

History of English Language and Literature
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Lecture 15 c
Age of Wordsworth (Continued)

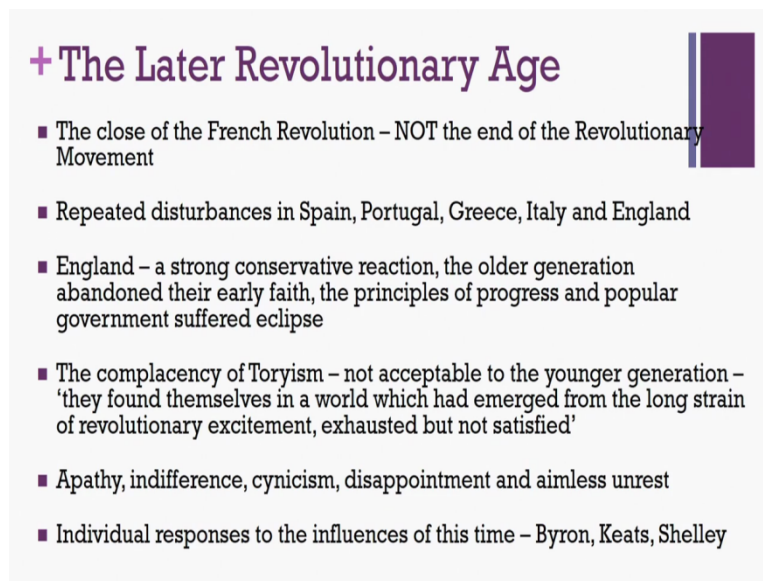
Hello everyone. I am happy to welcome you to yet another session of the course the history of English language and literature. Journey through different phases of British romanticism today we begin to look at the later revolutionary period which was characterized by a different kind of romanticism that was very different from the ones dominated by poet such as Wordsworth and Coleridge.

We noted in the beginning how the French Revolution was an impetus in triggering a lot of ideal and revolutionary reactions in terms of the newer forms of literature. And we also noticed how all of these poets and writers and thinkers who lived during that time were initially very fascinated by the French Revolution. But once the revolution took a bloody turn of events they were all so disappointed with the many ideas that also had influenced the revolution in the first place.

In today's session focusing our attention to the later revolutionary age we notice right at the outset that the French Revolution had come to an end. But however the revolutionary movement either in politics or in literature it had not really come to an end. In that sense this session is a continuation of the revolutionary ideas which began to inspire a generation of poets and writers from the end of the 18th century onwards.

So there is no particular date which could be given as an inaugural moment of this later revolutionary age but however it would be safe to assume that this is a set of poets and writers and thinkers who were influenced by the reminiscence of these ideas particularly in the 19th century. Even after the revolution which happened in France there continue to be repeated disturbances in Spain, Portugal, Greece, Italy and also in England. So whatever happened in England and continued to happen in England is the source of interest in present lecture.

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+ The Later Revolutionary Age

- The close of the French Revolution – NOT the end of the Revolutionary Movement
- Repeated disturbances in Spain, Portugal, Greece, Italy and England
- England – a strong conservative reaction, the older generation abandoned their early faith, the principles of progress and popular government suffered eclipse
- The complacency of Toryism – not acceptable to the younger generation – ‘they found themselves in a world which had emerged from the long strain of revolutionary excitement, exhausted but not satisfied’
- Apathy, indifference, cynicism, disappointment and aimless unrest
- Individual responses to the influences of this time – Byron, Keats, Shelley

In England we noted in the previous session that as soon as the revolution in France took a bloody turn and also it was dominated by a Reign of Terror, we also noticed that many of the supporters of the early stage of revolution they begin to turn away. And a very strong conservative reaction replaced the earlier romantic and revolutionary ideas which were propelling many of the romantic ideas of the poetry and literature.

So the older generation including Wordsworth and Coleridge as we noticed earlier they begin to abandon the earlier faith they had in these tenets of revolution and they also in certain way affected the ways in which the principles of progress and popular government were also getting popular. So we begin to see that a certain kind of complacency is of Toryism had begun to dominate the general socio-political scene in England. But this was not at all acceptable to the younger generation which grew up hearing a lot about the wonderful of revolution.

So though they were born into the era of revolution when they were growing up they did not see much signs of this revolution getting manifested in England because most of the older generation were already disillusioned by the ideals of the revolution. So the younger generation who were growing up in 19th century England they found themselves in a world which had emerged from the long strain of a revolutionary excitement, exhausted but not satisfied.

