an' give us Thine own eternal love.'

The Plough and the Stars (1926) shows even more explicitly the cost of fanatical nationalism in the violence it engenders. The background is the 1916 rising. We see men moved to bloodshed by patriotic rhetoric which appeals more to vanity than to good sense, and the consequent suffering, endured by the women especially, is agonizing. Since O'Casey made verbatim use of the oratory of Pearse with ironic purpose (intensifying its extravagance), it is not surprising that there was a disturbance at the first performance and civic guards had to be called in to carry protesting women off the stage. O'Casey's relationship with the Abbey Theatre came to an unhappy end in 1928 when Yeats turned down his more expressionist play, *The Silver Tassie,* a harrowing exposure of the damage trench warfare in France did to men's hope and happiness. The play experiments with nonnaturalistic dialogue and presentation. It is odd perhaps that there was no play from an English dramatist who had served in the war to match *The Silver Tassie,* and that the war's most reverberating impact on Britain's theatre-going public was to be made by R.C.Sherriff's (1896–1975) highly sentimental play *Journey's End* (1929), in which a young subaltern arrives at the front to serve under a captain he has idolized at school, and to find him broken by battle and drink. After O'Casey's disappointment over *The Silver Tassie* he became an exile in England. Later plays tended to be overlaid with symbolism for propaganda purposes (often Marxist—but a Marxism increasingly brought into relationship with Christianity), but he returned to a more authentic personal subject *in Red Roses for Me* (1943), where the setting is once more Dublin. Autobiographical memories are exploited and the hero seems to be a self-portrait. Of the six books of autobiography with which O'Casey occupied his later years it is generally agreed that the fourth, *Inishfallen, Fare Thee Well* (1949), covering the years 1917 to 1926, is the most interesting, though its

predecessor, *Drums under the Windows* (1945), deals with the crucial period from 1906 to 1916—and the chapter 'Song of a Shift' makes great sport of the fuss over Synge's *Playboy*.

There were those who claimed that what O'Casey did for divided Dublin had already been done for divided Belfast by the Ulster dramatist St John Ervine (1883–1971). Certainly his early plays such as *Mixed Marriage* (1911) and *The Orangeman* (1914) show the tragic cost of sectarian bigotry, while *John Ferguson* (1915) is a tragedy of Job-like patience under suffering endured by a Godfearing Ulster Protestant. Ervine managed the Abbey Theatre briefly before going to serve and be wounded in the First World War, but in the inter-war years he had successes on the London stage in such domestic problem plays as *The First Mrs Fraser* (1929).

Although Ervine wrote some fiction he was, like O'Casey and like Shaw, pre-eminently a dramatist; but many of the playwrights of the inter-war period were either primarily novelists or primarily poets and, to a certain extent, the struggle between naturalistic drama and more stylized drama represents the interplay of novelist-dramatist with poet-dramatist. Not that poets always write their plays in verse.

John Drinkwater (1882–1937) used prose for his chronicle play *Abraham Lincoln* (1918) and for *Oliver Cromwell* (1921), though the action of the former is periodically interrupted by two Chroniclers who philosophize in sometimes turgid verse. There is a milk-andwater quality about these plays both in substance and in style. John Masefield (1878–1967) also used prose for his historical play, *The Tragedy of Pompey the Great* (1910), but the dialogue, intended no doubt to be taut, vigorous and sinewy, in fact jerks and spurts abruptly and unrhythmically. Masefield used verse for *Good Friday* (1916) and *The Trial of Jesus* (1925), but it does not achieve sustained dramatic vitality. Nevertheless the efforts made by Masefield were part of the wider movement towards reviving poetic drama which Yeats himself initiated and to which Gordon Bottomley (1874–1948) contributed in such plays as *Lear's Wife* (1915) and *Gruach* (1921). Indeed Bottomley's increasing interest in the Celtic movement and his dramatization of legendary material gave him in the eyes of some critics the status of a Scots Yeats. Lascelles Abercrombie (1881–1938) also contributed verse plays to the same movement.

More accomplished theatrically are the more naturalistic comedies of Somerset Maugham (1874–1965), which recapture something of the flavour of Oscar Wilde's. In *Our Betters* (1923) the target is American women who buy their way into European aristocracy by marriage, and

the husbands who allow themselves to be purchased. In this, and in *The Circle* (1921), a drawing-room comedy of middleclass relationships, there is the psychological sharpness one expects from so observant a novelist. In Maugham's plays generally the wit and verve are spiced with a controlled cynicism, and one feels that he keeps his eye on the box office. Maugham the dramatist has been called the link between Wilde and Noël Coward (1899–1973), author of such polished, if brittle, domestic comedies as *Private Lives* (1930) and *Blithe Spirit* (1941), whose talent for keeping the pot of verbal flippancy at simmering point can be entertaining in short doses. His work raises the question whether flippancy can be labelled 'satire' in the absence of a morally anchored viewpoint. Another novelist who turned playwright was J.B.Priestley (1894–). He proved his skill in light domestic comedy (*When We Are Married,* 1938) and experimented with more thoughtful themes in *Johnson over Jordan* (1939), in which a man is followed into his experience after death, and in the 'Time' plays. In *Dangerous Corner* (1932) the opening of the first act is repeated in summary at the end of Act III, but the dangerous corner (a remark which led to devastating revelations) is this time smoothly negotiated. In *Time and the Conways* (1937) the lives of the Conways leap forward twenty years in Act II, to return in Act III to the 'present' of 1919. *I Have Been Here Before is* the third of the 'Time' plays. Priestley is not a profound thinker, but his directness of idiom and his steady competence as a craftsman have ensured his appeal to the middlebrow public.

James Bridie (the name is a pseudonym for O.H.Mavor, 1888–1951), the Glasgow writer, achieved a remarkable feat in his biblical plays, *Tobias and the Angel* (1930) and (to a lesser extent) *Jonah and the Whale* (1932), for he managed to attain modernity, vigour and naturalness without sacrifice of dignity and without whittling away the supernatural element or the religious thrust. But a large part of Bridie's output consisted of 'plays of ideas', like *Mr Bolfry* (1943) in which the Devil puts in an appearance at a Scottish manse where the minister's visitors are disputing their host's theology. Another Scot who went in for pseudonyms, Elizabeth Mackintosh (1897–1952), had a brilliant London success when she wrote *Richard of Bordeaux* (1933) under the name 'Gordon Daviot'. (She was also known in the field of detective fiction as Josephine Tey). This rewriting of the story of Richard II has a certain freshness (people like to hear Shakespeare's most poetically eloquent monarch saying 'Cheer up' and 'Pull yourself together'), and the sure-fire simplisticities of inter-

war psychological currency were not yet recognized as clichés except by the perceptive. Middlebrow historical chronicle, which dresses up fashionable psychological formulas in period costume, recurs on the boards from time to time, and *Richard of Bordeaux* has easily assimilable post-war successors in *Luther* (1961) by John Osborne, in *A Man for all Seasons* (1960), about Sir Thomas More, by Robert Bolt (1924–), and in *The Royal Hunt of the Sun* (1964), about Pizarro and the conquest of Peru, by Peter Shaffer (1926–). A contemporary success very different in motive and content was the 1934 dramatic version of *Love on the Dole,* the novel by Walter Greenwood (1903–74) who brought the realities of unemployment in the industrial north before the public in this and other books, like *His Worship the Mayor* (1934). The impact of Greenwood's unsparing gloom and satirical bluntness was uncomfortable. Greenwood's imaginative range was limited, but his Lancashire upbringing gave him first-hand knowledge of the conditions he represented.

When *Murder in the Cathedral* was commissioned for the Canterbury Festival in 1935, T.S.Eliot (1888–1965) initiated a resurgence of poetic drama. His study of the martyrdom of St Thomas a Becket at the instigation of Henry II is more than a 'historical' play in that Thomas's temptation and sacrifice are made symptomatic of every man's vocation to surrender to the divine will. The struggle between Church and state reflects the conflict between the spiritual and the temporal that threads its way through all human experience. The pattern of movement through trial and suffering to sanctity is paralleled with the pattern of Christ's atonement and resurrection, with the seasonal pattern of movement through the death of winter to the birth of spring, and even with the sexual pattern of human creativity whereby woman 'dies' in love to man in order to give birth. This is but to touch the fringe of the poetic substance of a profound play. In terms of theatrical history, one notes the influence of Greek tragedy, of *Samson Agonistes,* and of the medieval morality. Moreover the liturgical element in text and staging powerfully authenticates the religious content.

Whether Eliot's later plays fulfil the promise of this masterpiece is arguable. More concessions are made to current theatrical modes in *The Family Reunion* (1939). The members of the Monchensey family have psychological histories; but the curse (recurrently characterized in a vision of the Eumenides) resting on Harry, Lord Monchensey, seems to break out of the framework of pathological cause and effect devised to contain it. The burden of inherited guilt carries its religious

implications, and indeed the more one examines the text of this play at the points where it plainly echoes Eliot's other poetry, the more crossreference suggests allegorical readings of themes and situations. The same must be said of Eliot's later plays, *The Cocktail Party* (1949), *The Confidential Clerk* (1953) and *The Elder Statesman.* The verse moves acceleratingly towards the undoctored rhythms of conversation: surface obviousness of substance is ever more suspiciously 'obvious'; religious implications are conveyed in light overtones and half-pressed ambiguities (the significance of the 'Family' in *The Family Reunion* or of the 'Party' in *The Cocktail Party*), and underscored by acts of spiritual commitment (like Celia's martyrdom in *The Cocktail Party*). The threatening estrangement between Edward and his wife, Lavinia, in *The Cocktail Party* is averted by the guidance and wisdom of the unidentified stranger (Sir Henry Harcourt-Reilly): just so there are disjointed human relationships that divine assistance can put right at a price. *The Confidential Clerk* eschews even this degree of explicable symbolism. It is at first sight a farce of labyrinthinally complex mysteries and counter-mysteries over the identities of illegitimate offspring and over the obligations of parents whose interchangeability of parenthood explores an entertaining sequence of permutations. But the histories of parents and offspring alike, together with their changing uncertainties as the action develops, present a parable on the themes of human vocation, the need for self-knowledge, for openness of understanding, and for commitment of the will: these themes have their force at the level of natural human relationships and of the socalled search for identity; but they carry too their implications for the spiritual life.

A good deal of poetic drama followed in the wake of *Murder in the Cathedral.* Among the better religious plays of the forties was *The Old Man of the Mountains* (1946) by Norman Nicholson. It plants the story of Elijah firmly in the Cumberland area. The dialogue (verse and prose) is wiry and disciplined, the blending of Cumbrian and Old Testament interests fruity and alive. Dorothy Sayers (1893–1957) played her part in the movement with *The Zeal of thy House* (1937) (also written for Canterbury), a play dealing with events at the time of the cathedral's construction and managing to move with some dramatic power while yet exploring the theme of divine and human creativity. Miss Sayers's work for radio, *The Man Born to be King* (1941), is a prose play cycle on the life of Christ, a sequence of twelve episodes covering events from the Nativity to the Resurrection in a

presentation that is at once direct, in period, yet attuned to the modern mind. There is more literary than theatrical artistry in the verse plays of Charles Williams (1886– 1945). The poetry often lacks the quality of lending itself naturally to the speaking tongue and the listening ear. There are passages in the historical play, *Cranmer,* that are at once metaphysically fascinating and theatrically unspeakable (verse given to the Skeleton, for instance). Ronald Duncan experimented interestingly with masque and antimasque in *This Way to the Tomb* (1946), the masque presenting a fourteenth-century martyrdom, the antimasque revisiting the scene with television crew alert for the saint's anniversary revisitation. The Nativity play by Anne Ridler, *The Shadow Factory* (1946), made a distinctly contemporary impact with its setting in 'a factory, a year or two after the last war'.

After Eliot, Christopher Fry (1907–) gave the biggest stimulus to poetic drama. His pre-war play, *The Boy with a Cart* (1939), chronicles the life of a Cornish saint who has lost his father and who pushes his mother about in a cart until he finds a place to fulfil his aim and build a church. The poetry extends the implications of persistent faith and church-building. *A Phoenix Too Frequent* (1946) retells Petronius's story of a young widow who is religiously resolute on starving herself in the tomb of her husband till a young soldier reasserts for her the power of light and life. The contrast between life and love on the one hand, and sophisticated disillusionment on the other, is the theme of *The Lady's not for Burning* (1949), the play which established Fry with the theatrical public. The setting is medieval. Thomas Mendip is determined to be hanged for murder—though there has been no crime. What restores his resolve to live and his sense of purpose is the encounter with a young woman who has been seized on a charge of witchcraft and is to be burnt.

The springlike mood of *The Lady's not for Burning* is in contrast with the autumnal mood of *Venus Observed* (1950), a second 'comedy of seasons'. The Duke of Altair is a middle-aged widower determined to put an end to a lifetime's philandering by marrying one of his many past sweethearts. The aid of his son Edgar is invited for the selection of his new 'mother'. Three contestants are due, the Venus, Juno and Minerva of the competition. The surprise arrival of one, Perpetua, focuses the Duke's attention elsewhere and for the first time puts son in active rivalry with father. There is more individuality in the psychological studies in this play than in its predecessors. The poetry too, sometimes excessively fluent at the cost of dramatic thrust in the earlier plays, is generally more disciplined, and its metaphorical

overtones contribute to the fashioning of a coherent symbolic fabric. If the Duke is seeking a point of repose and stability for desires and dreams endlessly teased but unsatisfied by the teeming world of beautiful women, so all men are in search of that eternal rootedness that Perpetua offers. The symbolic searching of the heavens, through a 'phallic' telescope, is delicately linked with the Duke's probings of other would-be 'heavens'. His observatory is equipped with a bed and serves a double purpose. All in all the detailed symbolic pattern, at which we have hinted, is a rich and relevant one. Though *The Firstborn* (1946) is a sombre study of Moses and his vocation at the time of the Egyptian plagues, and *A Sleep of Prisoners* (1951), an anti-war play, is tragic in tone, Fry must be accounted a spokesman for wonder, buoyancy and gaiety, for acceptance and delight, at a time when more fashionable attitudes pointed in the opposite direction.

The work of Samuel Beckett might be cited in contrast. Beckett (1906–) has confessed his special concern with human impotence. His early discipleship of Joyce left him, artistically, with a vast overshadowing literary achievement against which he must assert himself. He had to break away from the Joycean abundance and the Joycean omniscience, and he sought out the extreme limits of economy, ignorance and inhibition. From the packed world of *Ulysses* he turned to create the bare world of *Waiting for Godot* (1954). Beckett takes away man's property, family, place in society, function in society, and then begins to strip him of the normal human equipment (legs and mobility, for instance). At the same time his characters go through the motions of reasoning and planning and use the vocabulary of experiencing the emotions of failure and success. It is not just that Estragon and Vladimir, the two tramps in *Waiting for Godot,* have no home and no locale; but they seem unaware that they have no home and locale. They do not expect the normally expectable. Just as their continuing bewilderment and uncertainty is punctuated by moments of comic confidence, so, in the case of Pozzo, the pantomimic representative of power and possessions, continuing confidence and assurance are punctuated by moments in which the sense of precariousness intrudes. The servitude of his roped, human beast of burden, Lucky, is grotesquely unreal and idiotic, yet the idiocy is the basis of Pozzo's 'security'. Moreover Pozzo's assurance is related to a vocabulary that presupposes a civilization and a placing in it: such a vocabulary is irrelevant in the 'world' which the idiom of the tramps has established and into which Pozzo intrudes.

Man's identity, his limitations and his place in the universe are at issue in Beckett's plays. In *Happy Days* (1961) we find a woman, Winnie, buried waist-deep in sand against a background that suggests the aftermath of an atomic holocaust. Her companion, Willie, is barely visible behind the mound. The conversation of the two (it is mostly monologue by Winnie) is outrageously out of keeping with their situation. Our familiar postures and verbal habits, the standard poses of human wisdom and consolation, are subjected to a ruthless scrutiny in being adopted by the half-buried woman. The counters of contemporary discourse— pretentious and unpretentious—are employed in a situation of impotence and near total negation in which they bear the weight of sheer tragedy and comedy at the same time. *Krapp's Last Tape* (1958) and *Endgame* (1958) continue the same preoccupations, the latter with Nagg and Nell in dustbins and their blind son chair-bound. Against paralysis and powerlessness of this kind Beckett brilliantly deploys a dialogue that is at once tragically and farcically at loggerheads with the immediate. It moves to tears and laughter, yet compassion persists through nightmares of negation and absurdity.

It was not Beckett, however, but John Osborne (1929–) who dealt the final death blow to the short-lived revival of poetic drama. His *Look Back in Anger* (1956) marked the beginning of a theatrical era. In the hero, Jimmy Porter, he projected the 'angry young man' whose rebelliousness and disillusionment shout themselves hoarse with more fluency than cogency. With a university education behind him, Jimmy is running a sweet-stall. He has married the daughter of a well-to-do army officer whose class he volubly condemns. The theme of irrational alienation and estrangement assumed by young beneficiaries of postwar social and educational advance touched a sore nerve and at the same time won sympathetic applause. A seemingly more refreshing aspect of Osborne's achievement was its effectiveness in undermining the continuing tradition of well-made West End plays like those of Terence Rattigan (1911–77) whose restrained dialogue and unadventurous themes lulled audiences into cosy after-dinner somnolence.

A breath of fresh air from Ireland hit London audiences at the same time when Brendan Behan (1923–64) gave an inside picture of prison life in *The Quare Fellow* (1956). The play is rich in ripe dialogue and laced with the grim ironic humour of one who knew Mountjoy Gaol from the inside as an IRA revolutionary, and Behan's later play, *The Hostage* (1959), has great sport over the predicament of an English

soldier held captive in a Dublin brothel by the IRA. The action is punctuated by songs, dances and fights. Belly-laughs at the verbal exchanges compensate for the lack of finesse in structure and characterization, and, over against the reality of the bloodshed, make their point. The year 1959 also saw the first production of *Serjeant Musgrave's Dance* by John Arden (1930–). This exercise in Brechtian epic is cast in chronicle form. The serjeant and three privates come to a mining town in the middle of a strike. Deserters from a nineteenth-century colonial war, they have brought the corpse of a local boy back from battle. Musgrave's purpose is to show the locals what war really is, charge them with complicity and turn his guns on them. But dragoons intervene in the nick of time. Arden's 'parable' is strong neither in dramatic thrust nor moral coherence. He is an indefatigable experimenter and has subsequently tried his hand at various theatrical forms, but he is limited by his suspicion of the fixed dramatic text and the literary craftsmanship it calls for. It is perhaps ironic that, by contrast, the most sensitive literary mind in the theatre of the 1950s, John Whiting (1917–63), should conversely have lacked a sure sense of theatre, though his last play, *The Devils* (1961), about demonic possession among seventeenth-century nuns, gave him his one box-office success.

The most significant of the new voices in the theatre of the late 1950s turned out to be that of Harold Pinter (1930–). *The Birthday Party* (1958), *The Caretaker* (1959) and one-act plays such as *The Dumb Waiter* (1960) quickly established him as master of a new conversational tonality in which the phrases and rhythms of day-today talk are reproduced with uncanny fidelity; yet so planted that their very ordinariness, their reiteration and their illogicality carry overtones of menace mingled with humour. The label 'comedy of menace' has been used to categorize Pinter's work. It does justice to the suggestively oppressive uncertainties that overhang his sojourners in tenements and basements. In *The Birthday Party,* when two hearty guests descend upon the seaside boarding-house to victimize poor Stanley, the audience is not sure how deep in criminality, brutality or insanity various characters may be, what sinister recoil from the past or what threat from the future it is that shadows the acridly comic celebrations and cross-examinations. The basis of menace and humour alike is the inadequacy of communication, captured in many a deft inconsequentiality:

MEG: That boy should be up. He's late for his breakfast.

PETEY: There isn't any breakfast.
MEG: Yes, but he doesn't know that.

In *The Caretaker* Aston, the tenant of a junk-laden room in a derelict London house, brings a tramp home to whom his brother Mick offers a job as caretaker. The theme of intrusion and possible supplantation is rendered all the more tenuously teasing by the fact that all three characters operate mentally at levels of subnormality at which communication can be neither meaningful nor sustained. Pinter's extraordinary gift is to be able to assemble characteristic living utterances of men and women minimally or even inadequately equipped with intelligence and powers of articulation, and to plant them so tellingly that the superficially flat idioms ring aloud with overtones of threat or fear, or with the uncanniness of excruciatingly unresolved ambiguity. Outstanding among the playwrights of what was called the 'New Drama', Pinter has consolidated his reputation on sheer literary grounds in plays for television such as *Tea Party* (1965) and *The Basement* (1967) and in stage plays such as *No Man's Land* (1975) and *Betrayal* (1978). The capacity for seizing on the accents of living conversation by men and women of limited articulacy and for transmuting it into dialogue loaded with resonances that discomfit and mystify, and yet also amuse, is the hallmark of a dramatist who expressly denies the right of an audience to expect the kind of verification of fact and motive which is lacking for the characters themselves. The fitfulness of realized human contact is a fact of life which the theatre cannot justly by-pass.

Among other dramatists who made their names with early works in the 1950s—yet without laying the foundations of a sustained literary career such as Pinter was to enjoy—mention should be made of Arnold Wesker (1932–) whose *Chicken Soup and Barley* (1958) chronicles the history of a Jewish, communist household in East London from the days of Mosley's fascist marches in 1936 to those of the Hungarian uprising of twenty years later; and Shelagh Delaney (1939–) whose *A Taste of Honey* (1958) put Salford working-class home life on the stage with winningly authentic conviction. About the same time John Mortimer (1923–), a barrister, initiated a successful literary career when he brought off a brilliant ironic study of the gap between legal mind and living client in an interview between a condemned murderer and his counsel in *Dock Brief* (1958), while N.F.Simpson (1919–) adventured with more flamboyance than

subtlety into the exploitation of the Absurd in *A Resounding Tinkle* (1958).