So the triggering phase of this later revolutionary age may be identified in this set of emotions which were not yet satisfied within England. In some sense we can even state that

the later revolutionary age was dominated by a set of feelings and a set of priorities which were moving against apathy, indifference, cynicism, disappointment and aimless unrest. So in this lecture we try to identify three major figures who responded to this situation and also were heavily influenced by this period though in varied ways, it is Byron, Keats and Shelley.

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+ The Later Revolutionary Age

- The close of the French Revolution – NOT the end of the Revolutionary Movement
- Repeated disturbances in Spain, Portugal, Greece, Italy and England
- England – a strong conservative reaction, the older generation abandoned their early faith, the principles of progress and popular government suffered eclipse
- The complacency of Toryism – not acceptable to the younger generation – 'they found themselves in a world which had emerged from the long strain of revolutionary excitement, exhausted but not satisfied'
- Apathy, indifference, cynicism, disappointment and aimless unrest
- Individual responses to the influences of this time – Byron, Keats, Shelley


And as the outset it is important to reiterate a point that we had come to take a look at even in one of the earlier sessions that romanticism as a general revolutionary movement and as a general revolutionary tendency in the writing of poetry and in production of literature in general, it did not have a singular kind of effect on all the writers. So we noticed that even in the earlier phase when the writers were showing different kinds of responses and were giving different literary outputs though the triggering fact have remained almost similar.

In same way even in the later revolutionary age we noticed that all these three figures which are clubbed together as the younger poets of the later revolutionary age, they have very little in common and they also responded in very different ways to the English romanticism of the later phase. So the younger poets of the romantic age include George Gordon, Lord Byron, Percy Bysshe Shelley and John Keats.

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+ The Younger Poets of the Romantic Age

- George Gordon, Lord Byron
- Percy Bysshe Shelley
- John Keats



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We begin our discussion by looking at one particular figure who has been generally discussed in history as a very fascinating figure. And he was also considered as someone who was associated with a particular kind of male personality, the brooding handsome hero. It was an unusual kind of mass cultural iconization of a literary personality. He was the largest selling poet in the first decades of the 19th century. He produced some energetic if uneven poetry. So, no extra points for guessing who this extremely fascinating poet was?

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+ *“Has become associated with a particular kind of male personality: the brooding, handsome hero. It was an unusual kind of mass cultural iconization of a literary personality. He was the largest selling poet in the first decades of the 19th century. He produced some energetic, if uneven poetry.”*

So we begin our discussion with Lord Byron who lived from 1788 till 1824. Byron is considered as the oldest of this younger generation of poets and he was also the most thoroughly representative poet of the later romantic phase. And it is said that he also very

fruitfully and the most effectively expressed the spirit of rebellion which was dominant in this later phase. He is considered by many historians and critics as the mouthpiece of this age.


And his own temperament was quite stormy and quite volcanic and violent in nature except that it also let him to lot of repeated conflict with both people and also with things. So we find him violently responding to many things which unsettled him and we also find that he remained the hallmark for the kind of writings that he produced. One of his first poetic outputs was the work titled Hours of Idleness.

It was published when he was very young but it also resulted in a lot of ferocious attacks by reviewers from Edinburgh review. But Byron was not the kind who could take it blind out. He also wrote a very vigorous and scaring satirical response to this review that appeared in the Edinburgh review.

Byron's response titled the English Bards and Scotch Reviewers was published in 1809 and he was so daring and quiet bold in going against the grain of the dominant tenets of literary principles so much so that he even dared to lampoon Wordsworth and Coleridge and dismiss them equally as the scribbling crew.

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+ Lord Byron (1788-1824)



- Most thoroughly representative, expressed the spirit of rebellion
- The mouthpiece of the age – his own temperament and stormy – irritable and volcanic character – repeated conflicts
- *Hours of Idleness* – published when he was very young
 - Attacked ferociously by the Edinburgh Review
 - Byron's vigorous satirical response – English Bards and Scotch Reviewers (1809) – lampooned even Wordsworth and Coleridge, dismissing them as 'the scribbling crew'
- "I shall publish, right or wrong / Fools are my theme, let satire be my song"
 - Byron's role and reputation as an iconoclast

So this was in fact the first time that Byron began to be noticed in the London Circus for being a very iconoclastic and a very unconventional kind of person. And he also repeatedly reiterated this right to write whatever he feels in many different contexts and one of his first articulations could be found in one of his poems where he wrote right at the outset, I shall publish right or wrong, fools are my theme, let satire be my song.