The evidence of the 1960s and 1970s is that those dramatists who sought to downgrade the dramatic text and to turn theatrical experience into something closer to the experience of the fairground and more remote from the experience of reading a book went up a blind alley. A good play remains basically a collection of words, and the man or woman with the gift of words will always make the surest impact as dramatist. Beckett and Pinter are cases in point. So too is Tom Stoppard (1937–) whose rare verbal versatility is matched by sure theatrical dexterity. In *Rosencrantz and Guildenstern are Dead* (1966) the two undifferentiated stooges of Shakespeare's *Hamlet* are turned into displaced, bemused and aimless figures with a Beckettian penchant for backchat and logical enquiry. The collision between drama and life, logic and nonsense, is effected with a touch of pathos as well as of farce. In *Jumpers* (1972) the collision is between theory and reality, for a murder is committed in the house of a professor preoccupied philosophically with the nature of good and evil and the problem of value. *Travesties* (1974) makes hay of the fact that James Joyce was working on *Ulysses* in Zurich in 1918 while Lenin was concerned with more practical plans. The calls of art and of revolution are thus neatly juxtaposed. The historical point chosen is that when Joyce organized a production of Wilde's *The Importance of Being Earnest* involving a member of the British Consular staff in the part of Algernon. Nowhere is Stoppard's linguistic virtuosity more evident than in the pastiche of Wilde and the parody of *Ulysses. Night and Day* (1978) exposes Fleet Street attitudes when reporters go to cover a rebellion against a dictator in an African country. *On The Razzle* (1981), a hilariously farcical romp with scintillating dialogue, is an adaptation of a play by the nineteenth-century Viennese dramatist Johann Nestroy. Theatrical expertise very different in character emerges in *The Real Thing* (1982) in which Stoppard interweaves a real-life story of a playwright, his wife, his mistress and her husband, with scenes from the plays he has written in which the other three perform. The movement between mental, actual and theatrical levels of experience is subtly effected.

A real personal tragedy lay behind *A Day in the Death of Joe Egg* (1967) by Peter Nichols (1927–). He and his wife had to cope with a spastic daughter whose ten years of life were little more than that of a vegetable. On the stage Nichols shows how the daily anguish was distanced by recourse to sick humour, and his verbal adroitness makes

the impact a disturbingly powerful one. Of Nichols's later plays perhaps the most telling are *Chez Nous* (1974), which brings a trendy pediatrician, advocate in print of teenage sexual permissiveness, up against the consequences of this advocacy in his own family, and *Born in the Gardens* (1979) in which middle-aged offspring gather round their mother after the death of their father. Set in Nichols's native Bristol, the play recaptures something of the emotional validity of *A Day in the Death of Joe Egg.* A comparable trans-generational situation is explored more deeply in *In Celebration* (1969) by the Yorkshire dramatist, David Storey (1933–). Three sons of a miner come back home to celebrate the anniversary of their parents' wedding. The values and attitudes of the allegedly bettereducated and now middle-class sons are searchingly measured against those of their working-class origins. Storey had made his name as a dramatist with *The Restoration of Arnold Middleton* (1967), a lively and amusing study of a schoolmaster who, in order to relieve domestic tension, plays the hearty, flamboyant classroom performer in his own home to the point of actual mental collapse. Storey's preoccupation with mental unbalance emerges again in *Home* (1970) where the audience gradually learns that the aged people before them are residents in an asylum. Their halting dialogue is symptomatic of broken contact between the surface and substance of human life.

Storey was born in Wakefield, and so was David Mercer (1928–80) whose *After Haggerty* (1970) has an interesting thematic relationship with Storey's *In Celebration.* A retired train-driver from Yorkshire turns up to complicate the already complicated personal affairs of his son, Bernard Link, a drama critic. The concern with the triple dichotomies of the age gap, the education gap and the socialclass gap is here, however, a source of fun rather than of reflective unease. Similarly Mercer's study of an aberrant and eccentric clergyman, *Flint* (1970), derives its effectiveness from sparkling wit and epigram—a fount of humour which dried up in Mercer's later work. Another master of dramatic dialogue, Edward Bond (1934–), mines a vein of social indignation with ruthless thoroughness. The obscene murder of a baby by city thugs in *Saved* (1966) is intended as a comment on the violent character of a de-humanized and technologized society. *Lear* (1971) revises Shakespeare extravagantly but unconvincingly, while *Bingo* (1973) cuts Shakespeare's personal character in his later years cruelly down to size.

A third dramatist to have come, like Storey and Mercer, from West Yorkshire is Alan Bennett (1934–). He has a verbal force and fluency

which derive not only from the authentic exploitation of native idiom but also from the storage of a mind that is literary without being academic. Hence the large-scale study in *Getting On* (1971) of a Labour MP who has transmuted living thought and action into hollow rhetoric. *The Old Country* (1977), Bennet's portrayal of a Philby-style exile in Moscow who receives visitors from home is a study laden with subtleties, emotional and dialectical, while *Enjoy* (1980) presents a couple in the last back-toback house in Leeds, and makes a tremendous impact by brilliantly counterpointing their natural speech with the jargon of media men and social investigators.

The 1970s also brought to light a new quality in Irish drama. Irish dramatists have repeatedly put Irish problems before the London public, as was evidenced in the case of O'Casey in the interwar years and Behan in the 1950s. Indeed Denis Johnston (1901–) did so in both periods. His play *The Moon in the Yellow River* reached London in 1934 and *The Scythe and the Sunset in* 1959. The former goes back to the Free State-Republican conflict, the latter to the 1916 rising. Both are plays of substance by an unduly neglected writer. Brian Friel (1929–) made his first impact in 1964 with *Philadelphia, Here I Come,* which divides Gareth O'Donnell into two personae, public and private, in investigating the motives behind his decision to forsake Ireland for the United States. The subsequent play, *The Freedom of the City* (1973), has justly been acclaimed as the best stage product of the current troubles in Northern Ireland. Set in Londonderry in 1970, it fastens on three people who on the spur of the moment seek shelter in the town hall from troops who are dispersing a demonstration. Rumour inflates them into a large band of armed rebels, and they are shot when they leave the building. *Living Quarters* (1977) is a gravely intense and tragic study of a heroic Irish commandant at the peak of his career who has married a young wife. In these plays, and in *Translations* (1980), Friel seems to be building up a corpus of work such as only a major dramatist could produce. The plays of Friel's compatriot Hugh Leonard (pseudonym of John Keyes Byrne) (1926–), a writer of comparable percipience, have proved less readily exportable, perhaps because they are more sombre and more intensely confined in dimension. Leonard is a master of tension. *The Poker Session* (1963) keeps the audience on tenterhooks. Friends and family gather to meet a young man returning home from a lunatic asylum who has grudges to work off on some of them and whose state of mental health remains uncomfortably questionable. In *Da* (1973) a middle-aged man returns to Ireland to bury his foster-father and sort

out his effects, and the past is touchingly recreated around him, while in *A Life* (1979) a retiring Dublin civil servant with terminal cancer seeks to repair a broken friendship and thereby sets in motion an ironic unravelling of past emotional entanglements.

Twentieth-century poetry

Yeats and Eliot, Irish and American, are the greatest English poets of our age. William Butler Yeats (1865–1939) was born in Dublin into a Protestant family with a long association with County Sligo. In London he associated with Dowson and Lionel Johnson in the Rhymers' Club. Back in Ireland, he became a leader of the Celtic Revival. He was in love with Maud Gonne, the nationalist, and remained deeply attached to her in spite of her refusal of him. The practical passions of his life were poetry, Irish culture and occult literature. What he drew from Irish folk lore and myth, and from interest in theosophy, hermetic studies, magic and cyclic theories of history, has made some of his poetry fully comprehensible only with the aid of annotations, but his central human concerns, the vigour of his imagery, and the personality stamped on his style carry the reader unresisting through formidable substance.

The young Yeats, represented in earlier anthologies by 'I will arise and go now, and go to Innisfree' and by 'When you are old and grey and full of sleep', was a master of rhythmic patterns and colourful, suggestive imagery:

I would that we were, my beloved, white birds on the foam of the sea!
We tire of the flame of the meteor, before it can fade and flee;
And the flame of the blue star of twilight, hung low on the rim of the sky,
Has awaked in our hearts, my beloved, a sadness that may not die.
('The White Birds', *The Rose,* 1893)

The three poems cited above indulge moods of nostalgia, sadness and dreamy escapism that suggest inability to cope. The indulgence of

such moods, the use of Irish legend, and the entanglement of the immediately personal in the mythical by a rather staged selfprojection mark Yeats's poetry with a rich and mysterious suggestiveness. But the early reliance on appeals to vague yearnings and unease gives little indication of the immense poetic stature Yeats was to achieve as he

developed. The maturing was both a personal and a technical matter. The frustrated love of Maud Gonne played its part, and no doubt the sacrifice of life in the 1916 rising transformed Yeats's personal involvement with his fellow countrymen, as the lines in 'Easter 1916' indicate:

All changed, changed utterly:
A terrible beauty is born.

But the development was essentially that of a rigorous and ambitious craftsman who worked and reworked the drafts of his poems with persistent thoroughness.
The upshot was that Yeats made poetry his servant: it became a vessel that could hold whatever he wanted to put into it, instead of a garment which he donned to address the world. There was eventually no limit on the moods and topics, no restriction to specific poses, to particular vocabulary or idiom. Yeats strenuously added to the interests and accents that poetry could cope with till the whole man seemed to have all modes of utterance on the tip of his tongue. The passive melancholy and swooning music to be found among the exquisitely phrased lyrics of *The Wind Among the Reeds* (1899) were purged from his mature work. A sinewy strength is evident in *Responsibilities* (1914) and in *The Wild Swans at Coole* (1919) (Coole Park was Lady Gregory's home). Thereafter Yeats is a poet of sharp-edged complexity with a ruthless honesty and a reverberating striking-power:

What shall I do with this absurdity— O heart, O
troubled heart—this caricature, Decrepit age that has
been tied to me As to a dog's tail?
('The Tower', from *The Tower,* 1928)

His Platonic reverence for works of art as 'monuments of unageing intellect' inspires in him the cry to be gathered through his work 'into the artifice of eternity' in 'Sailing to Byzantium' *(The Tower)*.
The use of astonishingly varied rhythmic and verbal patterns that are daily to hand in living conversation is now achieved without any sense of strain and sustained without any flagging of vitality. In the work of no other modern poet do we get the same sense of a master

moving with consummate ease through all conceivable varieties of expression:

Now his wars on God begin;
At stroke of midnight God shall win.
('The Four Ages of Man' from
A Full Moon in March, 1935)

Yesterday he threatened my life.
I told him that nightly from six to seven I sat at this table, The blinds drawn up.
('Beautiful Lofty Things' from
Last Poems, 1936–9)

The crisp and the casual, the formal and the informal, are equally his natural utterance. It is the versatility of form that compels wonder at one moment; at the next it is the fervour and frankness of reflection. Poems such as 'A Prayer for my Daughter' (*Michael Robartes and the Dancer,* 1921), 'A Dialogue of Self and Soul' (*The Winding Stair and Other Poems,* 1933) and 'The Circus Animals' Desertion' (*Last Poems,* 1936–9) are as busy and alert as the best Metaphysical poetry. The last named looks back on the 'masterful images' of his early poety (the circus animals he put on show) from his now enforced reliance on 'the foul rag-and-bone shop of the heart'. In such work heart and brain move dynamically from line to line, and the reader is swept along by the current. With Yeats you are always in the company of an interesting and interested man.

A near contemporary whose fame has scarcely stood the test of time was Sir Henry Newbolt (1862–1938). His rollicking nautical verses, 'Drake's Drum' ('Drake he's in his hammock an' a thousand miles away'—one of the *Songs of the Fleet* aptly set to music by Sir Charles Stanford) and his melodramatic ballad, 'He Fell Among Thieves', out-kipling Kipling. (The murderous thieves condemn him to die at dawn in north-west India, but he pictures the 'gray little church' and 'the School Close' and faces it bravely.) 'Vitai Lampada' ('There's a breathless hush in the Close tonight') has become a national joke about the public schools ('Play up! Play up! and play the game!').

John Masefield (1878–1967), Bridges's successor as Laureate, was a true master of nautical bluster, as is evident from 'The Tarry Buccaneer' and 'A Ballad of John Silver':

We were schooner-rigged and rakish, with a long and lissome hull,
  And we flew the pretty colours of the cross-bones and the skull.

Both poems are from *Salt-Water Ballads* (1902). 'Sea-Fever' ('I must go down to the seas again') has the emotional spine that Yeats's 'Innisfree' lacks, while 'Cargoes' has the imaginative clarity that Bridges's 'A Passer-By' lacks. Masefield's easy fluency led him to narrative poetry. His vibrant tale, *The Everlasting Mercy* (1911), presents in the first person the evangelical conversion of Saul Kane from prize-fighting, drink and debauchery. Racy idiom and octosyllabics blend exhilaratingly:

From '61 to '67
I lived in disbelief of heaven;
I drunk, I fought, I poached, I whored, I did despite
unto the Lord.

First to be recognized among the war poets of 1914 to 1918 was Rupert Brooke (1887–1915), though in fact he died so early in the struggle that little of his work was concerned with the war. Nevertheless his handsomeness of body and character, and his untimely death at Scyros, after leaving behind him at home the prophetic sonnet, 'The Soldier' ('If I should the, think only this of me'), made him a symbol of youth and promise heroically sacrificed at the call of country. The idolization of Brooke was justified by outbursts such as that of the sonnet, 'Peace' ('Now, God be thanked who has matched us with this hour'). But he was the poet of delicately mannered nostalgia for idealized Englishness (unofficial roses and honey for tea) in 'Grantchester', and the eulogist of the simplest sensuous delights (white plates ringed with blue lines and the rough male kiss of blankets) in 'The Great Lover'. The whimsical tendency is contained, the technical promise considerable.
Another young soldier who became a legend at his death was Julian Grenfell (1888–1915). His poem, 'Into Battle' ('The naked earth is warm with spring'), was published in *The Times* when he fell. It speaks nobly of the fighting man's calling, his zest and his readiness in the face of destiny. This, and Brooke's sonnet, and Laurence Binyon's (1869–1943) 'For the Fallen' ('They shall grow not old, as we that are left grow old') represent the traditional rhetoric of tribute

to heroism. But a different note was sounded as early as 1915 by Charles Hamilton Sorley who had once acclaimed young life as delightedly as Brooke in ‘The Song of the Ungirt Runners’, but who now wrote of the ‘millions of mouthless dead’, adding, ‘Say not soft things as other men have said.’ This was to be a more characteristic comment of English poetry on the slaughter of the trenches.
Siegfried Sassoon (1886–1967) saw to that. Sassoon’s prose works, *Memoirs of a Fox-Hunting Man* (1928) and *Memoirs of an Infantry Officer* (1930) reveal the well-to-do background of culture and sportsmanship from which Sassoon was pitchforked into the trenches. His reaction was to pitchfork the true vocabulary, implements and events of trench war into poetry. Sandbags and sludge, mud and blood, trench-boards, sodden buttocks and mats of hair, clotted head and plastering slime—in *Counter Attack* (1918) the reality of war was put in such terms on the printed page. We hear a hearty general’s morning greeting as men go up the line:

‘He’s a cheery old card,’ grunted Harry to Jack
As they slogged up to Arras with rifle and pack…. But he did
for them both with his plan of attack.

The soldier in the middle of it all has intonations both harsh and comic. The intolerable is made more tolerable by a grim humour that distances interminable discomfort ironically. Hear a soldier greeting the dawn after a night on guard duty in the rain (‘Stand To: Good Friday Morning’):

O Jesus, send me a wound today And I’ll believe in
Your bread and wine,
And get my bloody old sins washed white.

There is comparable frankness in the scenes from the front painted by Isaac Rosenberg (1890–1918); wheels lurching over sprawled dead and crunching their bones (‘Dead Man’s Dump’), dark air spurting with fire, a man’s brains splattered on a stretcher-bearer’s face. And, by contrast, there is a sudden incongruous moment of joy when the song of a lark drops from the sky instead of bombs (‘Returning we hear the larks’).

In 1917 Sassoon was wounded and sent home. (His attempt to get himself court-martialled as a pacifist unwilling to fight on was unsuccessful.) Another wounded poet, Wilfred Owen (1893–1918), was a patient in the same hospital and he sought Sassoon's company and advice. Both were to return to the front, Sassoon to survive, Owen to be killed a week before the Armistice. His 'Dulce et decorum est' directly attacks the 'lie' that it is fine to die for one's country, by picturing how a soldier dies when a gas attack overtakes men struggling back from the front line—'bent double, like old beggars under sacks', some with boots lost limping bloodshed. One man fails to get his gas mask on in time. We see him 'guttering, choking', then flung in a wagon, white eyes writhing, blood gurgling up from 'froth-corrupted lungs' at every jolt. 'I am not concerned with poetry,' Owen wrote, 'My subject is War, and the pity of War. The Poetry is in the pity.' But his poetic gifts were distinctive. The contrast presented in 'Greater Love' between sexual love and the soldier's sacrifice is sharp and profound. The red lips of the beloved are not as red as the 'stained stones kissed by the English dead'.

Your slender attitude
Trembles not exquisite like limbs knife-skewed.

Full warm-heartedness is seen in the hot, large 'hearts made great with shot'. This imaginative penetration in sustaining correspondences is evident time and time again in his work. In 'Strange Meeting' the poet has a visionary encounter with an enemy he has killed and who shares his sense of waste. The use of consonance and half-rhyme is impressive:

Courage was mine, and I had mystery, Wisdom was
mine, and I had mastery.

Sad as it is, Owen's story is less sad than that of the brilliantly promising young composer and poet Ivor Gurney (1890–1937), who was wounded on the Somme, gassed at Passchendaele, then finally discharged with 'shell-shock', and ultimately ended his days in a mental asylum, still writing poems of unaffected directness and often of searing pathos on his early Gloucestershire days and his experiences of the Western Front.

Edmund Blunden (1896–1974) edited *Poems of Ivor Gurney* (1954) and prefixed a memoir. Blunden's powerful prose reminiscences of

service, *Undertones of War* (1928), included some poems. His affinities are with those who have observantly and lovingly done justice in verse to the detailed beauty of the country and its life, as well as with those who captured tense and chilling moments of action on the battlefield. Delicately he describes a barn with its rain-sunken roof and its smell of apples stored in hay, or a pike in a pool quiveringly poised for slaughter ('The Barn' and 'The Pike'). These, and such gently etched exercises in fastidious pastoralism as 'Forefathers' and 'Almswomen', betray a consistent refinement of sensibility and technique. Blunden's delicacy is the delicacy of a strong mind at work with a disciplined pen.

It was in 1912, before the war began, that an anthology of contemporary verse, edited by Sir Edward Marsh (1872–1953) and called *Georgian Poetry,* was published and sold well. Four further volumes were published during the next ten years, and the term 'Georgian poets' has been applied to the contributors, though sometimes there has been a tendency to use the term pejoratively of the residue that remain when the poets of distinction have been creamed off. Thus smooth versification which lacks imaginative sturdiness and verbal intensity has coloured overmuch our concept of the 'Georgian'. Lascelles Abercrombie (1881– 1938) cultivated a vein of flaccid eloquence and Wilfrid Wilson Gibson (1878–1962), a vein of transparent simplicity. A movement which had initially sought emotional directness and verbal accessibility while fastening on homely subjects readily susceptible to 'poetic' treatment gathered on its peripheries numerous versifiers who wrestled neither with words nor experience but took well-trodden metrical and verbal paths towards mellifluousness and charm. Yet Harold Monro (1879– 1932), whose Poetry Bookshop published the first volume of *Georgian Poetry,* was a man of wide taste whose own best poems have rare firmness and honesty.

A characteristic Georgian voice is that of W.H.Davies (1871– 1940), a master of transparency. An air of spontaneity surrounds his unpretentious praise of the simple life and country delights. An engaging freshness makes for memorability in 'Leisure':

What is this life if, full of care,
We have no time to stand and stare,

and in 'Truly Great', where Davies lists the modest needs for happiness (garden without, books within, a convenient legacy and a gentle wife). Davies lived as a tramp and lost a leg while jumping a

freight train in America. His *Autobiography of a Super-Tramp* (1907) gained the attention merited by a hobo-turned-poet who had smoked his pipe in a station waiting-room just after his foot was severed. Another pure Georgian, Ralph Hodgson (1871–1962), was a less forthcoming personality than Davies, though he too was a lover of nature and he took the cause of animals to heart. 'The Bells of Heaven' neatly voices indignation against cruelty to circus animals, pit ponies and hunted hares, and does so with swinging memorability. When Hodgson introduced Edward Thomas (1878–1917) to the American poet Robert Frost, in 1914, he indirectly effected a historic transformation. For Thomas—another writer who was to fall in the war—came to poetry after years of work on books about the English countryside, English literature, and highly congenial writers such as Richard Jefferies and George Borrow. He fell under the personal and poetic influence of Frost, who forcibly confirmed what De la Mare, Gordon Bottomley and W.H.Hudson had already pointed out, that his prose showed him to be a true poet. Thus he turned poet in the last years of his life, and so distinguished a poet that his death on the Western Front seems like the most costly loss that the war inflicted on English literature. As a reviewer and critic Thomas had always censured poets for self-indulgent verbal connoisseurship and precious word-tasting. His own poetry made no concessions to the Georgian search for easy melodiousness or gracious sentiment. Rather he sought and achieved an intimate directness of communication while yet shaping his stanzas with the most strenuous intellectual and metrical discipline. Even so, Thomas's work is so sensitive and unforced that it conveys the impression of a writer who became a mature poet overnight. Lyrics such as 'The Owl', 'When First', 'Addlestrop' and 'No One Such as You' have a startling precision and compactness. Thomas can analyse a complex emotional mood with disarming candour, yet, having laid himself open, he withdraws unobtrusively, imposing nothing on the reader in the way of conviction or passion. Thomas's widow, Helen, tells her husband's story in
As It Was (1926) and *World Without End* (1931), the story of a poet whose spare genuineness has provided a model for many subsequent poets.

I have come to the borders of sleep,
The unfathomable deep
Forest where all must lose

Their way, however straight, Or winding,
soon or late; They cannot choose.
('Lights Out')

Another poet of the period whose reputation has steadily grown is Charlotte Mew (1869–1928), a woman whose troubled life eventually ended in suicide. The title poem of her first collection, *The Farmer's Bride* (1916), a masterpiece of compression, is the lament of a farmer whose frightened young wife is rejecting him sexually. Unaffected anguish and compassion seep through verses of deftly controlled fluency and tension:

She sleeps up in the attic there
Alone, poor maid, 'tis but a stair
Betwixt us. Oh! my God! the down
The soft young down of her, the brown,
The brown of her—her eyes, her hair, her hair!

More consonant with what the term 'Georgian' has come to imply is the work of James Elroy Flecker (1884–1915) who had posts in the foreign service in Constantinople and Beirut and who died of consumption. He is remembered for some well-tuned lyrics of nostalgia for England and of patriotic sentiment, and also for *The Golden Journey to Samarkand* (1913) and the verse play *Hassan* (1922). His pulsing seductive rhythms effectively evoke an atmosphere of oriental mystery and strangeness.

A master in the art of creating atmosphere alive with mystery and strangeness was Walter De la Mare (1873–1956). For over fifty years he poured out poetry and stories that won him the respect of fellow writers for the finish and precision of his artistry and the steady consistency of his imaginative power. De la Mare can readily conjure up an atmosphere of uncanny mystery. He can make eeriness palpable through images of spell-binding suggestiveness. In 'The Listeners' a Traveller knocks on a moonlit door and calls, 'Is anyone there?', to receive no reply, and to shout, 'Tell them I came…That I kept my word', before riding away into silence. That is all. But a tremulous awareness is evoked of meaning undisclosed and momentous, of strange happenings and stranger beings. The technique depends on negatives as well as positives, on what is not said and on what is not denied. No one comes down to the Traveller. No one leans out. No

one stirs. It depends too on the clarity of the images— a bird flying up out of a turret, the horse champing in the quiet, its hoofs finally plunging into silence. De la Mare's poetry is poetry of events and experiences uninterpreted. He is much concerned with what is not understandable, not known:

Oh, no man knows
Through what wild centuries Roves back the rose.
('All that's Past')

He is concerned with what is not cleared up, not finished ('He said no more that sailor man…', 'The Englishman'). His 'meaning' is not separable from its utterance. His mode of expression functions like the character of Martha who used to 'tell us her stories/In the hazel glen':

Her voice and her narrow chin,
Her grave small lovely head, Seemed half the
meaning Of the words she said.
('Martha')

D.H.Lawrence (1885–1930) is a poet of different breed. There is no lack of opinionated assertion in poems that begin 'There is no point in work/unless it absorbs you' ('Work') or 'How beastly the bourgeois is'. The much valued immediacy of impact, whether it be a proposition or an experience of the natural world that is laid before you, precludes all holding back. Lawrence strives for the fullest disclosure. In doing so he moves from stanzaic verse to free verse, and he seems to bind all rules, forms and modes of expression in his service in recapturing the full sensuous and emotional flavour of an encounter with a snake, a humming-bird or a mountain lion ('Snake', 'Humming-Bird', 'Mountain Lion'), in reproducing what is stirred in thought and mood by the sight of gentians in a house or by the bite of a mosquito ('Bavarian Gentians' and 'The Mosquito').

Among other writers born in the 1880s and 1890s were the Sitwells—Edith (1887–1964), her brother Osbert (1892–1969), who wrote a lively five-volume autobiography, beginning with *Left Hand*! *Right Hand*! (1944), and her brother Sacheverell (1897–), prolific in both verse and prose. Edith was a poet of cultivated technical sensitivity whose total output tells a story of development through four distinct

phases of poethood. She began by outraging sobriety and decorum with the flashily adventurous verbal pyrotechnics of *Façade* (1922). Then she moved to romantic evocation of a transfigured childhood world in *The Sleeping Beauty* (1929), alchemizing nostalgic memories into the stuff of fairy tale. In her third phase she produced her 'Waste Land', *Gold Coast Customs* (1929), a poem which surveyed the inter-war London scene of slum squalor and society parties in terms of the savage combination of bloodshed and orgy in the African jungle. And in phase four, now a Roman Catholic, she became a prophetic commentator on the human scene during and after the Second World War. The celebrated poem 'Still Falls the Rain' parallels the incendiary downpour of a London airraid with the saving rain of blood from the cross.

Robert Graves (1895–) made himself known to a huge reading public by his fictional reconstructions of first-century Roman history in *I Claudius* (1934) and *Claudius the God* (1934). Graves's poetry is carefully structured rumination. There is no sense of a cultured past (as in Eliot) or of mysteries half glimpsed (as in De la Mare). Indeed there seems to be a conscious depreciation of anything that might add significance to the locked-in events of the individual's temporal experience ('To evoke posterity/Is to weep on your own grave'). The poetic voice of Edwin Muir (1887–1959) is more prophetic and evocative. Muir came of an Orkney farming family which was driven by poverty to Glasgow when he was 14. Scarred by bereavements and privation, he produced a series of volumes such as *The Narrow Place* (1943), *The Voyage* (1946) and *The Labyrinth* (1949) in which he expressed his own experience of loss and exile by recourse to archetypal imagery of Christian revelation and classical myth. The poetic imagination transfigures the mystery of his personal pilgrimage in parable. A fellow Scotsman of more tranquil temperament, Andrew Young (1885–1973), a naturalist and eventually a canon of Chichester Cathedral, was a poet who could compress acutely observed impressions of the natural world into concise and thoughtful lines, often strong in sustained metaphorical elaboration, as is the picture of the crab ('The Dead Crab') with its 'well-knit cotearmure', and legs with 'plated joints' ending in 'stiletto points':

I cannot think this creature died
By storm or fish or sea-fowl harmed
Walking the sea so heavily armed; Or does it
make for death to be Oneself a living armoury?

A third Scot, Hugh MacDiarmid (properly C.M.Grieve) (1892–1978), was a more volcanic spirit than either. A man who hated England and much of what passes for 'Scotland' in the minds of readers and tourists, he embraced communism and Scottish nationalism, and looked for a Celtic revolution against English economic and cultural tyranny. MacDiarmid's use of a specially doctored Scottish vernacular, crucially different from Burns's in Scottish eyes, but less obviously so to the Sassenach, makes it difficult for English readers to get the natural feel of what is no doubt some of his best work. But MacDiarmid used standard English too. In his later work he is explosively discursive, especially when he lets fly at what he hates. The lash of his tongue is scathing.

It was Thomas Stearns Eliot (1888–1965) who brought about the most astonishing literary revolution of the age. The publication of *Prufrock and Other Observations* (1917), *Poems* (1919) and *The Waste Land* (1922) gave a totally new direction to English poetry. Eliot broke decisively with the conventionalized poeticism of the Georgians, with their preference for ready-made 'beauty' in topic and vocabulary, with their evasion in subject matter of the stuff of contemporary urban life in its prosaic, vulgar and squalid aspects. Indeed he found in living current usage the verbal vehicle for fixing with uncanny precision the worried mind's response to a world of tea cups and coffee spoons and white arms in the lamplight on the one hand, and a world of hair in paper curlers and yellow-soled feet clasped in dirty hands on the other. It is also the world of guttering street lamps, of 'yellow fog that rubs its back upon the window panes', of the 'smell of steak in passageways', of girls who fornicate in tenement flats, or on Margate sands, or in punts on the Thames, and of working-class wives who chatter about aborting pills in London pubs. Eliot put contemporary London life and scenery squarely before his readers:

Smells of chestnuts in the streets,
And female smells in shuttered rooms, And cigarettes in corridors
And cocktail smells in bars.

('Rhapsody on a Windy Night')

He found the appropriate images and cadences for toning up his presentation to the maximum in terms of verbal force and impact by using the devices of seventeenth-century Metaphysical poetry

alongside those of his own age. And he was judicious in having recourse to the remains of a rich literary inheritance that are part of the mental furniture of educated modern man. Eliot brilliantly exploited the striking power of recourse to the past ('Sweet Thames, run softly till I end my song') whether for sheer illumination of the present, for violent contrast with it, or for ironic commentary upon it. If Eliot is the greatest English poet of his age it is not just because he fashioned a distinctive and individual utterance to be at his service for the most diverse needs (Yeats too did that), but because he employed it to produce masterpieces. Eliot, like Beckett, is post-Joycean. The enrichment of meaning by amplification, overtone and frequent crossreference is pushed to an extreme stage in Joyce's *Ulysses*. We have spoken of Beckett's reaction against Joycean abundance. Eliot's reaction was not to strip down the imagery of life to bare equations ('Let immersion in a sand-dune equal human impotence'), but to preserve amplification alongside economy by condensing the verbal machinery of amplification. Joyce gradually builds up a series of correspondences to establish parallels between Stephen Dedalus and Hamlet *(Ulysses)*. Eliot makes use of key phrases ('Those are pearls that were his eyes' and 'The chair she sat in, like a burnished throne…', *The Waste Land,* 'And faded on the blowing of the horn', 'Little Gidding') to echo unforgettable moments crucial to the dramatic patterns of *The Tempest, Antony and Cleopatra* and *Hamlet* respectively. Such a practice of allusiveness enables a hundred lines to carry the weight of meaning most poets would convey in five or ten times that number. And of course the allusiveness is exploited much more briefly and intensively than in the above quotations. Moreover double allusiveness can complicate the practice, adding multiple dimensions to connotation.

Eliot's multidimensionalism is based partly on internal, partly on external cross-reference. Internally the poet uses, say, the word 'rock' repeatedly to carry the religious connotation of Christ or the Church *(The Rock)*. Then usages of the word elsewhere, ostensibly in natural description or arid incantation ('The Dry Salvages' or *The Waste Land,* v), may sound overtones from outside the particular context to add connotative enrichment.

Multidimensionalism based on external cross-reference is perhaps a more difficult matter to pin down. We may cite a single instance of the difficulty. In 'The Fire Sermon' *(The Waste Land),* the fire we pray to be plucked from is the fire of lust and greed, the fire of Hell. There is a cold blast at our backs in Hell. In it we hear the 'rattle of

the bones' which is at once macabre and skeletonic and also hints at dancing with bones, as the following image of the grinning face indicates ('The rattle of the bones, and chuckle spread from ear to ear'). 'Chuckle' is the giveaway word. One does not *see* a chuckle; one hears it. What spreads from ear to ear (cf. 'year to year', nine lines later), as everyone who has sung hymns or psalms knows, is the wind through the cornfield at harvesting (the harvesting of souls that brings them into Heaven)—the wind that 'Crosses the brown land, unheard' ('unheard' rings a loud connotative bell in *Ash Wednesday* and *Four Quartets*) but can set the valleys laughing and singing and turn a cornfield into a golden grin. Eliot has strengthened his picture of Hell (cosy as well as hot) by the paradox of the cold wind that also carries faint echoes of heavenly music and the garnering of saved souls.

Eliot's work is consummated in a *Paradiso* that gathers the scattered leaves of experience and literary memory into a patterned fabric, an epic in miniature *(Four Quartets)*. The work is preceded by a *Purgatorio (Ash Wednesday)* closely related to it in texture and thought. And *Ash Wednesday* is preceded by early work that has qualities of an *Inferno, The Waste Land,* to which it may well be that the rest of the early poems act as a commentary or an integrated accompaniment. Eliot's epigraph to *The Waste Land* suggests that he was as much interested in the image of the scattered leaves of the Sibyl's prophecy as he was in the gathered and folded leaves of rose and book and beatific vision at the end of 'Little Gidding'. The torn and scattered leaves are as appropriate to the representation of a dismembered civilization and a dismembered humanity as the flower and the musically patterned poem are to the representation of order recovered and restored. To sort and arrange the torn and scattered fragments is the reader's task-parallel to his real-life duty to recover and restore our fragmented culture and humanity.

Eliot earned respect as one of the greatest of our literary critics. The precision and authority of his judgements, not only on literature but on wider questions of culture, command attention; and of course his critical dicta help to illuminate his poetry. (See *The Sacred Wood,* 1920; *After Strange Gods,* 1934; and *Notes towards the Definition of Culture,* 1948.)

The American poet Ezra Pound (1885–1972), chief exponent of the 'imagist' movement that reacted against the sentimental rhetoric and metaphorical imprecision of late Victorian and Edwardian verse, was closely involved with Eliot in the poetic revolution he effected. Pound's major work, also of epic proportions, *Cantos* (1925 and

following), along with his earlier poetry, is that of a volcanic temperament allied to massive erudition and sharply responsive to the evils of twentieth-century commercialism, injustice and philistinism. Eliot dedicated *The Waste Land* to Pound as 'il miglior fabbro' (the better craftsman). The phrase is used by Dante of Arnaut Daniel, a twelfth-century poet. It not only pays tribute to Pound but, intentionally or otherwise, it parallels Eliot with Dante.

Another contemporary whom Eliot praised highly was David Jones (1895–1974). In his introduction to Jones's *In Parenthesis* (1937; but the introduction came later) Eliot speaks of Jones's 'affinity' with Joyce, Pound and himself. Though prose in form, *In Parenthesis* is poetic in quality. It is an epic of the 1914–18 war, whose literary and historic overtones extend its significance, bringing events into relation with those of Arthurian legend and Roman Britain in which Jones was especially interested. Here again, as Eliot observes, is work whose full dimensions of meaning are yet to be explored. Even more so is this the case with the more taxing work, *The Anathemata* (1952). Here the use of Welsh and Latin terms and motifs thickens the texture, and the influence of *Finnegans Wake* is evident in oral rhythm and verbal configuration.

Great critical claims have properly been made for Jones's masterpiece, yet the allusive density of his work inevitably limits his public. The same can be said of Basil Bunting (1900–), a Northumbrian poet and disciple of Ezra Pound, who made a major impact in his sixties with his autobiographical poem *Briggflatts* (1966). If Bunting makes no concession to the reader who will not work hard, nevertheless his lines have an infectious vitality, and his adoption of the brusque, take-it-or-leave-it stance conveys the assurance of the maestro who can afford to be impatient with mediocrity.

The Irish poet Austin Clarke (1896–1974) also reached his peak in his sixties. He began his career with narrative poems on legendary Irish heroes, spent his middle years in the service of verse drama, and then turned out a series of volumes of verse such as *Ancient Lights* (1955) and *Flight to Africa* (1963) which grapple forcefully with aspects of contemporary Irish life and do so in an invigoratingly crisp idiom influenced by Gaelic poetry. Clarke's work is packed with the stuff of life—vivid portraiture, story and argument, and wryly frank self-exploration. But before this late flowering of Clarke's poetic maturity had occurred, the rather younger Irish poet Patrick Kavanagh (1905–67) had already been acclaimed as Yeats's successor. Kavanagh, son

of a cobbler-farmer from County Monaghan, achieved fame with his long poem *The Great Hunger* (1942), and with two exercises in fictional autobiography, *The Green Fool* (1938) and *Tarry Flynn* (1948). Having exchanged the rigours of rural privation for the bars and backchat of Dublin, in his later collections of verse, such as *Come Dance with Kitty Stobling* (1960), Kavanagh reacted with fierce prophetic denunciation against the literary cult of the peasant and the projection of an idealized Ireland.

With Kavanagh we have taken leave of poets born in the nineteenth century. We turn to the 'poets of the thirties'. Some of them remained just that: but one of them has become a poet of the century, Wystan Hugh Auden (1907–73). Eliot, born in St Louis, Missouri, settled in England and took British nationality. Auden, born in York, bred in the Midlands, settled in New York and took United States citizenship. Auden's early work seemed to put him close to the Marxist camp. He was the poet of unidealized contemporary urbanism, of starving cities, rolling prams, moaning saxophones and talkie-houses,

The judge enforcing the obsolete law,
The banker making the loan for the war.

This world, and the complex 'metaphysical distress' it engendered in his generation, are realized in *Look, Stranger* (1936) with striking boldness of rhythm and angularity of idiom. But, like Eliot, Auden became a Christian, and the conversion affected the character of his later work. His technical versatility and virtuosity are immense: moreover he is irresistibly readable. An engaging fluency takes possession of the reader: it is one half of the secret of Auden's compulsion. The other half is his uncanny memorability, a gift of epigrammatic conversationalism that blends the casual and the contrived, the vulgar and the literary, in juxtapositions that prove inevitable against all laws of predictability. The composite style perhaps reflects the Christian paradoxes of sin and salvation, nature and grace, worldly ephemerality and sacramental significance, in which theology has immersed Auden's thought, and experience moulded his sensitivities. The deep currents of his thought and experience flow under cover; while the speaking voice is given to emotional and spiritual understatement. Auden's output was vast and various, from *Look, Stranger* and *The Ascent of F6* (a drama written in collaboration with Christopher Isherwood), through *New Year Letter* (1941), *For the Time Being* (1945) and *The Age of Anxiety*

(1948), to later volumes such as *The Shield of Achilles* (1955) and *About the House* (1966).

In poems of direct approach Auden makes you feel that you are in his presence, but not that you know him well. He is not remarkable for self-revelation, or for transference on to paper of what is sharply felt in human relationships; but his voice is always a poet's voice, in love with words. A verbal plutocrat, he has multitudinous turns of expression at his disposal. He grapples with a great range of thought and experience, and grapples in parallel with the resources of utterance. But Auden rejects the prophet's stance: he does not instruct; and he does not buttonhole the reader. The take-it-or-leave-it air does not betoken a lack of concern but a healthy sense of proportion. The reader sometimes finds himself eavesdropping as a modest practitioner thinks aloud:

After all, it's rather a privilege amid the affluent
traffic
to serve this unpopular art which cannot be turned into background
noise for study
or hung as a status trophy by rising executives….
('The Cave of Making', *About the House*)

So Auden writes in the memorial verses to Louis MacNeice (1907–63), one of the poets loosely grouped with him as spokesmen for the young in the uneasy 1930s. MacNeice's conversational style is looser and easier than Auden's, the texture more fluid, the tone more lyrical. His facility is winningly easy on the eye and the ear: if it lapses sometimes into versified reportage, it does not try to disguise its banality:

Frivolous, always in a hurry, forgetting the address, Frowning too often, taking enormous notice
Of hats and backchat—how could I assess The thing
that makes you different?

This is *Autumn Journal* (1939) and one can defend a journal for being journalistic. The evocative, nostalgic appeal of its account of the autumn of 1938 for those who lived through it is undeniable. MacNeice has no political axe to grind: he is not at loggerheads with the world he reports on. He observes and ruminates like a verseessayist. There is something of the scholar in his detachment, much of the Irishman in his melancholy and in his comic irony.

MacNeice came from Belfast, and Cecil Day Lewis (1904–72) came from Ballintogher. Lewis shared the social disenchantment of Auden and Spender, but his gifts as a lyric poet made the personal love sequence *From Feathers to Iron* (1931) particularly memorable. In 'Do not expect again the phoenix hour', celebrating conception, and 'Come out into the sun, for a man is born today', a cry of delight at birth ('Take a whole holiday in honour of this!'), Lewis's lucidity and imaginative inventiveness are charmingly blended. His strident revolutionary vein, however, now sounds crude: indeed his early work has been criticized for its immaturity, his later work for its lack of intensity. There is a ceiling to his verbal awareness, and it is below the level at which precise connotative illumination can astonish and excite.

A useful impression of the poetic situation in the 1930s can be gained from *World Within World* (1951) by Stephen Spender (1909–). Spender, who more than any of the group has been a life-long propagandist for progressive social causes, nevertheless emerges in his poetry as a reflective lyrist, musing and brooding on the human victims of civilization and the problem of being (see *The Edge of Being,* 1949). Two South African born poets of the same generation, Roy Campbell (1901– 57) and William Plomer (1903–73), were anthologized side by side with the Auden group. Campbell's politics, however, were of the Right (he fought for Franco in Spain). He is a poet with a vigorous voice, prodigal of word and image, a South African Hemingway in some of his postures, and given to satire. In this last respect he matches Plomer, but Plomer's satire is comic and explores the absurdity of the human scene. Meet the heroine of 'Mews Flat Mona, A Memory of the Twenties'. On a sofa upholstered in human skin Mona did researches in original sin, and so on. Finally, hooked on the hard stuff, she stepped from the top of an Oxford Street store, falling like a bomb on an elderly curate:

When they came with a shovel to shift her remains They found a
big heart but no vestige of brains.

Among poets of the same age group as the poets of the 1930s are two women, Kathleen Raine (1908–) and Stevie Smith (1902–71), who present an interesting contrast. Kathleen Raine's *Stone and Flower* (1943) was the first of a number of collections by a woman with both a scientific training and an interest in mysticism, whose intimate, meditative verse has a rare lyrical refinement, and who voices her

spiritual understanding of the natural world in neo-Platonic symbols. Her autobiographical trilogy, *Farewell, Happy Fields* (1973), *The Land Unknown* (1975) and *The Lion's Mouth* (1977), traces her rejection of the de-supernaturalized context of thinking which influenced her generation in their student days. Stevie Smith's poetry, on the other hand, inhabits that no-man's-land disputed by gravity and frivolity, sobriety and hilarity. By cultivating the device of sometimes disguising profundity as triviality, logic as nonsense, Stevie Smith leaves the reader often disquietingly unsure whether the seemingly banal line is really banal, whether the apparent non-sequitur is perhaps vibrant with new insight. The technique of playing tricks with the devices of doggerel sometimes pays rich dividends. The characteristically bland idiom can be disconcertingly fraught with question marks:

So in my time I have picked up a good many facts, Rather more than people who do wear smart hats.
('Magna est Veritas')

Keeping seriousness at arm's length for a lifetime is a very serious matter, and for that reason alone Stevie Smith's work cannot lightly be dismissed. It includes three novels as well as *Collected Poems* (1975).