So this in many ways reinforced Byron's roles and reputation as an iconoclast both as a literary figure and also in terms of his personality. And the work which in many ways cemented his reputation as a very well known literary artist was the publication of *Childe Harold's Pilgrimage*. The first two cantos of *Childe Harold* were published in 1812. This work was based on a tour that he undertook throughout the continent from 1809 to 1811.

The two years that he had spent touring the continent gave him a lot of experiences, a lot of memories and all of those found its way to an artistic expression and spell. So we find a very fascinating description of places, historic memories and also a lot of melancholic meditation. This work was immediate success. It also received a lot of extravagant adulation. It also forced Byron to acknowledge at a later point that after the success of this work, I woke up one morning and found myself famous.

So this was the kind of instant gratification that this work gave him in terms of his literary reputation. He also went on to publish a number of romances in verse and however in between his life was also fraught with a lot of other troubles.

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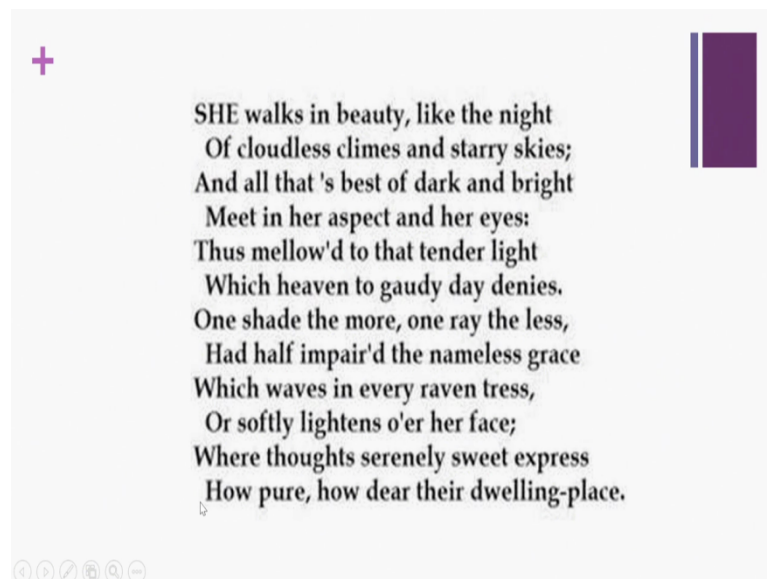
- *Childe Harold's Pilgrimage* –
- the first two Cantos (1812) – based on a tour on the continent in 1809-11
 - Descriptions of the places, historic memories, melancholic meditation
 - Immense success, extravagant adulation – 'I woke up one morning and found myself famous'
- Romances in verse –1815 – marriage followed by separation in 1816 – scandal broke out – denounced as a monster of iniquity
 - Left England an embittered man - Remaining life – in the Continent

In 1815 he gets married and it was also followed by a separation in 1816. But needless to say given the conservative frame of mind that the society was placed in during the 19th century, immediately a scandal broke out and he was denounced as a monster of iniquity. And important to recall that even at that point of time soon after the success that he enjoyed with the success of *Childe Harold* we find the same society in fact denouncing him for the kind of personal turns that events were taking place in his own life.

So due to these difficulties we find him leaving England as an embittered man and remaining life he was forced to spend in the continent. So during this time he also published some of the finest work continued to be much anthologized even in the contemporary. And one of the classic products of those times includes the short poem which has the same title She Walks in Beauty. So this work is considered as one of the most important works by Byron. It continues to be oft quoted and also much taught and much anthologized worldwide.

So if you allow me to read some bit of introductory lines from this. She walks in beauty like the night of cloudless climes and starry skies, and all that's best of dark and bright meet in her aspect and her eyes, Thus mellow'd to that tender light which heaven to gaudy day denies, one shade the more, one ray the less, had half impair'd the nameless grace which waves in every raven tress, or softly lightens o'er her face, where thoughts serenely sweet express how pure, how dear their dwelling place.