William Empson (1906–) is an intellectual who has pursued his ideal of maximum verbal concentration beyond the point of maximum demand upon the reader; John Betjeman (1906–), by contrast, is the master of limpid directness and swinging rhythms that have given him deserved popularity:

Miss Joan Hunter Dunn, Miss Joan Hunter Dunn, How mad I am, sad I am, glad that you won.
The warm-handled racket is back in its press,
    But my shock-headed victor, she loves me no less.
('A Subaltern's Love-song')

It is perhaps not surprising that when his *Collected Poems* (1958) came out the volume achieved record sales. More than any other contemporary's poetry, Betjeman's speaks for itself at first encounter with lambent clarity. It ranges over a wide variety of likes and dislikes proper to a sensitive personality in love with Victorianism, fascinated

by people and keenly nostalgic for the private and public past. *Summoned by Bells* (1960), his autobiographical poem, is a lively record of his early days. Betjeman became poet laureate in 1972.

There was a trio of poets born in the second decade of the century for whom neither the lucidity of Betjeman nor the social concerns of the 1930s' poets had any attractions. David Gascoyne (1916–) was early known for the garish extravagance of surrealistic imagery exploited in expressing the anguish of desolation and menace known in the bohemian circles of the 1930s. But a different note was heard in the moving poem on the suicide of a friend in 1941 ('An Elegy'), and Gascoyne's gifts were subjected to the discipline of an awakened religious awareness. His Christ in 'Ecce Homo' is one who weeps over Jerusalem and over the bombed cities of Europe. Gascoyne brings wit, irony and penetration to the diagnosis of our ills. One of his anthologized poems, 'The Sacred Hearth', is addressed to a fellow neo-Romantic poet, George Barker (1913–). Barker's poetry has always aroused controversy. It is a torrent of words in which every trick of the verbal conjuror is skilfully played. There is an indiscriminate extravagance in the use of technical and metaphorical devices and in the juxtaposition of incongruous tones of voice. For all that, the impact is undeniable: there is plenty of fine writing, and the welter, notably perhaps in *Eros in Dogma* (1944) and *The True Confessions of George Barker,* can be irresistible.

While his longer-lived contemporaries steadily developed their gifts, the third of the neo-Romantic visionaries, Dylan Thomas (1914–53), rose rapidly to fame, his genius blazed, and he died at 39. The flamboyant character of his gifts and his personality, the ostensibly fatalistic addiction to alcohol and the resultant untimely death left behind a legend of artistic self-immolation. Thomas's *Portrait of the Artist as a Young Dog* (1940) has lively autobiographical information about a poet whose childhood and youth in South Wales left him with an intensely aware zest for its life and its scenery. His first volume of poems, *Eighteen Poems,* came out in 1934. His reputation was widely established by the time *Deaths and Entrances* was published in 1946. The radio play *Under Milk Wood* (1954), which gives an animated impressionistic projection of a day in the life of a Welsh seaside village, is rich in comic human cartoonery. It extended Thomas's public appreciably.

Thomas's tumultuous verse is laden with rhetorical imagery of great suggestive force, and it voices a visionary sense of the wonderful as he pounds away at the basic experiences of life and death. Syntax and

logic are displaced by interwoven music and metaphor, and the complex verbal patterns, with their extraordinary rhythmic force and resounding Celtic superabundance, inevitably recall both Hopkins and Joyce. Whether Thomas's inner intellectual core justifies the former affinity or his inner artistic discipline justifies the latter is a question which evokes controversy, for his work represented a neo-Romantic phase that later fashion repudiated. But Thomas's poetic persona stamped itself on our age with lines and verses that compulsively convey the urgency of man's need and of his faith amid the elemental confrontations of life in time. One might cite 'A Refusal to Mourn the Death, by Fire, of a Child in London' (a wartime elegy), 'And death shall have no dominion' or 'Do not go gentle into that good night' (written on the death of his father).

Dylan's namesake, R.S.Thomas (1913–), a fellow Welshman of very different breed, has spent his life as a parish priest in parishes of rural Wales, where ministering to hill farmers and villagers has brought him close to the harsher realities of country life—the dirt, the cruelty and the near bestiality. Thomas's great literary strength lies in his economy, his sturdiness, his total evasion of sentimentality and his powerful sense of paradox. His unromantic studies of rural life are the work of a man deeply concerned with the physical and spiritual needs of the people he writes about. Human studies such as that of Iago Prytherch ('A Peasant') make no concessions to sentimentality. Thomas accepts the 'frightening vacancy of his mind' yet recognizes him as a prototype of human endurance. Thomas's concern with the dual power of nature to brutalize and to heal is rooted in his awareness of the openness of man's nature to the bestial and the spiritual. If the men of the moors have not yet 'shaken the moss' from their savage skulls or 'prayed the peat from their eyes' ('A Priest to His People'), nevertheless men of the farm survey a girl evacuee with 'earth's charity, patient and strong' ('The Evacuee'). A religious awareness of the cost of healing and creativity, natural and spiritual, in the life of earth and the life of man, asserts a powerful consistency. There is evident tension of heart and mind behind Thomas's frank confrontation with the paradox of the repellent harshness and saving simplicity of the peasant and his lot. And he explores with equivalent candour and terseness the personal tensions of his priestly life, exposing the varying moods of bewilderment and testing that are provoked by the stark contrast between inclination and vocation, between what seems to make sense in earthly terms and the calling he has embraced. Thomas's collections include *Song at the Year's*

Turning (1955), *Poetry for Supper* (1958), *The Bread of Truth* (1963), *Pietà* (1966), *Laboratories of the Spirit* (1975) and *Between Here and Now* (1982). It is understandable that he has been called the greatest living English poet.

Something of Thomas's capacity to universalize the local and the parochial is found in the poetry of Norman Nicholson (1914–) who has resolutely spent virtually the whole of his life living in the small terrace house in which he was reared behind his father's shop in Millom, Cumbria. Rooted in an oddly blended rural yet urban area, he is sensitive to both aspects of his environment, writing with equally resonant descriptive accuracy not only of 'Scafell Pike' (*Sea to the West,* 1981), but also of the mining area of 'Cleator Moor' (*Five Rivers,* 1944) and the towers of 'Windscale' (*A Local Habitation,* 1975). His technique of mining loaded resonances from everyday particularities is applied increasingly to human characters and their sayings as well as to the physical environment. His *Selected Poems* (1982) evoked from Seamus Heaney the comment that Nicholson's 'diction and images realise the texture and pieties of a whole way of life'.

Although the Second World War did not produce a body of 'war poetry' on a scale to match that of First World War poets, there was a small knot of young men who were maturing into poethood when war seized them and killed them. Sidney Keyes (1922–43), killed in North Africa, left two volumes of verse, *The Iron Laurel* (1942) and *The Cruel Solstice* (1944), in which the soldier's consciousness of pain and of the menace of death seems to be symptomatic of the wider human condition. Alun Lewis (1915–44), killed in Burma, brilliantly captured the frustration and tedium of service life for the uniformed civilian by picturing a wet Sunday in a bell-tent in 'All Day It Has Rained' (*Raider's Dawn,* 1942). For Keith Douglas (1920–44), killed in Normandy, the horrors of battle and the premonition of death gave focus to a dispassionate ruthlessness in scraping down to the bare bones of the human condition and in disinfecting his style of all false finery. The *Collected Poems* (1951, revised 1966) show him to be the one poet of his group in whose case comparisons with Wilfred Owen would not be out of place.

Of servicemen poets who survived the war to continue writing, Roy Fuller (1912–) recorded the facts of service life with sardonic lucidity (*The Middle of a War,* 1942), and in some dozen volumes since has brought a low-key detachment to bear on the dissatisfactions of the human lot, and done so with a consistent technical discipline that

commands respect even where it cannot arouse excitement. Charles Causley (1917–), who served in the Royal Navy, has managed to produce ballad-style poems of Kiplingesque verve and swing without faltering into cheapness:

I walked where in their talking graves
And shirts of earth five thousand lay, When history
with ten feasts of fire Had eaten the red air away.
(‘At the British War Cemetery, Bayeux’)

Vernon Scannell (1922–) produced his most celebrated war poem, the title poem of *Walking Wounded* (1965), many years after his active service. It muses wryly on a procession of damaged men who have missed the ‘heroic’ glamour of grave disfigurement or death and will have to fight again, and whose situation thus matches more closely the common human lot of most of us than do the mighty achievements of the few. An equally celebrated war poem is ‘Soldiers Bathing’ by F.T.Prince (1912–), the meditation of a richly stocked mind sensitive to the deeper historical and religious implications of man’s involvement with bloodshed. Prince was represented alongside John Heath-Stubbs (1918–) in *Penguin Modern Poets 20,* and Heath-Stubbs too is a versatile craftsman whose erudition matches his wit. He has something of Auden’s skill in moulding conversational idiom into verse.

Among the numerous poets of this same generation is a group of Scotsmen. Norman MacCaig (1912–) has a rare capacity for detecting the extraordinary quality of what is ordinary and for pinning the observed revelation down in telling imagery. Under the thatched roof of a barn, where mice ‘squeak small hosannahs all night long’, kittens below ‘are tawny brooches/Splayed on the chests of drunken sacks’ (‘Byre’, *A Round of Applause,* 1962). W.S.Graham (1918–) is a poet whose integrity of self-scrutiny shines through overwhelmingly intense imagery (as in the title poem of *Nightfishing,* 1955), yet whose struggle to communicate can sometimes leave the reader at a loss. George Mackay Brown (1921–) is an Orcadian who has settled in his home island to fasten in poetry (see *Selected Poems,* 1977) and fiction (see *Greenvoe,* 1972) on the local people and their way of life. He shares with R.S.Thomas the fearless accuracy that never either cartoonifies or diminishes its object; but the cultural ambience is richer than Thomas’s, for he threads imagery of the primitive and mythic past through his presentation. Edwin Morgan (1920–) has

registered aspects of day-to-day Glasgow life with imaginative ingenuity. An inventive and sometimes exuberant poet, he has no truck with modish cold-bloodedness. (See *Poems of Thirty Years,* 1982.) Iain Crichton Smith (1928–) sketches the Scottish background deftly and portrays Scots people with a rather melancholy awareness of human vulnerability. (See *Selected Poems 1955–1980,* 1982.)

Alongside these Scots poets who used English are several who preferred to use Scots and who soaked themselves in the Scottish literary tradition. Sydney Goodsir Smith (1915–75) wrote a fine sequence of meditative elegies on great lovers of history and myth, *Under the Eildon Tree* (1948). Tom Scott (1918–), who has been acclaimed as Hugh MacDiarmid's successor, wrote a long allegorical study of civilizational collapse, based on the sinking of the *Titanic,* in the title poem of *The Ship and Ither Poems* (1963), and he edited *The Penguin Book of Scottish Verse* (1970). Robert Garioch (1909–81) has an entertaining vein of jaunty raciness in the liveliest tradition of Scottish satire. Equally boisterous and heady is the Scots poetry of Alexander Scott (1920–), a hectoring, muscular and often rumbustiously comic commentator on his times. (See *Selected Poems 1943–1974,* 1975.)

A turning-point in the literary history of our century was reached in 1956 when Robert Conquest (1917–) edited *New Lines,* an anthology which gave visible shape to the reaction against the neo-Romanticism of Dylan Thomas and his like. The label 'the Movement' was applied to the contributors to Conquest's anthology, but it would be unjust to blur the individualities of the poets involved by subsuming their efforts under a common banner. The anti-Romantic movement eschewed rhetorical extravagances, prophetic postures and claims to insight. But the ascetic spirit and the cynical spirit are both anti-Romantic. The poets of the so-called 'Movement' are a mixed bunch. Philip Larkin (1922–) was acknowledged as the leader of the group. His volumes include *The Less Deceived* (1955), *The Whitsun Weddings* (1964) and *High Windows* (1974). He sees himself as writing in the tradition of Thomas Hardy in refusing to don the mantle of self-conscious poethood, but fastening without pretension on the commonplace experience, pin-pointing its impact on the senses and hinting at its half-glimpsed meaning—or more often its fully glimpsed meaninglessness—for modern man. The feeling recurs that man has lost his footing amid natural and civilizational instabilities. In 'Ambulances' children and women in the street are stopped in their tracks at the sight of

A wild white face that overtops
Red stretcher-blankets momently

and sense the 'solving emptiness/That lies just under all we do'. The sense of 'solving emptiness' is not far removed from cynical disengagement. Scorn of gravity and pretension can easily consort with the shrug of the debunker. Fear of comprehensiveness can turn into blinkered obsession with the limitedly parochial. But Larkin is a highly skilled craftsman.

The cultivation of a casual tone that seems to say 'I'm not a poet' was tried by several 'Movement' poets. When juxtaposed with selfconsciously 'literary' utterance, the conversational throwaway can be powerful in effect. Kingsley Amis's (1922–) 'A Bookshop Idyll' illustrates the point:

Man's love is of man's life a thing apart; Girls aren't
like that.

D.J.Enright (1920–) adopted the off-hand stance and low-key idiom to catch the modish air of 'sincerity' in *Bread Rather Than Blossoms* (1956). While Larkin edited *The Oxford Book of Twentieth-Century Verse* (1973), Enright edited *The Oxford Book of Contemporary Verse 1945–1980* (1980) so that 'Movement' biases towards cheerful balladry and versified chat have become institutionalized. Enright's anthology, for instance, is generous in provision of space for the entertainingly witty and polished light verse of Gavin Ewart (1916–):

Give me the Daulian bird and Locrian Arsinoë.
I want to arrange a protest in high places.
I just want to say to a few fat-nippled goddesses: It isn't fair.
('From V.C. a Gentleman of Verona')

There is space too, more properly so, for poems by Patricia Beer (1924–) who shares Larkin's rejection of conviction and fights shy of posture and of gravity alike:

We come across
Two slight acquaintances from NW3 Nuzzling at a Bellini.

(‘Birthday Poem from Venice’, *Selected Poems,* 1980)

Of *New Lines* poets not yet mentioned, Elizabeth Jennings (1926–) cultivated a limpid clarity, shaping her sentences in neat counterpoint with conventional metrical design. (See *A Way of Looking,* 1955, and *A Sense of the World,* 1957.)

The ‘Movement’ label was tagged on to *New Lines* poets at an early age. Many of them have continued to be productive in a way which makes the tag anachronistic. Donald Davie (1922–) indeed has since criticized the limitations of subject and attitude accepted by ‘Movement’ poets. Though not himself a poet who speaks with the voice of passion, Davie is a master of that kind of annotation which fixes momentary reflections and experiences with winning precision and with studied artistry, as his *Collected Poems 1950–1970* (1972) shows. Another verse-annotator, Dannie Abse (1923–), has documented the stuff of life with a sense of humour, with companionable candour and with an eye for the quirkiness of the commonplace. He seems to have encountered in his travels someone who contrasted his humdrum interests unfavourably with the concerns of more celebrated contemporaries, such as Geoffrey Hill and Ted Hughes:

Not one poem about an animal, she said… Your
contemporaries have all composed inspired elegies for
expired beasts; told of salmon flinging themselves up
the sheer waterfall; cold crows, in black rages,
loitering near motorways.
(‘Florida’, *Collected Poems,* 1977)

James Kirkup (1923–) early compelled attention with the title poem of *A Correct Compassion* (1952), a first-hand account of heart surgery from the operating theatre, and has since proved a fluent if sometimes facile versifier of whatever seizes his attention or interest. By contrast Charles Tomlinson’s (1927–) gift for verbally fixing the particular moment with both intensity and precision is the product of disciplined application to his craft. Tomlinson gives freshness to the world he delineates, and no poetic persona intrudes on its unveiling. (See *Selected Poems 1951–74,* 1978.)

It was a poet born in the 1930s, Ted Hughes (1930–), who first won acclaim for his thoroughness in rejecting the urbane civilities of

'Movement' verse. He injected a shot of percussive aggressiveness into the body poetic, turning to the animal world to tap its resources of raw energy and brutality, and using for backcloths the harsh moors and crags of his native West Yorkshire.

I sit in the top of the wood, my eyes closed.
In action, no falsifying dream
Between my hooked head and hooked feet:
Or in sleep rehearse the perfect kills and eat.
('Hawk Roosting', *The Hawk in the Rain,* 1957)

Hughes has been a productive poet. In several collections he has featured 'Crow' (e.g. *Crow,* 1970; *Crow Wakes,* 1971), utilizing him, on the model of the North American mythological trickster, Raven, as a spokesbird against God in surveying the black comedy of the universe.

A more economic and disciplined poet, Geoffrey Hill (1932–), has shown that dissatisfaction with the narrowness and banality of much Movement and post-Movement verse can be answered by steady confrontation with the facts of love and death, of faith and suffering, which does not hanker after Lawrentian primitivism and does not cut off the present from the past. Hill is a scholarly poet whose wide-ranging allusiveness, historical and literary, may limit his appeal, but he has been called 'the outstanding poet of his generation', and the claim may be tested by reference to the richly textured poem *The Mystery of the Charity of Charles Péguy* (1983), to the grim sonnets on the Wars of the Roses, 'Funeral Music' (*King Log,* 1968), or to the disturbing account of creation in the early work 'Genesis' (*For the Unfallen,* 1959), which pictures the vigorous thrust of new life in dynamic imagery:

And where the streams were salt and full
The tough pig-headed salmon strove, Curbing the
ebb and the tide's pull, To reach the steady hills
above.

Perhaps scholarship is in fashion again. Certainly another dominant poetic voice of the past two decades has been that of Anthony Thwaite (1930–), who ranges widely in substance and whose technical expertise has matching flexibility. 'Mr Cooper' (*The Owl in the Tree,* 1963) presents an unexpected encounter with the riddle of death in the

urinal of a Manchester pub, while *New Confessions* (1974) meditates on Saint Augustine, and *Victorian Voices* (1980) is a collection of dramatic monologues by nineteenth-century characters. Jon Stallworthy (1935–) made a big impact with the poem 'The Almond Tree' (*Root and Branch,* 1969), 'written from the inside' in recounting the shock of learning in the hospital corridor that his newborn son had Down's syndrome. Successive volumes have confirmed his status as a concerned writer and meticulous craftsman. Alan Brownjohn (1931–) takes stock exactly, if uneasily and ironically, of the human scene around him (see *A Night in the Gazebo,* 1980). Peter Scupham (1933–), no mere annotator of the immediate environment, has brought awareness of history and of human mortality to bear on poetic exercises laden with thought (see *The Hinterland,* 1977). Tony Harrison (1937–), translator and librettist, born in Leeds but currently working for the New York Metropolitan Opera, has published poems on his Leeds home background (in *The Loiners,* 1970; and *Continuous,* 1982) which are as subtle as they are earthy, and which, in the later volume at least, seem to confirm his voice as that of someone more than a minor poet.

A notable feature of the past two decades has been the work of a group of Irish poets. Of the older ones Richard Murphy (1927–), from County Galway, has made sustained and percipient studies of Irish personalities and has recorded the changes and chances of the seaman's lot. (See *The Last Galway Hooker,* 1961; and *New and Selected Poems,* 1974.) Thomas Kinsella (1928–) left Ireland for the United States in 1965. Strenuous cerebralism gives his work a density that too often sacrifices surface coherence. John Montague (1929–) moved in the opposite direction, from the United States to Ireland. He is a sharp observer of life with a keen sense of the past, and he edited *The Faber Book of Irish Verse* (1974). *Selected Poems* (1982) at times reflects his worried absorption with his Ulster inheritance. And it is this inheritance which is so powerfully explored in the poetry of Seamus Heaney (1939–), whose emigration has been from County Down to the Republic. In a series of collections (*Death of a Naturalist,* 1966; *Wintering Out,* 1972; *North,* 1975; *Field Work,* 1979) Heaney has moulded his highly charged stanzas from terse phrases and telling images that tingle with resonance. In the oft-quoted poem 'Digging' the poet watches his father digging his potato patch as his grandfather dug the peat, and ends with the inspired climax:

Between my finger and my thumb The squat pen rests.
I'll dig with it.

And dig he does, into the landscape and its past history, with a justly acclaimed exactitude and lucidity. Heaney's contemporary Michael Longley (1939–), from Belfast, knows how to combine traditional metrics with eloquent colloquialism, and has touched movingly on the troubles. Derek Mahon (1941–), also from Belfast, has been defined by a reviewer as 'the least locally attached' of the recent Northern Irish poets, and as working in the 'post-Movement tradition of the poem as anecdote-and-moral'. Certainly Mahon gives the impression of a poet who can turn his hand to any subject that presents itself (see *Poems 1962–1978,* 1979). Tom Paulin (1949–), though born in Leeds, was brought up in Belfast and has a deft ironic way of allowing a superficially flat verbal line to throw up overtones of personal anguish or overshadowing violence (see *The Strange Museum,* 1980). Paul Muldoon (1951–), from County Armagh, is more taxingly remote and oblique, often teasing the reader with blank inconclusiveness. Yet his command of word and image has the stamp of authority. (See *New Weather,* 1973; *Mules,* 1977; and *Why Brownlee Left,* 1980.)

In turning to Paul Muldoon we have already touched on a poet born in the 1950s. If it is difficult to be just the writters of one's own century, it is almost impossible to be just to those of recent decades. It would be invidious and misleading lightly to select for reference a further sample of the poets now writing. *The Penguin Book of Contemporary British Poetry* (1982), edited by Blake Morrison and Andrew Motion, includes selections from seven poets we have already treated and from a dozen others. They include Douglas Dunn (1942–), who first made his name for neatly delineated but flatly dispassionate vignettes of the city scene (*Terry Street,* 1969) but has developed a finer and more assured touch in *St Kilda's Parliament* (1981); and James Fenton (1949–), author of *The Memory of War: Poems 1968–1982* (1982), whose fullness of concrete detail is teasingly and potently conjoined with defiance of simplistic or conclusive interpretation, and whose cadences and idioms sometimes carry subtle overtones in echo of Eliot. By contrast, the voice of Craig Raine (1944–) is par excellence that of an innovator whose fanciful imagery is calculated to revitalize our view of the familiar world:

He shakes the air into a paper bag and, eggs
pickpocketed inside, trapezes it.