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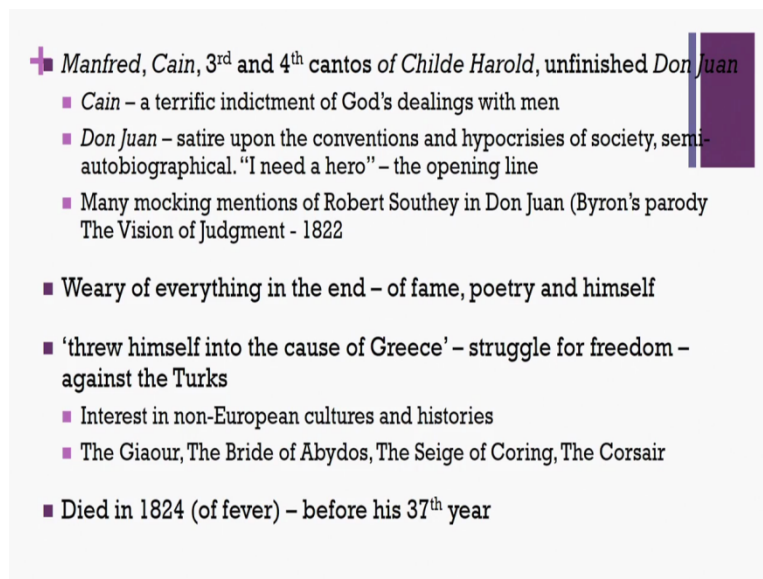
But this was only a phase of Byron's productivity. He was more reputed for the other wide iconoclastic things that he continued to write. Some of his more famous works include Manfred, Cain, 3rd and 4th cantos of Childe Harold and then unfinished part of Don Juan. In Cain he engages with a terrific indictment of God's dealing with men. But Don Juan was considered as one of his most successful works ever and also the work that cemented his reputation as an iconoclast and also as a master literary genius.

Don Juan is a satire upon the conventions and hypocrisies of society. It is also considered semi autobiographical in nature. It is also most famous for its opening line which states, I

need a hero. So it is said that it was Byron's own longing to identify a hero whom he could emulate during those trouble times. He was also quite famous for the many mocking mentions of Robert Southey in Don Juan.

If you recall Byron had already parodied a work by Robert Southey, *The Vision of Judgement* in which he eulogised quite unrationally the doings of King George the 3rd. So in 1822 first time we find Byron mocking Southey satirically in his works and he continued to do that in many of his works.

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✚ *Manfred, Cain, 3rd and 4th cantos of Childe Harold, unfinished Don Juan*

- *Cain* – a terrific indictment of God's dealings with men
- *Don Juan* – satire upon the conventions and hypocrisies of society, semi-autobiographical. “I need a hero” – the opening line
- Many mocking mentions of Robert Southey in Don Juan (Byron's parody *The Vision of Judgment* - 1822)
- **Weary of everything in the end – of fame, poetry and himself**
- ‘threw himself into the cause of Greece’ – struggle for freedom – against the Turks
 - Interest in non-European cultures and histories
 - *The Giaour, The Bride of Abydos, The Siege of Coring, The Corsair*
- Died in 1824 (of fever) – before his 37th year

In fact incidently though Robert Southey was a poet laureate, much of his fame now rest in the many mentions that he found mockingly in Byron's works. We do find Byron enjoying a lot of success even during his lifetime. But however in the end we find him becoming weary of almost everything of fame, of poetry and even of himself. And we find him looking for a new different kind of excitement at every phase in his life.

And eventually towards the end of his life which was pretty early as well, we find him throwing himself into the cause of Greece and he even participated in this struggle for freedom which the Greeks had launched against the Turks and this also is an extension of his interest in the non European cultures and histories.

If it is useful to remember that some of his works such as the *Giaour, The bride of Abydos, The Siege of Coring* and the *Corsair* all had relied heavily on non European cultures, traditions and mythologies. So eventually in the 1824 he dies of fever before his 37th birthday. And he was also not in England, he was in Greece when this happened.

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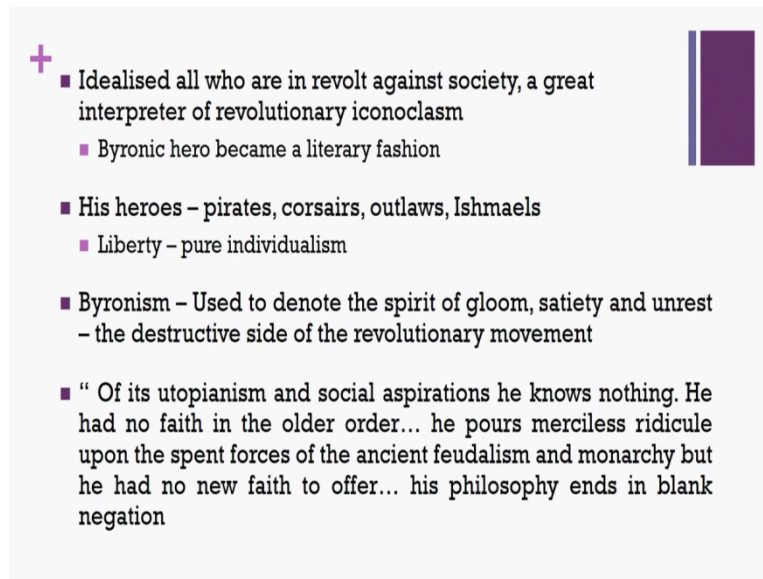
- *Manfred, Cain, 3rd and 4th cantos of Childe Harold, unfinished Don Juan*
 - *Cain* – a terrific indictment of God's dealings with men
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Throughout his lifetime both in his writing career and also in his personal dealings we find Byron idealizing all who were in revolt against the society. In that sense we could identify in him a great interpreter of a revolutionary kind of iconoclasm. And this was quite a popular thing during that time in 19th century England that Byronic hero became almost a literary fashion. Byron's heroes were very interesting and they were very unconventional and they also did the kind of things that heroes were usually not supposed to do.