('The Grocer')

Set alongside the gnomic profundities of James Fenton's 'A German Requiem' (*A German Requiem,* 1980), such refreshing ingenuities suggest that in respect of both the reliance upon tradition and the need for experiment English poetry is in good shape.

The twentieth-century novel

Of the writers who launched themselves about the turn of the century none is more remarkable than Joseph Conrad (1857–1924). A Polish orphan, he conceived a passion for the sea, was twenty years a seafarer, and became a British subject and a master-mariner. He settled down on land in 1894 and his first two novels, *Almayer's Folly* (1895) and *An Outcast of the Islands* (1896), have a common Malayan background. But it is in *The Nigger of the 'Narcissus'* (1897) and more especially in *Lord Jim* (1900) that Conrad's quality first shows up. He is now master of his adopted language and is able to add to his control of atmosphere and his rather melancholy concern with broken men (such is Almayer) a new depth of psychological insight. 'Lord' Jim instinctively leaps to join other officers who take to a boat when their ship, laden with pilgrims, appears to be sinking. In fact it is saved and towed to harbour. Jim is a romantic and an idealist: the jump is his 'fall'; and his incapacity at the crisis is one version of that impulsive departure from habitual standards which fascinates Conrad. The burden of the almost involuntary cowardice stays with Lord Jim until his life ends in a final expiatory act of redemption.

Though Conrad's experience as a seaman provides the stuff of his novels, and the sea itself—its changefulness, enmity in storm and reposefulness in calm—had moulded his spirit, his overriding interest is in human beings, and sea life provides a background and a symbolism for exploring their behaviour and their worth. The 'worth' is tested in situations of stress such as life at sea or on the edge of the jungle or among violent men readily provokes. Faithfulness, whether in sudden peril or before an exacting demand or under the corrosive strain of long isolation in remote parts of the world, is what proves men. So Captain Mac Whirr (in *Typhoon,* 1903) rides the storm in the

Nan-Shan and deals courageously with 200 fighting Chinese coolies and the danger of mutiny. Tom Lingard (in *The Rescue,* 1920) faces a more ambiguous test. Upper-class people are perilously stranded in

their yacht and need his help (he has fallen in love with one of them) just at a point when past obligation requires him to be wholly preoccupied with a crisis in the cause of a Malayan prince; and it is the prince's cause that suffers. Mr Kurtz (in *Heart of Darkness,* 1902), an ivory-trader in the Congo, succumbs to the strange evils of the jungle and proves a hollow man. *Heart of Darkness,* like *Lord Jim,* is one of the stories told by Marlow. Conrad's ironic power is strengthened by his use of a narrator whose comments distance events and supply an additional point of judgement. The oblique method is needed to contain the intricacies of the psychological and moral investigations Conrad undertakes.

Nostromo (1904), often regarded as Conrad's most masterly work, is a vast study of a South American country, 'Costaguana'; and in it Conrad works out a complex pattern of conflicts and mysteries on a philosophical basis whose central symbol is the 'Gould Concession', a silver mine. Charles Gould's wealth and power have enabled him to prop up a shaky capitalist government, but revolution breaks out. Nostromo, a trusted foreman, conveys silver away under instructions, hides it, and then pretends the vessel carrying it has sunk. Silver is the demonic influence, political and personal, rotting the governing system, the domestic virtues of Gould and the integrity of Nostromo: and of course many others are touched by it in life and personality too. Conrad's created world is immense—the republic of Costaguana with its politics, its trade and its teeming personalities. The intricacy of the imaginative presentation is such that every sensitivity of the reader's poetic and psychological understanding is appealed to. Man clashes with nature, value with value, man with man; and all public enterprise and private virtue are at war with the corrosive dominion of time. Among novels in which the sea plays no part is *Under Western Eyes* (1911) with its setting in Tsarist Russia. Razumov runs into difficulties when trying to aid a fugitive fellow student who has thrown a bomb and killed a minister in St Petersburg, and he betrays the revolutionary to the police. As so often, Conrad's central concern is the testing of a man's soul in crisis, the laying bare of his ultimate resources in lonely confrontation with a perilous question mark.

A very different literary career started almost simultaneously with Conrad's when H.G.Wells (1866–1946) published *The Time Machine* in 1895, thus beginning a series of prophetic books in what we now call science fiction. The time machine carries its inventor forward to a horrific future of evolutionary regress. In addition to Wellsian fantasies (*The Shape of Things to Come,* 1933, was a later

one), Wells wrote social novels with a message. In *Kipps* (1905) a young man who works at a draper's suddenly acquires great wealth, and a good deal of fun (not to mention propaganda) accompanies his entry into a different social class. Humour and human interest remain predominant, as they are in *Tono-Bungay* (1909) and *The History of Mr Polly* (1910), two books which contain autobiographical material. 'Tono-Bungay' is the name of a patent medicine, 'slightly injurious rubbish at one and three halfpence a bottle', that makes a fortune by effective sales promotion. Mr Polly is a bankrupt shopkeeper who fails to commit suicide, takes to the road, and settles down with the landlady of a country pub. *Ann Veronica* (1909) is a protest novel in which a 21-year-old woman, a biology student, rebels against the social, political and sexual inhibitions fettering the young women of the age. In later novels such as *The World of William Clissold* (1926) fiction becomes increasingly a vehicle for argument. Since Wells was the apostle of scientific progress, socialism and emancipation from monogamy, his polemics brought him into conflict with his contemporaries.

Among them was G.K.Chesterton (1874–1936), whose goodhumouredly aggressive Christianity (Roman Catholicism eventually) made him the lively foe of scientism, humanism and rationalism. His imaginative work is impregnated with his beliefs. Love of paradox and fertility in aphorism mark his inimitable style. The detective stories featuring the shrewd priest, Father Brown, (eventually collected in *The Father Brown Stories,* 1929) were immensely popular for their unpredictability, and, like all else Chesterton wrote, they are judiciously laden with wisdom. *The Man Who Was Thursday* (1908) is his best novel. A tale of anarchists and secret agents that unexpectedly makes a serious point at the end, it excellently exemplifies Chesterton's brilliance at leading the reader up the garden path. For the turning of tables and the rocking of glibly held assumptions is Chesterton's forte. His poetry keeps its place in the anthologies by virtue of his mastery of rousing balladry at once rhythmically sophisticated and rhetorically ablaze ('Lepanto' and *The Ballad of the White Horse* especially). As a critic GKC is zestful, brimming with ideas, an unapologetic chaser of hares and dispenser of illumination (see *Robert Browning,* 1903, *Charles Dickens,* 1906, and *Bernard Shaw,* 1909). As a biographer and thinker Chesterton is the kind of popularizer who does not cheapen what he touches, as his *St Thomas Aquinas* (1933) and his *Orthodoxy* (1908) will show.

Chesterton's friend and fellow Catholic, Hilaire Belloc (1870– 1953), completes the quadrumvirate (Shaw, Wells, Chesterton, Belloc) who challenged settled assumptions, social and economic, though from vastly different angles. The Chesterbelloc (Shaw's term) also challenged the established reading of history in respect of the value of the Reformation and the presupposed continuity of progress. Belloc's output of satire, travel books, history and polemics was prolific: but the topicality of much of it has dated it, and he is now read chiefly for his light verse. A famous couplet now reads ironically:

When I am dead, I hope it may be said:
'His sins were scarlet, but his books were read.'

On Conrad's last voyage as First Mate of the *Torrens* in 1893, one of his passengers was young John Galsworthy (1867–1933). Galsworthy has described how the 'great teller of tales' and he spent evening watches together and how Conrad asked him to his cabin on the last evening. They were to become friends as writers later. Galsworthy's field of documentation was that of the upper class to which he himself belonged. In creating the Forsyte family he found a medium for expressing his disturbed awareness of the limitations that the values of the propertied classes impose on their lives, particularly on their finer sensitivities in human relationships. Soames Forsyte's arid incompatibility with his wife Irene, who rejects her status as a piece of property, represents the failure of beauty to impinge on the world of the possessive. Galsworthy's thinking is clear and unpretentious, his fictional world honestly and compassionately constructed. The three volumes of *The Forsyte Saga* (*The Man of Property,* 1906, *In Chancery,* 1920, and *To Let,* 1921) were succeeded by two further trilogies, *A Modern Comedy* (1929), and *The End of the Chapter* (1935).

What Galsworthy did for the upper classes Arnold Bennett (1867–1931) did for a shopkeeper's family in the Potteries in *The Old Wives' Tale* (1908), a long chronicle of the lives of two sisters, Constance and Sophia Baines. They are the children of a draper in Bursley, one of the Five Towns. Bennett's sense of reality and his understanding of women's minds give the reader a close familiarity with his people and their world. The book is both a sombre comment on the passage of time and a vindication of the unbending will of Midlands women in confronting it. Of his other novels, *Anna of the Five Towns* (1902)

and *Clayhanger* (1910), also Potteries novels, have a comparable authenticity. (The latter, the first of a trilogy, is set in the 1870s and 1880s and takes in the Jubilee of Queen Victoria in 1887.) The influence of French realism (Balzac and Flaubert) lies behind the careful recording of Midlands life. Of later novels *Riceyman Steps* (1923) portrays a miserly London bookseller and is a masterly study of human eccentricity. *Lord Raingo* (1926), the fruit of Bennett's wartime work at the Ministry of Information, presses the contrast between the bloodshed at the front and the antics of those involved in the power game in Whitehall and Downing Street.

It was left to a serving soldier to do full justice to this theme and the larger theme of the historic changes effected by the First World War. Ford Madox Ford (1873–1939) had collaborated with Conrad on two of Conrad's earlier works (*The Inheritors,* 1901, and *Romance,* 1903). A friend of Pound and a champion of Joyce, Ford was anxious to free the novel from narrative techniques that do violence to the mind's encounter with life's disordered impressions, and also to exploit further the technique of oblique reportage, so that reading can never lead to single-track interpretation that falsifies the character of experience. Thus Dowell, the narrator of *The Good Soldier* (1915), is himself a protaganist. He is heavily involved in all he speaks of, and his own oddities of act and response tease our curiosity; but there is no guidance from an omniscient author to help us to a decisive judgement on the reliability of his record or the accuracy of his self-revelation. The book is a little masterpiece, and a fit precursor to the four novels together called *Parade's End: Some Do Not* (1924), *No More Parades* (1925), *A Man Could Stand Up* (1926) and *Last Post* (1928). They investigate the effect of the First World War on English society by tracing the career of one of the gentry (Christopher Tietjens) damaged by it. Tietjens, son of a Yorkshire landowner, proud, generous, a gentleman with too little concern for his own interests and his own image, is tricked into marriage with a worthless woman. Personal happiness is long in abeyance because of her machinations and because of his oldfashioned chivalrous reluctance to take advantage of the love of a congenial girl who has brains, ideals and generosity like his own. This quandary complicates the long agony of his wartime career. A brilliant statistician, he leaves the security of the civil service, where he is expected to fake figures, to become an officer at the front, where his decency and integrity are as much an obstacle to his military career as they were to his civil career. The first three books move from pre-war days to the end of hostilities,

and the fourth book is in the nature of an epilogue. Characterization is vital; narrative presentation cunningly counterpoints the inner life with the outer life and the present with the past. Momentous social and psychological changes effected by the war are registered in acutely diagnosed personal predicaments.

Another ambitious fictional treatment of the war came from R.H. Mottram (1883–1971) who served in Flanders as an interpreter. He presented the resident peasant's view of the war alongside that of serving soldiers by fastening upon events at a farm behind the lines that is used as a billeting post. In the three novels of *The Spanish Farm Trilogy* (1927) Mottram achieves an overall view of the passing years and the changing attitudes of participants during the war as a whole. Henry Williamson (1895–1977) followed the story of a London clerk, John Bullock, to the Somme in *Patriot's Progress* (1930), a stridently horrific indictment of the bloodshed. Ernest Raymond (1888–1974), in *Tell England* (1922), did for the Gallipoli campaign what Sherriff did on the stage for the trench life of the Western front in *Journey's End,* and with comparable appeal to popular sentiment. Richard Aldington (1892–1962), a young poet before he went off to fight in France, was indelibly marked by his experience there. His novel, *Death of a Hero* (1929), draws a bitter contrast between civilian life at home and the harrowing experience of the front-line soldier that cuts him off from meaningful communication with those left behind.

T.E.Lawrence (1888–1935) registered a very different war. He led the Arab revolt against the Turks and thereby became a legendary figure in his own lifetime. The glamour of his personality casts its aura over his record of the Arab revolt, *The Seven Pillars of Wisdom* (1926). John Buchan (1875–1940) too found glamour in the war, in which he served as a war correspondent and an intelligence officer.

His adventure stories are sturdy yarns. *Prester John* (1910) has its setting in South Africa, *Huntingtower* (1922) and *John Macnab* (1925) have theirs in Buchan's native Scotland. His war books are the stories of espionage featuring Richard Hannay. In *The Thirty-Nine Steps* (1915) Hannay is made aware of a German plot and becomes the quarry of plotters and (by error) of police alike: he appears again in *Greenmantle* (1916) and *Mr Standfast* (1919), where his angle on the war is that of a major engaged in dangerous missions. Buchan's view encompasses as a 'cosmic drama' what other participants saw only from the inside as a meaningless waste. It is fair to compare Buchan with Stevenson for the liveliness and directness of his narrative technique, and he is a master of suspense.

Literature, of course, saw the war in retrospect. During the years of bloodshed many writers were peacefully at work who had long established themselves and some who were just hoping to find their feet. Among the latter, Katherine Mansfield (properly Katherine Mansfield Beauchamp, 1880–1923) was writing short stories of her native New Zealand, determined to bring the life of her homeland into the consciousness of the old world (see *Bliss,* 1920); while Henry Handel Richardson (properly Ethel Florence Richardson, 1870–1946) from Melbourne published *Australia Felix,* the first novel in her trilogy *The Fortunes of Richard Mahony,* in 1917. Mahony's story follows the sad career of her own father, a Dublin doctor who had joined the gold rush to Australia. An older writer, W.H.Hudson (1841–1922), a naturalist, whose romantic novel *Green Mansions* (1904) had been set in South Africa, gave a vivid and entrancing account of his Argentinian boyhood in the autobiography *Far Away and Long Ago* (1918). Norman Douglas (1868–1952), the travel writer, wrote an evocative novel of escape in *South Wind* (1916). It is set in an idealized Mediterranean island where corruption and chatter are the main occupations of freaks and cranks. Sir Max Beerbohm (1872–1956), the urbane, elegant ironist and cartoonist who had known Wilde and the decadents of the 1890s, published his comic novel of Oxford life, *Zuleika Dobson,* in 1911 and his comic studies, *Seven Men,* in 1919. The former recounts mass suicide by undergraduates infatuated by the adorable Zuleika; and the latter satirizes literary and social figures with delicious humour and parody. More brittle than Douglas's world, more transparent than Beerbohm's, is that presented in the novellas of Ronald Firbank (1886–1926), whose nebulous personalities are so many voices floating eloquently about the reader's ears. In *Vainglory* (1915), *Caprice* (1916) and *Valmouth* (1919) dialogue is rich in witty aphorism and light irony. The 'stories' are vague, indeed negligible. The tone of decadent preciosity is palpable.

'Saki' (Hector Hugh Munro) (1870–1916), an altogether sourer ironist, was to lose his life on the Western Front, but not before he had made high mockery of English society life. He began by recording the conversation of a frivolous young cynic in the sketches collected as *Reginald* (1904), and then refined his technique of mordant ridicule in short stories and in the novel *The Unbearable Bassington* (1912). Dialogue is often sophisticatedly hilarious. Saki is master of the bitchy riposte and the cynical slap-down ('If one hides one's talent under a bushel, one must be careful to point out to

everyone the exact bushel under which it is hidden'). For sheer sourness, however, he might well be challenged by Caradoc Evans (1878–1945), though whereas Saki's target is London society, Evans's target is the Welsh peasantry. His collections of short stories (*My People,* 1915; *Capel Sion,* 1916; *My Neighbours,* 1919) are virulent in portraying the savagery of rural life and the religious hypocrisy under which it is cloaked. One 'Father in Sion' keeps his mentally sick wife padlocked in a stable loft and airs her once a week with a cow's halter round her neck. Understandably enough, Evans made himself hated. But he is a powerful stylist, harnessing biblical and Welsh idioms and rhythms.

A much sunnier humour marks the portrayal of Irish rural life by E.Oe.Somerville (1858–1949) and Martin Ross (properly, Florence Martin) (1862–1914). Their reputation was made back in 1899 by *Some Experiences of an Irish RM,* a collection of stories in which the well-meaning, but half-English, Resident Magistrate, Major Yeates, does his best to make sense of life lived amid the ingenious antics of the locals. Further stories were added in *Further Experiences of an Irish RM* (1908) and *In Mr Knox's Country* (1915). Meanwhile, in *The Charwoman's Daughter* (1912), the Irish poet and novelist James Stephens (1880–1950) showed Dublin's streets and people seen through the eyes of a poor girl whose day-dreams are her only compensations for the privations of tenement life. Stephens's *The Crock of Gold* (1912) mingles reality and fantasy, fairy tale and philosophy, in a charming hotchpotch.

There is no fantasy in the world of Somerset Maugham (1874– 1965), a novelist and dramatist who qualified as a doctor before turning to writing. There is clinical detachment in his study of human character and surgical precision in ironic judgement. *Of Human Bondage* (1915) contains autobiographical material. Philip Carey, an orphan with a club foot (Maugham himself had a stammer), tries vainly to become an artist. Nor is there fantasy in the world of E.M. Forster (1879–1970). He organizes his material in a dualistic pattern whereby opposed attitudes to life collide and their respective representatives fail to bridge the gap between them. In *Where Angels Fear to Tread* (1905) the conflict is between English middle-class respectability (Forster's favourite target) which, under a hypocritical exterior, is narrow-minded, provincial and crudely insensitive, and Italian warmth and impetuosity. In *Howards End* (1910) the collision is between the solidly efficient but insensitive English family, the Wilcoxes, and the more cultured and sensitive Schlegel sisters, who

are half-German. The Wilcoxes' world is that of commerce, imperialism and philistinism, while the Schlegels are socialists and go to symphony concerts. *A Passage to India* (1924) explores the difficulty of achieving a mutual understanding between the English and the natives in British India. Forster's message throughout his work is based on respect for 'passion and truth', for 'personal relations', for 'integrity', as opposed to conventionalism and rule by accepted 'catchwords'. Of course the dichotomies he relies upon soon became the clichés of a new conventionalism whose demolition is now under way.

Two writers who began to make themselves known before the First World War and attained immense popularity later were Hugh Walpole (1884–1941) and Compton Mackenzie (1883–1972). Both were encouraged by Henry James. *Mr Perrin and Mr Traill* (1911), a powerful study of hatred between two schoolmasters, drew attention to Walpole's talent, and *Sinister Street* (1913), a thoughtful study of a middle-class boy's adolescence and development, drew attention to Mackenzie's. Mackenzie's facility, the readiness of his humour and his narrative inventiveness guaranteed continuing success in light novels, but he wrote too a massive six-volume fictional survey of his own age, *Four Winds of Love* (1937–45). Walpole's ambition also stirred him to challenging enterprises. *The Cathedral* (1922) invited comparison with Trollope, centring as it does on the public and private downfall of the Archdeacon of Polchester. And eventually Walpole wrote a monumental family saga chronicling the history of a Lake District family over a hundred years. *Rogue Herries* (1930) was the first volume of *The Herries Chronicle*.

Mackenzie might have claimed that the desire to entertain and the facility to do so in a lifetime's productivity need not cheapen a writer's gifts. P.G.Wodehouse (1881–1975) might be cited to prove the point. His humorous novels exploit farcical situations involving a group of characters as well known as any in English literature—the Hon. Bertie Wooster and his butler Jeeves, Psmith and Aunt Agatha, and lots of idle gentry and their satellites. The style brilliantly caricatures gentlemanly finesse and aristocratic dignity, with earthier tones appropriate to the lower orders. The *dramatis personae* are put through their paces in situations of adroitly contrived absurdity, yet naturalness of sequence and of dialogue is unbroken for the reader who enters Wodehouse's world on its own irresistible terms. *Leave it to Psmith* (1923), *The Inimitable Jeeves* (1924) and *Carry on Jeeves* (1925) show the author at full tide.

It is convenient at this point to interpose a note on the beginnings of that current of children's fiction which has flowed so richly this century. The wider diffusion of culture has made the child readership an important one; and it may well be that imaginative writers of quality will turn increasingly to this public if adult fiction turns irrecoverably sour. Of course some writers for children are not people who, one feels, *might* have written for an older public. Beatrix Potter (1866–1943) is a case in point. *The Tale of Peter Rabbit* (1902) was the first of a series of animal stories, finely illustrated in water-colour, which blended a knowledge of real animals and what one can only call a reverence for their animal individualness with the gift for dressing them up and making them talk. As there is no condescension to rabbits, ducks, hedgehogs and cats (to Benjamin Bunny, Jemima Puddleduck, Mrs Tiggy-Winkle or even naughty Tom Kitten), so there is no condescension to children. When the meaning of 'credit' is explained in *The Tale of Ginger and Pickles* (a cat and a terrier who keep a shop), the explanation, you feel, leaves the children understanding the system a good deal more profoundly than those adults who practise it. Beatrix Potter's style is inimitably businesslike and to the point. The narrative line is richly filled out by illustrations, notable for scenes of the Lake District where Beatrix Potter lived for much of her life.