So his heroes were pirates, corsairs, outlaws and even the Ishmaels of the world. And his definition of liberty was of a very different kind. He identified liberty in pure individualism. So we do find him going against the grain of dominant conventions and dominant ideas of even liberty, equality and fraternity. And we do find him celebrating a different kind of revolution, a different kind of freedom which bothered on certain anarchy as well.

The term Byronism itself had come into use to denote the spirit of gloom, satiety and unrest. And in a certain way many historians and critics also feel that Byron's revolutionary zeal was something that was focusing more on the destructive side of the revolutionary movement. And we do find him moving away from the principles that many of these earlier poets and the earlier thinkers believed in.

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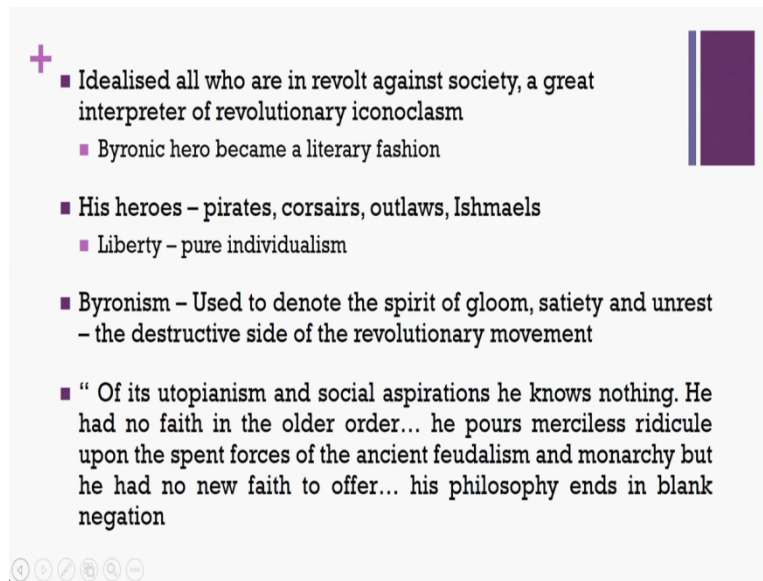
- Idealised all who are in revolt against society, a great interpreter of revolutionary iconoclasm
 - Byronic hero became a literary fashion
- His heroes – pirates, corsairs, outlaws, Ishmaels
 - Liberty – pure individualism
- Byronism – Used to denote the spirit of gloom, satiety and unrest – the destructive side of the revolutionary movement
- “ Of its utopianism and social aspirations he knows nothing. He had no faith in the older order... he pours merciless ridicule upon the spent forces of the ancient feudalism and monarchy but he had no new faith to offer... his philosophy ends in blank negation

And even among the later poets, even among the young revolutionary poets of the later romantic age we do notice that Byron was the only one who led such an iconoclastic life throughout his personal and his literary career.

But however there was a flip side to the kind of belief system that he had and some historians are quite right in pointing out that, of its utopianism and social aspirations he knows nothing. He had no faith in the older order. He pours merciless ridicule upon the spent forces of the ancient feudalism and monarchy but he had no new faith to offer. His philosophy ends in blank negation.

So many are of the opinion that the unrest that he had and also the many ways in which he denounced and rejected the existing principles and the existing systems were quite pointless in the end because he did not have any alternative system or any other kind of alternative provision to hold forth. So it almost becomes a meaningless kind of discourse. Nevertheless his heroes and his characters continued to fascinate not just the English people but also the readers of world literature to no end.