The Lake District also provided the setting for some of Arthur Ransome's adventure stories for children of a higher age group. Ransome (1884–1967) had an interest in outdoor activities like camping and sailing boats and this, together with his knowledge of nature and topography, gave body to his adventure stories such as *Swallows and Amazons* (1931). The children use the vocabulary of adult enterprise and seem conversant with the technical terminology of fairly advanced seamanship, but their explorations are realistic holiday activities and there are reliable, kissable parents in the background. An older writer still, Kenneth Grahame (1859–1932), published *The Wind in the Willows* (1908) whose setting is the River Bank, where the Good Life is lived by a friendly community of Rat, Mole, Badger and others. They refrain from marriage and work, but mess about unambitiously, especially with boats. When Toad of Toad Hall, an irresponsible and conceited fellow, becomes enamoured of modern gadgetry, they have to deal with a menacing threat to their way of life.

A.A.Milne (1882–1956) had worked as journalist and dramatist before his children's books took the country's middle-class families by storm in the 1920s. It was the birth of Milne's son, Christopher Robin, and the parental need to turn bedtime entertainer that initiated the uncovering of Milne's immense talent for vivifying toy animals. Appropriate human characteristics—lovable slow-wittedness (Pooh Bear), plaintive self-pity (Eeyore), pathetic ineffectiveness (tiny Piglet) and diminutive 'cheekiness' (Roo, pocket edition of Kanga)—are read into the toy animals according to their appearance. Stuffed limbs, suitably bedraggled, and stitched eyes were vividly realized in E.H.Shepard's illustrations. The two prose volumes, *Winnie-the-Pooh* (1926) and *The House at Pooh Corner* (1928), built upon the reputation firmly established by Milne's charmingly versatile verses for children in *When We Were Very Young* (1924), to which *Now We Are Six* was added in 1927.

At the other end of the literary spectrum from the popular entertainment of old or young provided by a Wodehouse or a Milne stands the sophistication of the 'Bloomsbury Group', a coterie of writers and intellectuals with a common interest in love, art and truth, and a common revulsion against the cramping inhibitions of the middle-class Victorian mind. A key figure in the group was the biographer Lytton Strachey (1880–1932), who gained a reputation for debunking by frankly deflating the 'heroes' of recent history in his spicy studies of Florence Nightingale, Cardinal Manning and Thomas Arnold in *Eminent Victorians* (1918). He applied the same ironic technique, in some respects less devastatingly and more sentimentally, to the Queen, Prince Albert and others in *Queen Victoria* (1921). A writer at the centre of the group was Virginia Woolf (1882–1941). She was a woman of great sensitivity, subject to mental depression, and she took her own life at the height of the air war in England.

Virginia Woolf felt that standard fictional techniques of traditional plotting and character projection constituted an artistic servitude to the crude external sequence of events. To this extent she had affinities with Proust and Joyce. She replaced the standard techniques of presentation—description, narrative and dialogue, arranged in successive chunks—with a 'stream of consciousness' which could represent the fluidity of the inner life and the sharp richness of the little experiences and sensations that stimulate it. Virginia Woolf thus evolved a technique in which characters are not 'presented' to the reader: rather the content of their inner lives impinges on the reader.

In *Mrs Dalloway* (1925) events take place in a single summer day in the life of Clarissa Dalloway, but the substance of the book is contained in mental reflections and flashbacks that reconstruct Mrs Dalloway's past. *To the Lighthouse* (1927) extends the technique, handling a group of people centred on the Ramsey family in their seaside home. The party plan to visit the lighthouse in part 1 of the book but do not go. Only after the passage often eventful years is the trip made; and by now the lighthouse has become a powerful symbol of the shifting light and darkness in human life. *Orlando* (1928) is remarkable in that Orlando's lifetime extends over four centuries. At first an Elizabethan nobleman, he changes sex *en route* through history. Virginia Woolf intended the book as a tribute to her friend Victoria Sackville-West (1892–1962), whose novel *The Edwardians* (1930) gives a lively first-hand account of life in a ducal residence in the early years of the century. In Virginia Woolf's *The Waves* (1931) the externals of action and dialogue are totally submerged, and the reader is taken into the minds of a group of growing characters who know one another when young, but whose ways diverge for many years. The personality of each is reflected in the minds of the others so that a kaleidoscopic pattern emerges, corresponding in its glittering fluidity to the movement of the sea.

To some extent Virginia Woolf's experimentation had been anticipated by Dorothy Richardson (1873–1957) whose vast thirteennovel work, *Pilgrimage,* began with the publication of *Pointed Roofs* in 1915. The work is transfigured autobiography, utilizing a streamof-consciousness technique as a deliberate attempt to produce a feminine alternative to masculine realism. But the narrative flags under the weight of undifferentiated detail.

A vastly different innovator was D.H.Lawrence (1885–1930). His working-class background, his obsession with sexual passion, his open determination to preach, and his casual attitude to the novel as an art form are four characteristics that distinguish him from Virginia Woolf. His father was a Nottinghamshire miner, barely literate, and his mother an ex-schoolteacher increasingly dissatisfied with her husband's cultural level and desperately anxious for 'Bertie' (David Herbert), her favourite, to rise above his origins. Mrs Lawrence's possessive devotion to her son and the tension of the family situation are represented autobiographically in the novel *Sons and Lovers* (1913). In a finely realized account of mining life in the Midlands, the situation of the Morel family parallels that of the Lawrences. Mrs Morel's background was middle-class and the passion that caused her

to marry her miner husband has died, to leave her love wholly directed at her sons, especially at Paul. Paul's psychological development is traced with subtlety, especially the growth of his interest in books and painting and the course of his early love affairs with Miriam and Clara. The boy cannot escape the overpowering emotional bond imposed by his mother's love and he fails to achieve a fulfilling relationship with either girl. The personality of Miriam ('nearly sixteen, very beautiful, with her warm colouring, her gravity, her eyes dilating suddenly like an ecstasy'), pitted against the competitive emotional demand of Paul's mother (who dies of cancer), is movingly alive; and Jessie Chambers, whom Miriam represents, has written her own reminiscences of Lawrence since his death. (See *D.H.Lawrence, A Personal Record,* by E.T., 1935.)

After teacher training at University College, Nottingham, and subsequent teaching at Croydon, Lawrence turned to full-time writing, publishing *The White Peacock* in 1911 and *The Trespasser* in 1912. In the meantime his mother had died and in 1912 Lawrence fell in love with Frieda Weekley. He took her away from her husband (a professor at Nottingham) and her three children to the Continent. Sexual passion thus had a practical primacy for him over other obligations, and it was again his preoccupation in *The Rainbow* (1915) and in *Women in Love* (1920). The former covers the lives of three generations of a Nottinghamshire family, the Brangwens, but is especially concerned with the emotional career of Ursula Brangwen, a sensitive woman who rejects the deadening mechanization of spirit and environment by the mining industry. The theme ramifies in the sequel, *Women in Love*. Here Gudrun and her sister, Ursula, are paired with Gerald Crich, son of a mine-owner, and Rupert Birkin, a school inspector. Gerald is representative of the industrial ethic and Birkin spokesman for the passionate self that must assert its integrity against the cramping pressures of mechanized industrialism and the domination of intellect. Lawrence was now using the novel form to hammer out a view of life and to exercise a radical effect on his readers' thinking. Sex-based anti-intellectualist theories are extravagantly developed in the nonfiction work, *Fantasia of the Unconscious*. But one must remember that Lawrence was not a static thinker. He does not hesitate to pit idea against idea: even theories that he likes may be propounded by one character and taken to pieces by another. He lives his own problems on paper. The marital difficulties of Richard Lovat Somers and his wife in *Kangaroo* (1923) are projected from Lawrence's own experience with Frieda. The book

gives a rich portrayal of Australian life and scenery. Cooley, the underground fascist leader, is a Nietzschean devotee of 'blood-consciousness', but Somers in the end rejects his leadership. *The Plumed Serpent* (1926), set in Mexico, develops the Nietzschean theme and gives it a religious dimension. Set against the alien Catholic culture is an Aztec cult that is rooted in sex and blood-consciousness and exalts the dominant male over the passive female. One is aware of an almost demonic urge driving Lawrence towards the assertion of unexplored naturalistic allegiances to replace the civilizational values he hated and had rejected. The frank sexuality of *Lady Chatterley's Lover* (1928) made it his most notorious book. It takes us back to Nottinghamshire. Sir Clifford Chatterley has returned from the war paralysed below the waist. His impotence is made symbolic of the sterile upper-class establishment. Mellors, the gamekeeper, representative of lower-class virility, provides the sexual satisfaction Chatterley's wife, Connie, desperately needs. In attempting to intensify the collision between what is vital and what is moribund,

Lawrence made free use of 'four-letter' words in the love relationship. The urge to rescue such words from the slough of comic obscenity was vain.

In 1914 Ezra Pound was already describing Lawrence and Joyce as 'the two strongest prose writers among *les jeunes*'.[3] James Joyce (1882–1941) was born and educated in Dublin. His incorrigibly thriftless father and struggling mother brought up their children (ten of them) ever nearer the edge of poverty, but Joyce was thoroughly educated at Catholic schools and at University College, Dublin. Then, after a year in Paris, and a return to Dublin on his mother's death, he went abroad with Nora Barnacle in 1904 and kept himself by teaching until he was able (with the help of patronage) to be a full-time writer. It was not until 1914 that Joyce managed to get his book of short stories, *Dubliners,* published. The stories are written with deceptive simplicity and deal successively with events of childhood, youth and adulthood. Some show the nullifying effect of the Dublin social and mental environment on characters whose dreams, hopes and ambitions are pathetically or tragically unfulfilled. The rhythm of aspiration and disappointment or resignation recurs at various levels of sophistication; and the element of stylization in the patterning of

[3] Quoted in Stuart Gilbert (ed.), *Letters of James Joyce,* Faber & Faber, 1957.

the material, together with the evident recourse to symbolism, foreshadows Joyce's later work.

A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man had been long a-writing when it came out in 1916. It reworked much material in *Stephen Hero,* a manuscript that has been posthumously published (1944). It is as much rooted in autobiographical experience as Lawrence's *Sons and Lovers,* yet the artistic technique is so different that it can easily be misread. Joyce at once hugs his hero close in sympathy and distances him in irony: the resultant blend of pathos and humour is piquant. Of course Stephen's recollections of home, school, first love, and awakening cultural interests have an unmistakably authentic core; but the final artistic self-dedication is to 'silence, exile, and cunning', and silence and cunning imply abandonment of direct openness. The adoption of literary subterfuges—symbolism, labyrinthinism, and formality hidden inside naturalism—are as important in the total artistic vocation as the need by exile to escape Irish politics, religion and sentimentality. Joyce's presentation of
Stephen's experience from within Stephen's own mind involves use of styles in tune with infant thought, childhood thought, adolescent thought and student thought successively. Sensitive adjustment of idiom to the thinker's moods and understanding, whether they are healthy or not, involves walking on a stylistic tightrope stretched precariously between involvement and detachment. The thematic use of images establishes continuing symbolic connections. Stephen Dedalus's own name brings together that of the first Christian martyr and that of the arch artificer of classical legend.

With *Ulysses* (1922) we reach a masterpiece of epic proportions. The framework is linked to the *Odyssey*. Odysseus's years of wandering, his son Telemachus's search for him, and the return to Penelope, are echoed in the story of Leopold Bloom, Dublin advertisement canvasser, Stephen Dedalus (who is in search of spiritual fatherhood), and Molly, Bloom's much-loved but sexually neglected wife. For wanderings about the world of ancient myth we have wanderings about the city of Dublin. All is compressed within one June day (the 16th) in 1904. The full development of the 'streamof-consciousness' technique enables Bloom's past life to be grasped in retrospect. The technique faithfully records the flow of thought and feeling, doing justice to persistent emotional currents and logical randomness alike. The natural flow of mental reflection, the shifting moods and impulses that constitute the fabric of inner life, are represented with uncanny penetration. But readers who see only thus far miss much of

Joyce's power. For as the outer and inner action proceeds, Joyce's 'poetry' continuously throws up metaphors, symbols, ambiguities and overtones which gradually link themselves together so as to form a network of connections and crossconnections binding the whole edifice in unity.

Leopold Bloom has been sexually separated from his wife for ten years since the birth and tragic death, eleven days later, of their longed-for son, Rudy. Leopold is a Jew. His separation from Molly is not only comparable to Odysseus's separation from Penelope, for the upgrading of Bloom to epic status is part of a wider enrichment of significance. Joyce's imagery makes Bloom the focus of universal human tensions. His hunger for Molly is an aspect of everyman's hunger for his earth goddess, for his mother, for the warmth and security and fulfilment which earth can never permanently provide. Therefore it corresponds with man's idealistic turning to Church and Madonna, mystical Bride and Divine Spouse. The imagery gives Molly a changing status: she may correspond to mother country, Mother Church, or mother of the Son of Man. Similarly her infidelity with Boylan may correspond now with Ireland's betrayal of her children, now with Eve's betrayal of Adam, and now (via a symbolic reading of *Hamlet*) with betrayal by the frail, erring human flesh of the manhood it has mothered. The system of correspondences enables Joyce to take a panoramic (even encyclopedic) view of the human situation while never for a moment relaxing his grip on the particular: for *Ulysses* is alive throughout with the savour and salt of life in Dublin in 1904. The reader is deeply immersed in the currents of its private and public life. But Joyce makes Dublic everyman's city. In its association with Molly it is a potential reflection of *Urbs Beata,* the New Jerusalem, though Bloom, materialistic twentieth-century everyman, whose eye is on the main chance, would prefer to see it turned into the New Bloomusalem, with electric dishscrubbers, bonuses for all, universal brotherhood and free love thrown in.

The eighteen episodes are divided into three books (three, twelve, three) with an implicit Dantean structure, in that the central section, Bloom's wanderings in Dublin, takes us spiralling down the circles of modern 'unreality' (in newspaper office, library and the like) to the depths of the twentieth-century Inferno in the brothels of Nighttown. The moral pattern is clear. In Molly's adultery we see the home betrayed from without and within (by Boylan's intrusion, by Bloom's fastidious neglect). Molly is Eve seduced by Satan, Ireland usurped by the British, the Church betrayed from within, the flesh of man let

down by the selfish masculine intellect. Ireland is betrayed by those who rend her dedicated prophetic leaders, by those who sell her horses to the enemy for cash, by those who sell her artistic soul for cash (as establishment writers do) and by those who sell her young womanhood for cash in the Dublin brothels.

The humour of the book balances its profundity; the stylistic virtuosity matches the magnitude of the conception. Each episode displays Joyce's literary skill in a distinct style appropriate to the substance of that episode alone. Joyce spent seven years writing *Ulysses*. Its delights and its illuminations for the reader are excitingly added to with every reading, however many. At the end of several, the reader will wish to try *Finnegans Wake* (1939) where new techniques of verbal ambiguity allow for the accumulation of simultaneous meanings at a new level of complexity. Joyce had experimented in *Ulysses* with new words like 'menagerer' which derives a threefold connotation from 'manager', 'ménage' and 'menagerie'. By developing this method of compression and calling in the aid of other languages than English, he gave additional dimensions to the tale of a Dublin publican and his family, touching the cosmic and the archetypal at one extreme and the personal (autobiographical) at the other. The text is difficult. Joyce could justify his method on the grounds that the world of *Finnegans Wake* is the dream world in which we spend a good part of our lives, and where shifting identities, multiple significances and absurdly incongruous composite impressions are commonplace.

An exciting writer in close touch with Joyce, Eliot and Pound was Wyndham Lewis (1884–1957). He shared the 'anti-romantic' drive towards reinstating artistic impersonality and the values of intelligence; for he hated current indulgence of the artistic personality and sentimental denigration of intellect and objectivity. He had no sympathy with Lawrence's cultivation of the primitive and the unconscious nor with the 'stream-of-consciousness' technique because of its internality and intuitiveness. As an artist he led a movement known as 'Vorticism', yet he wrote prolifically as novelist and polemicist. *Time and Western Man* (1927) has perhaps been most celebrated among his polemical books. The summit of his work as a novelist is represented by the trilogy, *Childermass* (1928), *Monstre Gai* and *Malign Fiesta* (both 1955), a fantastic satirical epic in which we first see the mass of humanity gathered outside Heaven and facing supernatural judgement before a peculiar authority (half man, half dwarf) known as the Bailiff. Great claims have been made for

Wyndham Lewis by his admirers. He has been compared to Swift for the intellectual passion of his satire, and to Blake for his lonely, prophetic mission of judgement.

A more cheerful, less vitriolic satirist, who later however turned solemn sage, was Aldous Huxley (1894–1963). Grandson of T.H. Huxley, the scientist, and connected through his mother with Matthew Arnold, he was a man of intellect. His early novels were witty satirical studies of the fashionable cultural circles of the 1920s. Huxley's casual display of erudition and his capacity to give highbrow status to cleverness about current cleverness (and wickedness) gave him a cult appeal to the student as a kind of educated Noel Coward. The technique at first owes something to Thomas Love Peacock in its emphasis on the conversation of eccentrics (*Crome Yellow,* 1921), though *Antic Hay* (1923) offsets the cynical representation of highbrow chatter with the activities of Theodore Gumbril who markets Gumbril's Patent Small-Clothes— with built-in pneumatic seats. *Point Counter Point* (1928) represents the early vein at its richest. It experiments with the interplay of themes (chiefly disturbed marriages and liaisons) on a musical pattern, and the writer Philip Quarles is working on a novel counterpointing what is happening. Huxley draws on Lawrence and Frieda for Mark Rampion and his wife, on John Middleton Murry (Lawrence's biographer in *Son of Woman*) for Burlap and on Sir Oswald Mosley for Everard Webley. *Brave New World* (1932) is a fantasy of the future. The year is 632 AF (After Ford). Totalitarian scientific control governs everything from the incubation of babies in bottles to the assignment of each (pre-conditioned) being to his appropriate (predetermined) function in society. Culture is suppressed. Standardized pleasures are laid on through the contentment media. Hygiene is the supreme moral value ('Mother' is a dirty word). The accuracy of the forecasting is still worrying. Huxley's later work is strongly influenced by successive concern with pacifism, mysticism and the occult.

If Huxley turned into a sage, the satirist T.F.Powys (1875–1953) all but turned into a hermit, though a married one. He was one of three Powys brothers who made their names as writers. The youngest of the trio, Llewelyn Powys (1884–1939), published fiction and miscellaneous prose. The eldest, John Cowper Powys (1872–1963), a novelist of great imaginative energy and awareness, wove vast verbal tapestries, variegated in human and scenic display. His Wessex novels, *Wolf Solent* (1929), *A Glastonbury Romance* (1932) and *Maiden Castle* (1936), have intermittent intensity of perception but

are not comparably strong in clarity of design or purpose. T.F.Powys was a more disciplined stylist, who modelled his sinewy, economic prose on Bunyan's. He lived quietly in a village in Dorset and the novels that emerged from his seclusion indicate the complexity of his response to life. He is at once a moralist with a religious vein and a scathing satirist. There is harsh irony, ruthless exposure of savagery and sexuality in village life in *Mr Tasker's Gods* (1925), for instance; but there is a seductive vein of symbolism in *Mr Weston's Good Wine* (1927) where God figures as a travelling vintner.

The period in which these novels were published produced a spate of popular rural fiction. A current emphasis on the primitive ways of rough-hewn countrymen is well exemplified in the best-seller *Precious Bane* (1924) by Mary Webb (1881–1927), whose heroine (like her creatrix) has an untreated harelip but ultimately finds her man nevertheless. This rural vein was hilariously burlesqued by Stella Gibbons (1902–) in her *Cold Comfort Farm* (1932). A sober account of earlier rural life was given in the three autobiographical books (collected as *Lark Rise to Candleford,* 1945) by Flora Thompson (1873–1947), a stonemason's daughter who registered the day-to-day life of a late nineteenth-century village with fascinating fullness of recall.

Other women writers who were at work in the inter-war years include Margaret Kennedy (1896–1967), whose immensely successful novel *The Constant Nymph* (1924) shows spiritedness and love in (ultimately tragic) conflict with conventionalized society; Rebecca West (1892–1983), novelist and critical thinker, who spread her energies widely in journalism; and Naomi Mitchison (1897–), who combined genuine historical authenticity with updated raciness of conversational idiom in stories of Greece and Rome such as *The Conquered* (1923). Her successor in this field, Mary Renault (properly Mary Challans) (1905–83), was to reproduce the life of the classical and ancient world in her Minoan novels (see *The King Must Die,* 1958) and her novels on Alexander the Great (*Fire from Heaven,* 1970).

There was an inter-war appetite for family chronicles which Storm Jameson (1897–) helped to feed with her trilogy on a Yorkshire shipbuilding family, *The Triumph of Time* (1932). A contemporary and more socially aware picture of the shipbuilding industry was given by George Blake (1893–1961) in *The Shipbuilders* (1935), which realistically documents the effect of the slump on the Clydeside shipyards and their employees. A fellow Scot, Neil Gunn (1891–

1973), did for the crofters and fishermen of Sutherland and Caithness what Blake did for Glasgow ship-workers, and with an intense grasp of the personal cost of physical struggle and privation. (See *The Grey Coast,* 1927.) Lewis Grassic Gibbon (1901–35) set his trilogy of novels *A Scots Quair* (beginning with *Sunset Song,* 1932) partly in his native area, the Mearns of Kincardineshire, tracing the story of a crofter's daughter from girlhood to middle age. The impact of the First World War and subsequent social changes overshadow a personal story that is brought to life in a fluent, rhythmic style rich in the 'speak' of the region.

While these writers were at work in Scotland, Wales's literary successor to Caradoc Evans, Rhys Davies (1903–78), portrayed his people in short stories without Evans's bitterness but with something of Evans's tendency to over-Welshify the Welsh for the entertainment of the English. (His tales were eventually garnered in *Collected Stories,* 1955.) Davies's own successor, Glyn Jones (1905–), is more intimately and compassionately involved with his characters. He is deeply sensitive to both the darker and the brighter aspects of the Welsh background and the Welsh character. He has a rhapsodic lyrical vein alongside a sharp sense of the comic. Realism and fantasy, squalor and rapture, earthiness and romance go hand in hand. (See *Selected Short Stories,* 1971.) A much older short-story writer who nevertheless produced his best work in the 1920s was the Englishman A.E.Coppard (1878–1957). His collections include *Adam & Eve & Pinch Me* (1921), and the tales are the work of a refined craftsman with a sharp eye for the sudden epiphany which can transfigure workaday life.