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- Idealised all who are in revolt against society, a great interpreter of revolutionary iconoclasm
 - Byronic hero became a literary fashion
- His heroes – pirates, corsairs, outlaws, Ishmaels
 - Liberty – pure individualism
- Byronism – Used to denote the spirit of gloom, satiety and unrest – the destructive side of the revolutionary movement
- “ Of its utopianism and social aspirations he knows nothing. He had no faith in the older order... he pours merciless ridicule upon the spent forces of the ancient feudalism and monarchy but he had no new faith to offer... his philosophy ends in blank negation

His indignations and his affiliations were quite contrary to what the other major romantic writers believed in. And he did not have any proper model or an ideal that he believed in. We find him moving away from most of the things that the romantics believed in. Though he is classified among the romantic poets we do not find him worshiping any of the earlier ideals such as Wordsworth or Coleridge. So he is even a solitary figure who is taking a very different revolutionary kind of work in British romanticism.

To sum up about Byron's influence and the Byron's belief system it would suffice to quote from Hudson who says, he proclaimed himself an adherent of the Augustan school, admired Pope, cared little for Wordsworth or Coleridge and compared the poetry of the 18th century with a Greek temple and that of his own time with a barbarous Turkish mosque. So overall his comparison may look a little weird and quite out of context especially when we are discussing romanticism.

But this was precisely the beauty of the romantic movement, the beauty of the revolution that came in the (16:26) of literature in Britain that it really allowed more room for transgression. It also celebrated individuality in whichever way is possible.

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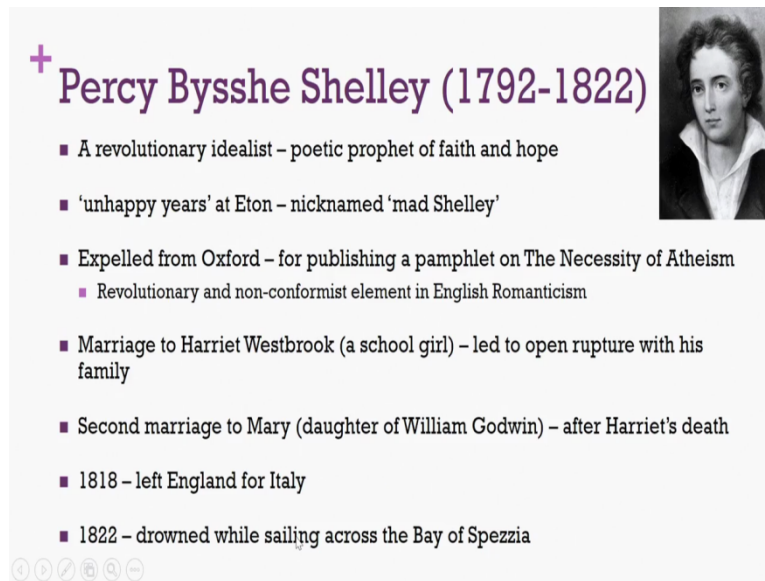
We move on to the next most important figure Percy Bysshe Shelley who lived from 1792 till 1822. He was also a revolutionary idealist but however he was starkly different from that of Byron that he had more hope in the world and more to offer to humanity compared to the Byron’s lost aimless kind of rejection of revolutionary ideals. Shelley is considered more as a poetic prophet of faith and hope. And we also find him going through very turbulent years right from his childhood throughout his educational period.

It is reported that he spend some unhappy years at Eton. He was nicknamed mad Shelley because of the strange things that he believed in and strange visionary appeal that he had. He was also expelled from Oxford interestingly and especially for publishing a pamphlet on the necessity of atheism. So in Shelley we can very rightfully identify the revolutionary and nonconformist element in English romanticism. He also had a very turbulent life when he approached adulthood.

His marriage to Harriet Westbrook, it was quite eventful because Harriet was still a school girl when Shelley married her. It also led to an open rupture with his family. And this marriage also did not last very long. His second marriage to Mary Godwin, the daughter of William Godwin, however proved more fruitful. It also leads to a lot of intellectual revivalism within him.

It was after Harriet’s death that Shelley resort to marrying Mary Godwin. And in 1818 we find him leaving for Italy and also by 1822 he came rather premature ending of his life when he was drowned while sailing across the Bay of Spezzia.