In the genre of satire David Garnett (1892–1981) mocked fidelity in marriage in *Lady into Fox* (1922) in which a country gentleman keeps up appearances as best he can while his wife is transformed into a fox. William Gerhardi (1895–1977), who was born in St Petersburg of a family of Manchester mill-owners, gave an amusing sketch of the 'comic opera attempts to wipe out the Russian revolution' in *Futility* (1922) before turning from satire to psychology in *Of Mortal Love* (1936). There is a lively sense of foolery and knavery in the work of Rose Macaulay (1881–1958). *Potterism* (1920) brought her celebrity for its withering ridicule of current go-getting philistinism. *Told by an Idiot* (1923) is a threegeneration family study in similar vein. Deeper personal concerns push their way to the surface in later books, notably *The Towers of Trebizond* (1956) where her own emotional crisis in

worried love for a married man[4] is reflected. The dilemma of conscience is movingly recorded in *Letters to a Friend* and *Last Letters to a Friend* (1961–2).

No soul-searing tensions visit the world of J.B.Priestley (1894–) in *The Good Companions* (1929), a frank attempt to resurrect the zestful bounce and gusto of the three-decker picaresque novel. It oozes with aggressive Yorkshire warm-heartedness, and Jess Oakroyd of Bruddersford is a substantial human study. Later novels have sustained the tale of success it initiated. Priestley is also a critic, with books on Meredith and Peacock to his credit, as well as the more comprehensive study *Literature and Western Man* (1960). And he is an agreeable essayist (*Delight,* 1949).

If Priestley's literary method harks back to the eighteenth century, that of Elizabeth Bowen (1899–1973) derives more immediately from twentieth-century developments in psychology. Her detailed exploration of the inner emotional life and her interest in tangled relationships reflected through the minds of children remind one of Virginia Woolf. She is acute in rendering the maturing experience of sensitive women and the transmutation of innocence and idealism into wounded understanding (as in *The Hotel,* 1927, and *The Death of the Heart,* 1938). The name of Rosamond Lehmann (1903–) is often linked with hers because Miss Lehmann's first novel, *Dusty Answer* (1927), traced the development of a sensitive girl.

Elizabeth Bowen was born in Dublin and inherited an estate in County Cork. She confessed herself one of those Anglo-Irish who were 'only at home in mid-crossing between Holyhead and Dun Laoghaire'. The allegiances of some of her contemporaries were sometimes less ambiguous. Frank O'Connor (1903–66), the shortstory writer from Cork, turned Republican after the 1916 executions and fought in the Civil War, an experience which produced the famous title story of *Guests of the Nation* (1931). Sean O'Faolain (1900–), another Corkman who fought against the Free State forces, wrote vividly about the troubles in his collection of short stories, *Midsummer Night Madness* (1932), and went on to study Irish life in novels such as *A Nest of Simple Folk* (1933) and further volumes of stories which are often full of vitality and percipience.

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[4] An interesting sidelight on this relationship is that the man in question, Gerald O'Donovan (1872–1942), was himself a minor novelist whose own early story is fictionalized in his novel *Father Ralph* (1913). He was a Roman Catholic priest in Ireland until changing convictions drove him away from his work and his country. His case inspired George Moore to write his novel *The Lake*.

Liam O'Flaherty (1896–), who hails from the Aran Islands, a third veteran of the Republican war against the Free State, portrayed horrific aspects of revolutionary terrorism in his lurid novel *The Informer* (1925), but many of his later short stories have a compensating restraint and simplicity.

An Irishwoman of vastly different background and temperament was Helen Waddell (1889–1965), daughter of a Presbyterian missionary from County Down, who went from Queen's College, Belfast, to Oxford. A medieval scholar with more than a touch of poetry in her prose, she wrote a study of medieval Latin poets (*The Wandering Scholars,* 1927) and returned to the twelfth century to reproduce the story of Heloise and Abelard in the novel, *Peter Abelard* (1933). Her scholarship and her feeling for the age were such that she was able to handle the emotional story lyrically without cheapening it. She faithfully reproduces the intellectual climate of the age, doing justice to the theological and philosophical controversies Abelard was involved in and binding them so closely to his personal dilemma that the whole acquires the status of an archetypal study in Christian self-surrender such as Eliot made in *Murder in the Cathedral*.

Theology gives depth of a different kind to the novels of Charles Williams (1886–1945). Williams presented the human being as supernaturally involved in a cosmic conflict between the powers of light and of darkness. He was penetratingly subtle in detecting the ease with which the misorientated ego can become virtually possessed by potencies demonically motivated. His novels open up the daily twentieth-century lives of his characters to the full range of spiritual influences from without—whether divine or diabolical in origin. His supernatural mythology is not just fictional machinery but credible Christian symbolism. The later novels like *Descent into Hell* (1937) and *All Hallows' Eve* (1945) are the best. Williams's work in the field where theology and literary criticism meet (*The Figure of Beatrice, A Study in Dante,* 1943) is stimulating. Williams had interesting literary connections, being both a friend of T.S.Eliot and a member of the Oxford circle associated with C.S.Lewis (1898–1963). It was Lewis who, in *Arthurian Torso* (1948), recommended and elucidated Williams's sequences of Arthurian poems, *Taliessin Through Logres* (1938) and *The Region of the Summer Stars* (1944).

Lewis's own work as a literary critic and Christian apologist (especially the famous correspondence between devils, *The Screwtape Letters,* 1942) has been enormously influential. His novels give the weight of moral and religious significance to tales of

interplanetary travel and biological experimentation such as are now generally called science fiction (*Out of the Silent Planet,* 1938, *Perelandra,* 1943, *That Hideous Strength,* 1945). Lewis's frank use of allegory in *The Pilgrim's Regress* ('An Allegorical Apology for Christianity, Reason, and Romanticism', 1933) deserves more attention than it has had, but perhaps his finest work as an imaginative writer is in the chronicles of Narnia, seven stories for children, of which the first, *The Lion, The Witch, and the Wardrobe* (1950), represents the divine power of redeeming love in the person of the awesome lion, Aslan. In these stories the finely articulated symbolism shadows aspects of the Christian faith and, in *The Silver Chair* (1953) for example, brings a shrewd prophetic wisdom to bear on contemporary civilization.

Dorothy Sayers's work as dramatist, apologist and translator of Dante brought her within Lewis's circle. Her reputation as detective novelist predates the connection. In this field she added to the necessary expertise in criminal investigation a power to give vitality to men and women of taste and culture who have plenty to talk about in addition to corpses and clues. The spice her wit and sophistication provided for the educated reader relied a good deal on the character of her amateur sleuth, Lord Peter Wimsey, an urbane, donnish aristocrat: but she also laid on meatily digestible backgrounds such as the advertising agency in *Murder Must Advertise* (1933). It is of course a woman who has become one of the most popular and prolific of all English detective novelists, Agatha Christie (1891–1976), largely, it would seem, by virtue of the skilfully engineered complexity of her plots.

Of all that emerged from Lewis's circle the most astonishing success has attended the work of J.R.R.Tolkien (1892–1973). His fairy story *The Hobbit* (1937) proved to be forerunner of a massive mythical epic in three parts, *The Lord of the Rings* (1954–5). The hobbit is a little, two-legged being, whose encounter with dwarfs takes him from his cosy home to dangerous adventuring in forests and mountains and a perilous introduction to the dragon, Smaug. This adventure is enriched by hints of a mighty 'history' in the background, but scarcely prepares us for the colossal expansion of the fantasy world that follows in the trilogy. The vast work takes us into a world strangely alive with unspoken meanings and unseen presences. The magic ring is the token of corruption, for its possession means power. It has been captured from Sauron, Dark Lord of the evil and desolate land of Mordor, who would recover it and enslave all living beings. A key

foe is Aragorn, heir to the rival kingdom of Gondor. Among the inhabitants of the Middle-Earth in the Great Year of its Third Age, whose history Tolkien is chronicling, we meet dwarfs, elves, wizards, and unfamiliar species like the Orcs and the Ents, as well as the hobbits. Tolkien has not of course elucidated the meaning of the underlying symbolism. That the modern world of technology and mechanization seems to be under judgement is evident, and the awareness of good and evil in conflict is palpable throughout. Tolkien's imaginative inventiveness is extraordinary, and his flair for name-making a great bonus of adornment. His epic is the product of a rich fusion between scholarship in older languages and in mythology, and a Christianly orientated imagination (he was a Roman Catholic).

Another trilogy of epic quality is that by Mervyn Peake (1911– 68)—*Titus Groan* (1946), *Gormenghast* (1950) and *Titus Alone* (1959). Peake too creates a fantasy world, but its inhabitants are, at least in shape, human beings however grotesque. Moreover it has no flavour of the primitive. Its horrors belong to a post-civilizational mythology. Life in Gormenghast (Titus's home) proceeds according to a complex ritual anciently established and now fully understood only by Sourdust who has devoted a lifetime to mastering it. Lord Sepulchrave (Lord Groan) gazes at the world 'through a haze of melancholia'. The Countess lives amid a swarm of cats and birds. The curator, Rottcodd, presides over the Hall of Bright Carvings. But a young radical emerges to question, murder and destroy—one Steerpike. Mervyn Peake was an artist and the pictorial power of his work is stirringly eerie and sinister. There is a cartoonery of gravity and momentousness as well as of the ridiculous, and Peake's characters loom larger than life. In the last volume, when Titus escapes from Gormenghast, we find a more savage brand of satire depicting a nightmare world uncomfortably like our own.

As Peake's stylistic virtuosity bears the marks of the artist, so too does the work of Joyce Cary (1888–1957). Here is one more writer of whom it is sometimes said that his verve and vitality put his novels outside the main stream of twentieth-century fiction: but it is possible to misidentify the 'main stream'. Some of his work harks back to the packed, rollicking world of Smollett or Dickens. Cary was born in Londonderry and the gift of colourful Irish fluency is plainly his. He has the capacity to assume a style as an actor puts on a costume. It is not only a manner of speech that he adopts: he enters into the mind and heart of characters so that they emerge obtrusively alive and

subject to criticism, yet inwardly felt and sympathized with. This is the recipe for a collision between the comic and the pathetic, between the hilarious and the tragic, that makes his books awesomely perceptive yet often riotously funny. In *Mister Johnson* (1939) the Nigerian clerk, a mission-school product, aspires to the white man's ways with a naïvety and roguery that are irresistibly touching and vibrant. He deceives himself with his own grandiose pretension ('a poet who creates for himself a glorious destiny', Cary said of him). In the trilogy, *Herself Surprised* (1941), *To Be a Pilgrim* (1942) and *The Horse's Mouth* (1944), it is first the earthy, warm-hearted cookhousekeeper, Sara Monday, whose experience is explored. She has gone into domestic service and married into the family, but after her husband's death she becomes the mistress, successively, of Gulley Jimson, a compelling but unprincipled artist, and of Thomas Loftus Wilcher, an aged solicitor. Wilcher's family history is explored in the second novel, and in the third Gulley Jimson's career is before us. Rascally, scurrilous, irrepressible as ever (after a term in gaol), he battens on Sara touchingly, on 'patrons' consciencelessly. The high farce at the end is unforgettable. A later trilogy handles a very different triangle. Nina Nimmo tells the story of her husband, Chester Nimmo, in *Prisoner of Grace* (1952). Nimmo is a dedicated and selfmesmerizing radical politician, dominant by that thrust of selfconfidence that makes Mister Johnson and Gulley Jimson what they are. In *Except the Lord* (1953) Nimmo tells his own story at the end of his life (he rose to be a cabinet minister). Jim Latter, Nina's lover, a soldier of the old school, writes *Not Honour More* (1955) in the death cell for the shooting of Nimmo. One senses an archetypal rendering of the history of twentieth-century political England patterned movingly at the personal level. Nimmo's idealism is not unrelated to the flamboyant self-deception of Mister Johnson and Gulley Jimson. The last two at least, it may be argued, are Irishmen in disguise.

There are two more novelists who were born before the turn of the century, and both are writers whose artistry operates within a narrow range. One of these is L.P.Hartley (1895–1972). His trilogy about Eustace and Hilda does not have the limitless splendours of Cary's abundance, but it is a sensitively controlled study of a brother-sister relationship (*The Shrimp and the Anemone,* 1944, *The Sixth Heaven,* 1946, and *Eustace and Hilda,* 1947). The overpowering emotional link with his sister is something Eustace, the younger, cannot snap: the attempt brings tragedy. The range of Ivy Compton-Burnett (1892–

1969) can be precisely defined. Her characters are members of upper-class families who speak a stereotyped 'Victorianese' that smacks of drawing rooms where good manners prevail. The tone of the mannered sentences is in ironic contrast to what they gradually reveal—tales of bitter internecine conflict between kindred, or between masters and servants. There is tyranny and murder, malice and blackmail, cruelty and hypocrisy in what emerges from under the verbally unruffled surface. No horror is spared. A devastatingly vitriolic view of family groupings is conveyed with witty graciousness of utterance. *Brothers and Sisters* (1929), *Elders and Betters* (1944) and *Mother and Son* (1955) are of this genre.

Of the English novelists born since 1900 perhaps Graham Greene (1904–) is the most considerable. His conversion to Roman Catholicism in 1927 has determined the character of his best work. In *Brighton Rock* (1938) he makes a study of a teenage delinquent who runs a gang and commits murder, but Pinkie has been brought up as a Catholic and is aware of sin. Greene is especially powerful in distinguishing between the Catholic ethic, which is rooted in the idea of grace and of dependence on the sacraments, and humanistic notions of virtue which lack spiritual dimension and supernatural orientation. When ill-handled, this distinction leads to the dangerous trick of surrounding wicked Catholics with an aura of superiority to good, unselfish unbelievers—a superiority that seems to have been purchased on the cheap in the religious market. But the clear identification of salvation as open to the sinful man who clings to his faith and at least tries to repent leads to fine and moving pictures like that of the 'whisky priest' persecuted in Mexico in *The Power and the Glory* (1940). Perhaps Greene's fullest sketch of a Catholic sinner whose sin is so tied up with humility, penitence and self-sacrifice that it begins to smack of godliness is that of Scobie in *The Heart of the Matter* (1948). He is a District Commissioner of Police in West Africa, desperate over non-promotion. His compassion and sensitivity lead him to adultery: his desire not to injure his mistress or his wife lead him knowingly to take communion unabsolved: then he kills himself. The implication is that he is more virtuous than the virtuous, and holier than the holy: and it is well done. Yet Greene leaves one sometimes feeling sorry for the people in his books who manage, not without cost, to be more conventionally decent and get no authorial thanks for it. Greene's style does not draw attention to itself: there is no waste of words. He lays bare the anguish and weakness of human beings on the edge of despair; but he restores to human experience the

status of the contingent. The heart breaks under the eye of God, and it is not just happiness, but salvation, that is at issue. Greene has continued to be productive and later novels included *A Burnt-Out Case* (1961), *The Human Factor* (1978) and *Dr Fischer of Geneva* (1980).

Evelyn Waugh (1903–66), like Greene, was a Roman Catholic convert. He made his name as a satirical novelist, scathing in his representation of upper-class types, but spicing the mixture with cartoonery and farce. The picture of life in a bad private school in *Decline and Fall* (1928) is riotously funny; though ironies are cheerfully pushed byond the bounds of plausibility. Waugh's later work is more serious. The distrust of modern values grows, and it is not unmixed with contempt. The Catholic leaning is linked with nostalgia for aristocratic culture in *Brideshead Revisited* (1945). An upper-class Catholic family chronicle is unfolded retrospectively when Captain Ryder is posted on wartime duty to the former family home of his friends, the Marchmains. The sense of institutional Catholicism is strong in Waugh, and a code of updated-militaristic chivalry is aired sometimes at the expense of the benighted products of modern egalitarianism. Waugh's service in the army in the Second World War was the basis of his war trilogy, *Men at Arms* (1952), *Officers and Gentlemen* (1955) and *Unconditional Surrender* (1961).

The social system is under judgement from a very different angle in the work of George Orwell (pseudonym of Eric Blair, 1903–50). A scholarship boy at Eton, Orwell became excessively conscious of his disadvantages, physical and financial. Police experience in Burma added to his class sensitivity, and the backlash took him into voluntary participation in poverty at and below the working-class level. From self-immersion among the social dregs emerged such books as *Down and Out in Paris and London* (1933) and *The Road to Wigan Pier* (1937). Orwell's most celebrated books came late in his short life. Disillusioned with Communism (after fighting in Spain), he wrote *Animal Farm* (1945), a satirical fable on revolution that has turned totalitarian. The animals oust tyrant Jones and take over the farm them-selves, but the pigs get on top, convinced of their own superiority. It is for the good of the community as a whole that, being the brains of the state, they should be well served by the others. The revolutionary slogan, 'All Animals are Equal', is amended to suit the new situation: 'But Some Animals are More Equal than Others'. *1984* (1949) looks prophetically into the future and foresees the triumph of totalitarianism so complete that individual thought is eradicated. A

Ministry of Truth feeds the nation with lies and propaganda in the name of education, culture and news. A Ministry of Love operates the insidious Thought Police, while the Ministry of Plenty cuts the rations down and the Ministry of Peace runs the permanent war. An instrument of repression is 'New-speak', the approved language from which concepts dangerous to the prevailing non-thought, are eliminated. The reader follows gloomily the crushing of a rebel, Winston Smith, who deviates into the pursuit of privacy and love. Monochrome relentlessness gives the book a certain sourness.

A fellow Etonian of exactly the same age group as Orwell, Cyril Connolly (1903–74), published one satirical study in decadence, the novel *The Rock Pool* (1936), set in a Riviera resort, and one somewhat precious collection of pensées, *The Unquiet Grave* (1944), but was an influential reviewer and essayist, and editor of *Horizon* from 1939 to 1950. Unlike Orwell, Connolly scarcely seems to belong with his contemporaries, the socially conscious poets of the 1930s, but Rex Warner (1905–) plainly does, for, before turning to historical fiction, he began his career as novelist with allegorical novels, *The Wild Goose Chase* (1937) and *The Aerodrome* (1941). He shows technologized totalitarian bureaucracy confronting Lawrentian idealism in the first case, and confronting a shabby but free English traditionalism in the second case. If Warner's best work seems to have been his earliest, the same must be said of Richard Hughes (1900–76) who never afterwards fully matched the compulsive verve of *A High Wind in Jamaica* (1929), in which young children are captured by pirates and the collision between the fantastic and the calculating, the innocent and the wicked aspects of the child mind is registered with insight and cunning. A more sombre tale of the sea, *Boy* (1932) by James Hanley (1901–), follows a Liverpool stowaway from a cruel environment on land at home to a crueller one aboard. Hanley, who was born in Dublin but settled in Wales, is probably the most neglected of our century's major novelists. Critical justice has never been done to his massive five-volume saga that began with *The Furys* (1935). It centres on Dennis Fury, a seaman, his wife Fanny, and their son Peter. At its high points the study acquires mythic dimensions. And Hanley is master of the tragic. His portrayal of the disintegration of a French sea captain in *The Closed Harbour* (1952) makes the reader wonder why Hanley is not as familiar a writer on academic syllabuses as is Conrad.

Among other writers born into the first decade of the century T.H.White (1906–64), though born in India, was also of Irish stock.

He gave a fresh rendering of the Arthurian cycle in the tetralogy, *The Once and Future King* (1958). The version is at once in key with Arthurian mores and updated in psychological treatment. It began in 1938 with *The Sword in the Stone,* dealing with Arthur's boyhood and the entry on his calling. The third book in the series, *The Ill-Made Knight* (1941), is a convincing and moving reconstruction of the Lancelot and Guinevere story. White's *The Goshawk* (1951) describes how he tried to train a hawk according to the ancient practice of falconry. Henry Green (pseudonym of Henry Vincent Yorke) (1905–73) established a reputation as a conscious stylist, sensitive in recording the minutiae of experience, aware of the comic, and versatile in experiment. In *Party Going* (1939) a group of society holiday-makers are fog-bound at a railway station, and their futile preoccupations mirror a larger social and moral wastefulness. We are immersed in class conflict at a factory in *Living* (1929), and Green, as a company managing director, knew this scene at first hand. Nancy Mitford (1904–73) made her name with *The Pursuit of Love* (1945) and *Love in a Cold Climate* (1949). Upper-class personalities play their social game and indulge their domestic eccentricities while their youngsters do what they can to limit the damage to their own lives. Miss Mitford has a sharp ear and a keen wit. It was a volume of essays of which she was joint editor (*Noblesse Oblige: An Enquiry into the Identifiable Characteristics of the English Aristocracy,* 1956) that launched the terms 'U' (upper class) and 'Non U' on their career. As labels for distinguishing (not too seriously) smart from vulgar ways of speaking and behaving, they have been a source of entertainment since. Miss Mitford's excursions into historical biography (*Madame de Pompadour,* 1954, and *The Sun King,* 1966) give intimate pictures of life at the courts of Louis XIV and Louis XV.

There were two contemporaries for whom addiction was at once a personal tragedy and a means of intensified literary perception. One of them, Anna Kavan (1904–68), dependent on heroin for the last thirty years of her life, worked on her own experience of an unhappy childhood and consequent resort to an inner world in *The House of Sleep* (1947) (re-titled *Sleep Has His House,* 1948). Here, and in *A Scarcity of Love* (1956) and some of her short stories, she displays a hauntingly powerful poetic gift for exploring the feverish phantasmagoria of the dream world. Malcolm Lowry (1909–57), whose alcoholism brought about his early death, made a tragic study of an alcoholic British consul in Mexico in his *Under the Volcano* (1947). Searingly painful in its registration of the alcoholic's

occupancy of a mental terrain where dementia and lucidity collide and overlap, and deeply moving in its account of the emotional cost to his wife, the book also gives universal dimensions to the portrayal of this individual human 'fall'.