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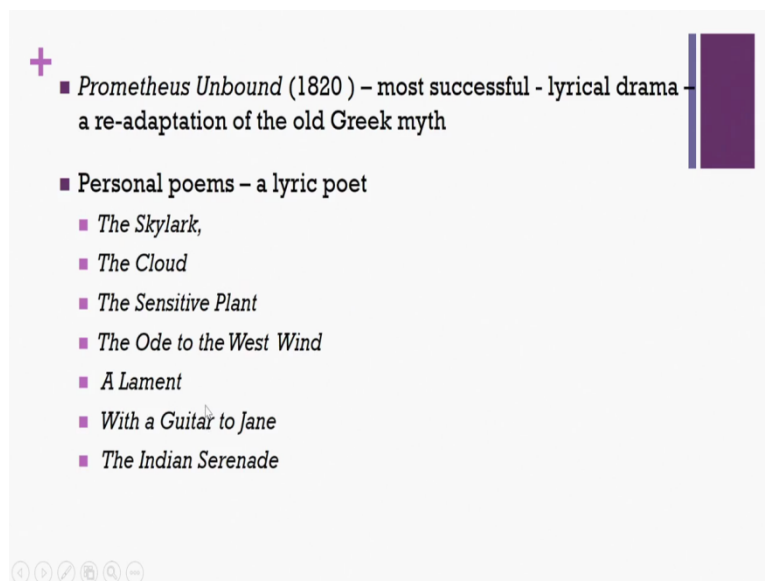
+ Percy Bysshe Shelley (1792-1822)

- A revolutionary idealist – poetic prophet of faith and hope
- 'unhappy years' at Eton – nicknamed 'mad Shelley'
- Expelled from Oxford – for publishing a pamphlet on *The Necessity of Atheism*
 - Revolutionary and non-conformist element in English Romanticism
- Marriage to Harriet Westbrook (a school girl) – led to open rupture with his family
- Second marriage to Mary (daughter of William Godwin) – after Harriet's death
- 1818 – left England for Italy
- 1822 – drowned while sailing across the Bay of Spezzia

Interestingly all of these romantic writers they met an untimely death and it is said that had lived their full life, their work would have been quite beyond comparison even in world literature. The most successful work of Shelley is considered to be *Prometheus Unbound* published in 1820.

It was a lyrical drama and the re-adaptation of the old Greek myth of Prometheus. And he also wrote a number of personal poems which were mostly like structure of odes. And some of them include *The Skylark*, *The Cloud*, *The Sensitive Plant*, *The Ode to the West Wind*, *A Lament*, *With a Guitar to Jane* and *The Indian Serenade*.

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+ *Prometheus Unbound* (1820) – most successful - lyrical drama – a re-adaptation of the old Greek myth

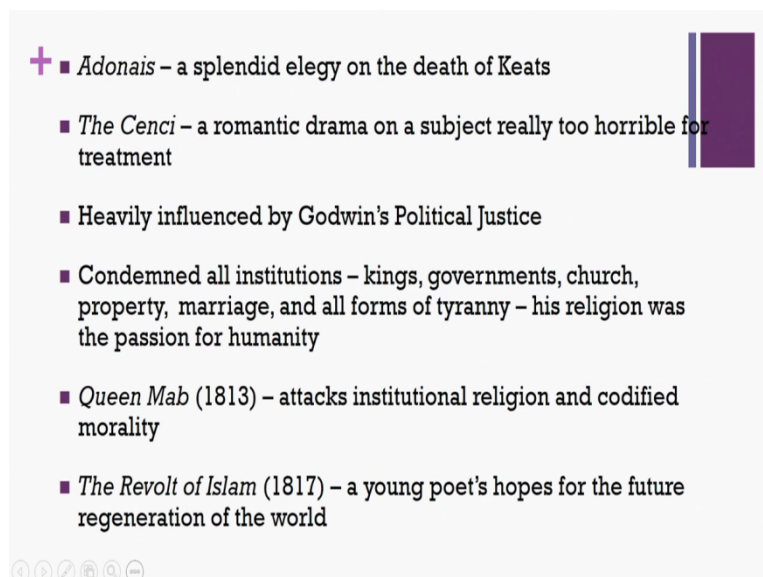
- Personal poems – a lyric poet
 - *The Skylark*,
 - *The Cloud*
 - *The Sensitive Plant*
 - *The Ode to the West Wind*
 - *A Lament*
 - *With a Guitar to Jane*
 - *The Indian Serenade*

Apart from that he wrote a very significant and a very moving elegy *Adonais* on the death of Keats who also died an untimely premature death. *The Cenci* was a romantic drama on a subject which was really too difficult for treatment within the poetic aspires. He was heavily influenced by Godwin's political justice. Interestingly Godwin also later becomes his father in law.

And we do find that the most of the writers of those times were heavily influenced by Godwin's principles and Godwin's philosophical ideas but however in Shelley it had a very immediate kind of a reaction leading him to change not just in his literary productions but also in his overall belief system. So as a result we find him condemning all kind of institutions such as kings, governments, church, property, marriage and also all forms of tyranny which are part of these acceptance institutions.