Anthony Powell (1905–), a low-key recorder of our decaying twentieth-century civilization, completed a complex connected series of twelve novels called *A Dance to the Music of Time*. The lifespan and much of the experience of the central figure, Nicholas Jenkins, match Powell's own. His story is told against the background of public events from university days in the 1920s, through the social unrest of the 1930s, the Spanish Civil War, the abdication and the Second World War to the post-war years. It began with *A Question of Upbringing* (1951) and includes *The Acceptance World* (1955) and *Casanova's Chinese Restaurant* (1960). It ended with *Hearing Secret Harmonies* (1975). There is much futility, much drinking, much marrying, remarrying and not marrying in this vast symphonically structured panorama of middle-class life in a world lurching vainly on. The extended scope of the work, the patterning of the characters' entries and exits, and the overall melancholy at the flight of time have together invited comparison with Proust. The work is matched, at least in magnitude, by Snow's necropolitan annals of the grey men of power, *Strangers and Brothers.* C.P.Snow (1905–80) was varsity scientist and civil servant and knew all about what goes on behind Cambridge senior-common-room doors and within Whitehall corridors, but his curiously unexciting revelations scarcely stir the appetite for either academic or administrative status. The chronicle, in eleven volumes, centres on the life of Lewis Eliot, a lawyer. Ethical questions are portentously at issue as hands reach out to grab at office or the levers of power.

Another considerable achievement in the way of grouped novels is *The Alexandria Quartet* by Lawrence Durrell (1912–). Durrell is a poet and the luxuriance of his prose style is well suited to the task of immersing the reader in the soporific atmosphere of the Near East. Landscapes tend to be overwritten, but the sensuous verbal density does justice to the physical feel of the Alexandrian world as well as to the pervasive air of the mysterious and the sinister. The tetralogy is not a chronological sequence but explores the interplay of relationships between the main characters from different viewpoints in turn. We see the strangely compelling Justine through the infatuated eyes of Darley (a writer) in *Justine* (1957), but her character and behaviour emerge in a totally different light in

Balthazar (1958). *Mountolive* (1958) and *Clea* (1960) complete the work. The theme of political espionage and gun-running is entangled with that of rivalries and duplicities in love. Again comparisons have been made with Proust; but though the *Quartet* is a highly accomplished work, reflection does not run deep. The tetralogy effects no profound awakening or transformation of response to life.

Powell, Snow and Durrell may have called out comparisons with Proust but, oddly enough, a novelist definitely—if negatively—influenced by Proust was Samuel Beckett, whose critical study *Proust* (1931) provides insight into his own convictions as a writer and indicates his literary affiliations. Beckett seems to have realized that what Proust and Joyce had done was not imitable but must be a stimulus to the exploration of new ground. *Murphy* (1938) is at once a burlesque on an exhausted fictional technique and an attempt to revivify the novel from 'non-literary' verbal sources. The description of Celia by catalogue makes a mockery of millions of stereotyped introductory descriptions of heroines: the detailed measurements are like a dressmaker's notes. Miss Counihan is parodically presented: 'Standing in profile against the blazing corridor, with her high buttocks and her low breasts, she looked not merely queenly, but on for anything.' The plot is a send-up of the Hardyesque pattern of crossed amorous relationships. Neary loves Miss Dwyer, who loves Elliman, who loves Miss Farren, who loves Father Fitt, who loves Mrs West, who loves Neary, and so on. There is Irish fun at the expense of everything in sight or in print. Yet the loosening of Murphy's tenuous hold on sanity and life is movingly registered, and the prostitute, Celia, preserves a touching dignity in her love and in her bereavement. On the basis of burlesque and of an all-inclusive range of verbal manipulation (technical, poetic, conversational, philosophical, idiotic, obsessional, inarticulate, etc.) Beckett later explores the minds and feelings of characters in states of impotence, frustration and imbecility so gross that their emergence as full-length, inwardly sensed personalities in fiction is disturbing. Such characters are not figures on the objective periphery but central to the action—or inaction. (See *Molloy,* 1955; *Malone Dies,* 1956, and *The Unnamable,* 1958.) Increasingly Beckett makes use of serial irony. In *Watt* (1953) ironical postures or devices are used tellingly, then ironically over-stretched so that irony is undercut by a new layer of irony, and there is no resting-place for conviction or steady response. But the humour is irresistible. What arises, with devastating imbecile logic, out of the need to feed Mr Knott and regularly get rid of the

remains in his bowl, is one of the funniest things in our literature. As a novelist, of course, Beckett seems rather a lone figure, though his contemporary and fellow-Irishman Flann O'Brien (properly Brian O'Nolan) (1911–66) published a highly experimental novel, *At Swim-Two-Birds* (1939), whose characters are provoked to compete with their creator in the authorial game. O'Brien also produced an ironic Kafkaesque pilgrimage into the after-life in *The Third Policeman* (1967).

As Beckett has written on Proust, so Angus Wilson (1913–) has written on Zola (*Emile Zola: An Introductory Study,* 1952), a master of naturalistic documentation and close psychological analysis. Wilson has the gift for minute investigation of inner questioning and unrest on the part of men and women at grips with personal inadequacies and broken hopes, with confused relationships and with such problems as homosexuality (a successful novelist, Bernard Sands, in *Hemlock and After,* 1952), the sense of public and private failure (a retired history professor, Gerald Middleton, in *Anglo-Saxon Attitudes,* 1956) and bereavement (Meg Eliot in *The Middle Age of Mrs Eliot,* 1959).

P.H.Newby (1918–), like Durrell, did war service in Cairo, and his representation of Anglo-Egyptian relationships in such novels as *A Picnic at Sakkara* (1955) and *A Guest and His Going* (1959) is made in an idiom as quiet and restrained as Durrell's is grandiloquent and flamboyant. The analysis of the complexity of interwoven personal and political motivations is at once dryly piquant and farcically discomfiting. If Newby's laconic understatement leaves one hungry for intensity, the verbal profusion of Anthony Burgess (1917–) leaves one thirsty for restraint. *But A Clockwork Orange* (1962) is an interesting exercise in the anti-Utopian genre, predicting an England at the mercy of teenage delinquents on the one hand and of government-directed mind-engineering on the other.

William Golding (1911–) established his reputation with *Lord of the Flies* (1954) in which a group of boys, stranded on a desert island after an air crash, regress to savagery. In reversing the pattern of children's adventure stories and locating evil in the boys themselves, Golding re-energized the notion of original sin. Facile fashionable doctrines of progress and evolution are up-ended in *The Inheritors* (1955) where we see a crucial stage in the rise of our species through the eyes of Neanderthal man (and hear a good deal of his utterance too). Neanderthal man is innocent, pious and amiable, while our own progenitor, *Homo sapiens,* who comes to displace him in the process

of evolutionary development, is double-minded and capable of selfdeception. The theme of the human 'fall' is present again. Golding makes no concessions to the novelist's natural desire to work to a promising brief or to repeat experiments that have proved successful. In *Pincher Martin* (1956) a shipwrecked sailor imagines that he is clinging to a bare rock desperate to survive. His past is recalled; but at the end we learn that he died in the wreck and that the whole recollection has taken place at the point of drowning. *Free Fall* (1959) is the study of Sammy Mountjoy, a successful artist, how he loses his soul and is brought up against the consequences when the girl he has seduced goes insane. If Martin is a mock-up Prometheus, Sammy is a parodic Dante who destroys his Beatrice. In *The Spire* (1965) Golding studies the moral and spiritual condition of Jocelin, dean of a cathedral, whose obsessive resolve to build a spire has a dual motivation in faith and in sheer self-assertion, through which the powers of heaven and hell collide. Golding has continued to produce novels (*Darkness Visible,* 1979; *Rites of Passage,* 1980) in which he experiments boldly with substance and style, in each case sustaining his vision on a symbolic framework which gives moral thrust and coherence to the whole.

A group of seven women born in the second decade of the century might together illustrate the diversity of the twentieth-century novelist's interests. Elizabeth Taylor (1912–75) is a refined stylist whose swift flashes of dialogue and reflection and deft sketches of the wider background give vitality to her portrayals of well-to-do family life in commuterland. (See *In a Summer Season,* 1961, and *The Wedding Group,* 1968.) Mrs Taylor has humour and compassion as well as disciplined artistry, and has logically been compared with Jane Austen. So has Barbara Pym (1913–80) who tasted fame, sadly enough, only at the end of her life. Another restrained and perceptive artist, she is mistress of ostensibly ingenuous and candid dialogue and reflection which are resonant with comic overtones. *Excellent Women* (1952) and *A Glass of Blessings* (1958) were reprinted in the late 1970s when Philip Larkin and David Cecil drew attention to the quality of her neglected work. Later novels, *The Sweet Dove Died* (1978) and *Quartet in Autumn* (1978), are more sombre but no less engaging in their blend of pathos and comedy. One might well put beside these two English writers the Irish writer Mary Lavin (1912–), whose short stories focus on the ups and downs of family life with quiet pathos and humour. Her novels, *The House in Clewes Street*

(1945) and *Mary O'Grady* (1950), are family histories presented with psychological sensitivity and a delicious vein of irony. The public domain intrudes more into the work of Olivia Manning (1917–80) who found herself, with her husband, in Bucharest in 1939, to be driven thence by German advances first to Greece, then to Egypt. She recorded her experience in her *Balkan Trilogy: The Great Fortune* (1960), *The Spoilt City* (1962) and *Friends and Heroes* (1965), documenting how people behaved as the Nazi menace encroached on English residents. The private story of Harriet Pringle and her husband Guy is one of colliding temperaments, but for those in the know the trilogy has fascination as a *roman à clef.* Another woman who was in the right place at the right time as a future novelist is Doris Lessing (1919–), brought up in Southern Rhodesia. Her sequence of five novels called *Children of Violence* begins with *Martha Quest* (1952) and tells the story of Martha's upbringing and development. It is a story of personal search and struggle, by a somewhat tempestuous and self-centred woman, against the fetters of sexual, social and political conventions. Iris Murdoch (1919–), on the other hand, is a professional philosopher who has used the novel as a vehicle for studying the problem of freedom and responsibility.
Under the Net (1954) is heavily over-plotted but often very amusing, while *The Bell* (1958) is somewhat over-organized in terms of symbol and characterization.

Muriel Spark (1918–) first made an impact with a novel, *Robinson* (1958), which, curiously enough, like Golding's *Lord of the Flies,* owes something to Defoe's *Robinson Crusoe*. January Marlow and two other survivors of a plane crash spend three months on a manshaped island inhabited only by Robinson and his servant. Robinson, a semi-mythical figure—benefactor, host and provider, yet also governor and director—withdraws for a space to contrive temporary 'freedom' for the survivors, and their relationships reenact passages from January's past. In *Memento Mori* (1959) aged characters have the tenor of their ways shaken by intermittent telephone calls reminding them that they must the. Thus Muriel Spark subjects her characters to specialized laboratory conditions that intensify aspects of the inescapable human condition—they are marooned in exile or under threat of mortality. Her little worlds become microcosms of the larger reality. Dimensions of awareness are lightly opened up. The Devil turns up at a London factory in the shape of a lively Scotsman in *The Ballad of Peckham Rye* (1960). *The Bachelors* (1960) is a quieter study of what the title suggests: the

intrusion of the unknown Other is in this case represented by spiritualism. *The Prime of Miss Jean Brodie* (1962) is the study of an Edinburgh school teacher whose methods challenge authority and subject her favourite pupils to overpressurized hot-house development, socially and sexually. There is autobiographical material here, as in the much later novel, *Loitering with Intent* (1981). Muriel Spark is a witty writer with an epigrammatic crispness in dialogue. Technically she engineers time shifts and modes of presentation with adroitness. The human conditions she explores may have dimensional openness to the possibility of the extra-naturalistic, but she steers well clear of mechanical allegory or over-contrived symbolism. Her imaginative worlds exist in their own right.

The 1950s saw a literary phenomenon which journalists conceptualized for a mass public with the phrase 'Angry Young Men'. That post-war socialism gave university education to young men from the working classes and then left them cut off from élitist circles, social and cultural, no doubt helps to explain the rise of the anti-hero, venomously, comically or patronizingly dismissive of establishment mores and inhibitions. William Cooper (1910–) has been credited with ushering in the anti-hero of the 1950s with Joe Lunn in *Scenes from Provincial Life* (1950), but it was *Lucky Jim* (1954) by Kingsley Amis (1922–) that provided the journalists with a protest hero to partner Osborne's Jimmy Porter. In fact, of course, Amis is essentially a comic writer and Jim Dixon, the young university lecturer, is up against a target as much represented by pretentiousness and phoney dilettantism as by anything likely to get under the skin of an ardent social egalitarian. Amis, developing his comic talent in later novels, took up the handy sex recipes. A more standard specimen of *iuvenis iratus* is Joe Lampton, a West Riding hero with his eyes on the money, in *Room at the Top* (1957) by John Braine (1922–). Lampton, a war orphan and local authority clerk, gets his revenge on the local social establishment that rejects him by marrying into it. The emotional and moral cost of ambition is analysed with penetration. Braine tackles a real human issue. Arthur Seaton, in *Saturday Night and Sunday Morning* (1958) by Alan Sillitoe (1928–), is a Midlands factory hand who lacks a meaningful place in society and whose physically dirty working hours are balanced by morally seedy week-ends. A more thought-out study in the search for social adjustment is provided by John Wain (1925–) in *Hurry on Down* (1953). Charles Lumley, a young university graduate, faces difficulties supposedly due to the fact that (in Wain's words) 'there is

an unhealed split between the educational system and the assumptions that underlie life'.

These novelists have continued to write, but the protest novel was eventually submerged under popular enthusiasm for Tolkien's hobbits and Adams's rabbits. For, against all seeming laws of predictability, Richard Adams (1920–) had an enormous success with *Watership Down* (1972), a full-length adventure story about a company of rabbits inhabiting the Berkshire down named in the title, and went on to deal with the long-prophesied re-incarnation of a mythic bear in *Shardik* (1974) and the suffering of dogs subjected to scientific experimentation in *The Plague Dogs* (1977). A contemporary of Adams, who started to write at a much earlier age and died comparatively early, Paul Scott (1920–78), having served in India during the war, set himself the task of dissecting the final years of British rule in India in a quartet of novels, *The Raj Quartet,* of which *The Jewel in the Crown* (1966) was the first. Relationships between the British and the natives are explored at every level of personal and public life. The work is complex in construction yet fluent and compelling. The fascination of recent history has touched other writers too. Richard Hughes planned a trilogy, *The Human Predicament,* on events that culminated in the Second World War and published two volumes, *The Fox in the Attic* (1961) and *The Wooden Shepherdess* (1972), covering the years from Hitler's *putsch* in 1923 to the Night of the Long Knives in 1934. In *Troubles* (1970) J.G.Farrell (1935–79) portrayed life in a decaying Irish hotel during the troubled years between 1919 and 1921, and then tackled two other episodes in British imperial decline, the Indian Mutiny (*The Siege of Krishnapur,* 1973) and the Fall of Singapore (*The Singapore Grip,* 1978).

A number of highly talented Irish novelists came to prominence in the 1960s and 1970s. The first to make her mark was Edna O'Brien (1932–) whose study of Irish girlhood, *The Country Girls* (1960), supplied the long-needed feminine counterpart to the fictional accounts of masculine upbringings given by James Joyce and Patrick Kavanagh. Village life is caught in memorable detail. So too are the dreams and strains of girlhood. The story of the two girls, Caithleen Brady and Bridget Brennan, is continued in *Girls with Green Eyes* (1962) and *Girls in their Married Bliss* (1964). John McGahern (1934–) takes the reader into an altogether more sombre, intense and claustrophobic world in *The Barracks* (1964), which recounts the tragic suffering and death of the struggling wife of an Irish policeman

with a huge chip on his shoulder. *The Dark* (1965) records a bright, motherless boy's struggle against a brutal father.

William Trevor (1928–) is a writer of broader range and richer gifts, perhaps the most distinctive novelist to emerge since William Golding and Muriel Spark. In *The Old Boys* (1964) he focuses on a group of cranky old human misfits in a story of an old boys' association and their annual reunion, and in *The Boarding House* (1965) on the inhabitants of an establishment equally conducive to the harbouring of mildly potty and inadequate individuals. Trevor's terse, crisp dialogue, and his dry, detached portrayal of seediness, illhumour or pointless pernicketiness is fetchingly entertaining. And there is compassion too. Trevor extended his range in *Mrs Eckdorf in O'Neill's Hotel* (1970). A woman photographer is seeking material for her next coffee-table documentary at a Dublin hotel that has decayed from its former splendour and is now used as a brothel. The counterpointing of various themes in Dublin life is neatly controlled and gives textural richness to the novel. Trevor has continued to be productive as a novelist (see *The Children of Dynmouth,* 1976, and *Other People's Worlds,* 1980), and he is also a versatile writer of short stories. The tales in *Angels at the Ritz* (1975) show an interest in personal experiences of frustration and anti-climax which naturally called out comparisons with Joyce's *Dubliners*. A talent of matching distinction, if not of comparable imaginative range, is that of Jennifer Johnston (1930–), the daughter of the playwright Denis Johnston. She portrays the Anglo-Irish landed gentry with a subtle registration of their awkward relationship to local peasants and retainers. In *The Gates* (1973) Major MacMahon decays alcoholically while his orphaned niece finds consolation with a peasant boy. In *How Many Miles to Babylon* (1974) Irish heir and peasant boy go off to fight together as officer and private in the First World War, and the mechanical pressures of military discipline turn their impulsive affection for each other into a cause of tragedy.

The regionally rooted novel on this side of the Irish sea has been of late more pedestrian in its interests. Stanley Middleton (1919–), for instance, has focused narrowly on middle-class types in his native Nottingham, exploring the way the crises of mortality or of love arise to trouble the even tenor of humdrum provincial lives. There is no plotting and no contrived conclusiveness. Middleton is master of the commonplace. His steady output began with *A Short Answer* (1958) and includes *Distractions* (1975) and *In a Strange Land* (1977). David Storey (1933–), also a dramatist, has fastened on various instances of

rebellion against, or displacement from, a Yorkshire working-class background in novels such as *Flight into Camden* (1961) and *A Prodigal Child* (1982), and has studied the collision between proletarian earthiness and upper-class decay in Lawrentian terms in *Radcliffe* (1963). Melvyn Bragg (1939–) gave a colourfully textured account of growing up in a small town in Cumbria in *For Want of a Nail* (1965), and focused with moral insight as well as with imaginative sensitivity on the lives of Cumbrian country folk in *The Second Inheritance* (1966) and *Josh Lawton* (1972).

No regional bias restricts the range of John Fowles (1926–). His novel *The Collector* (1958) is an intense and tragic study of a psychopath who imprisons the girl he loves. His best work is *The French Lieutenant's Woman* (1969), a nineteenth-century love story which subjects Victorian mores and attitudes to careful analysis. Malcolm Bradbury (1932–) and David Lodge (1935–) have exploited the entertainment value of the antics of redbrick university teachers, and Margaret Drabble (1939–) those of Oxbridge students (in *A Summer Birdcage,* 1963, and *The Millstone,* 1965). Susan Hill (1942–) has concentrated with sympathy on the tensions and stresses suffered by the old (in *Gentleman and Ladies,* 1968), by women victims of domestic tyranny (in *A Change for the Better,* 1969) and by a suddenly bereaved wife (in *In the Springtime of the Year,* 1974). A more restless spirit, Fay Weldon (1935–), mistress of an electrically vibrant style and a bracing aggressiveness, has an engaging blend of irony and sportiveness, and has been justly praised for blending 'feminism and high-class entertainment' in such novels as *Female Friends* (1975), *Praxis* (1979) and *The President's Child* (1982). For sheer native talent she is matched by Beryl Bainbridge (1934–), but the comparison stops there. Beryl Bainbridge's speciality is the tragedy and comedy of human self-delusion. *The Bottle-Factory Outing* (1964) tells of two English girls who work for an Italian bottling firm in London, whose dreams scarcely equate with their own potential, and whose pursuit of those dreams escalates to high farce, then to tragedy. *Sweet William* (1975) portrays in Ann Walton, a London employee of the BBC, a well-meaning victim of a skilled sexual predator. Beryl Bainbridge's distinctiveness lies in the matterof-fact blandness with which irony and humour are planted in situations of emotional stress or macabre horror.

Among younger novelists now at work A.N.Wilson (1950–) has a comparably beguiling sense of humour. In *The Healing Art* (1980) Xray reports on two Oxford women are mixed up so that the

housewife wrongly thinks she is clear and the English don, Pamela Cooper, struggles unnecessarily to accommodate herself to a death sentence. Pamela, an Anglo-Catholic, is persuaded to seek miraculous healing at the shrine at Walsingham and a seeming miracle ensues. Wilson's registration of the contemporary scene is acutely ironic; yet his strength is that he is not pure satirist, pure humourist or pure moralist, but a piquant blend of all three. The humour is the sharper for the moral seriousness with which it runs in harness. In some of the short stories in *First Love, Last Rites* (1975) Ian McEwan (1948–) enters the child's mind with disturbing penetration, and does so in a style that is taut, direct and exact. In his novel *The Cement Garden* (1978) four children are given prematurely by the deaths of their parents the adult freedom that corrupts Golding's schoolboys in *Lord of the Flies.* The symbolism, the atmosphere of intense, claustrophobic eeriness and the unreality of the children's isolation in a decaying urban area together give this concise tale the qualities of fantasy and fable. There is neither constriction nor conciseness in the work of William Boyd (1952–), but his novel *An Ice-Cream War* (1982) is a remarkable product of patient research. It tells the story of the campaign in East Africa during the 1914–18 war, and thus sheds light on a littlepublicized aspect of the struggle.

It has to be admitted at the end of a chapter such as this that the literary historian of the recent past can scarcely avoid making premature critical evaluations. In dealing with contemporary writers the risk of distributing praise, or even attention, disproportionately is always high, and it is further magnified when the context is a historical survey studded with established names and covering a field as wide as that of English literature from Chaucer's day to our own.