And his religion incidently was a passion for humanity. So we do not find him obeying the conventional rules set in terms of religion or in terms of family or society relations. In *Queen Mab* particularly a work published in 1813 we find him attacking all kinds of institutional religion and (codi) codified morality. We also find him rejecting the tenets of Christianity because he found them too tyrannical. In 1817 he published the poem *The Revolt of Islam* in which he articulates a young poet's hopes for the future regeneration of the world.

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- *Adonais* - a splendid elegy on the death of Keats
- *The Cenci* - a romantic drama on a subject really too horrible for treatment
- Heavily influenced by Godwin's Political Justice
- Condemned all institutions - kings, governments, church, property, marriage, and all forms of tyranny - his religion was the passion for humanity
- *Queen Mab* (1813) - attacks institutional religion and codified morality
- *The Revolt of Islam* (1817) - a young poet's hopes for the future regeneration of the world

So though he was also quite disillusioned with the turn of events which had happened in the post revolutionary period we find him more hopeful about the future which is yet to come. He also had written a number of pamphlets such as *Address to the Irish People* and *The Mask of Anarchy*

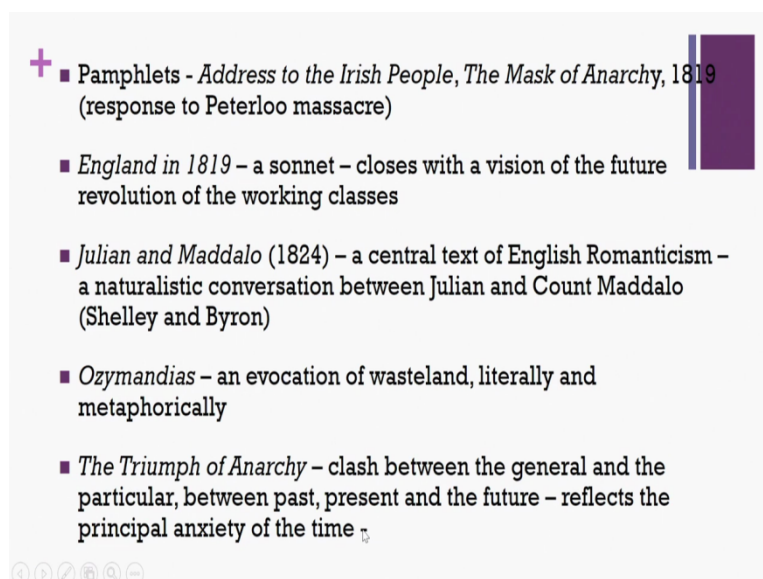
Anarchy published in 1819. And this was in response to Peterloo massacre. It is useful to again recall that right in the outset the event that led his expulsion from Oxford was also the composition of a pamphlet with questions religious beliefs and celebrated atheism.

England in 1819 was another sonnet by Shelley. It closes with a vision of the future revolution of the working classes. In that sense we find that there is also a political visionary within the personality of Shelley. Julian and Maddalo published in 1824 was a very interesting work by Shelley. It is also considered as the central text of English romanticism. It moves away from the predictable kinds of poetry that romantic poets were otherwise producing.

So it had recreated a naturalistic conversation between Julian and Count Maddalo and who were also representatives of Shelley himself and Byron. So this conversation was quite interesting and it was found quite stimulating and encouraging for the audience of those times. Ozymandias, one of the powerful poems by Shelley is an evocation of wasteland literally and metaphorically.

It continues to be of much anthologized and taught worldwide as well. In the work The Triumph of Anarchy we find Shelley analysing the clash between the general and the particular, between past present and the future. He also in that sense could reflect the anxieties of his time in most of his works.

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- Pamphlets - *Address to the Irish People, The Mask of Anarchy*, 1819 (response to Peterloo massacre)
 - *England in 1819* – a sonnet – closes with a vision of the future revolution of the working classes
 - *Julian and Maddalo* (1824) – a central text of English Romanticism – a naturalistic conversation between Julian and Count Maddalo (Shelley and Byron)
 - *Ozymandias* – an evocation of wasteland, literally and metaphorically
 - *The Triumph of Anarchy* – clash between the general and the particular, between past, present and the future – reflects the principal anxiety of the time

Shelley is quite well known for this master piece of work that he produced, A Defence of Poetry which was also more like a work of literary criticism. It is also useful to remember at

this point that from the romantic period onwards most of the leading writers also found it their responsibility to talk about the theories of poetry and the theories of literature that they believed in.

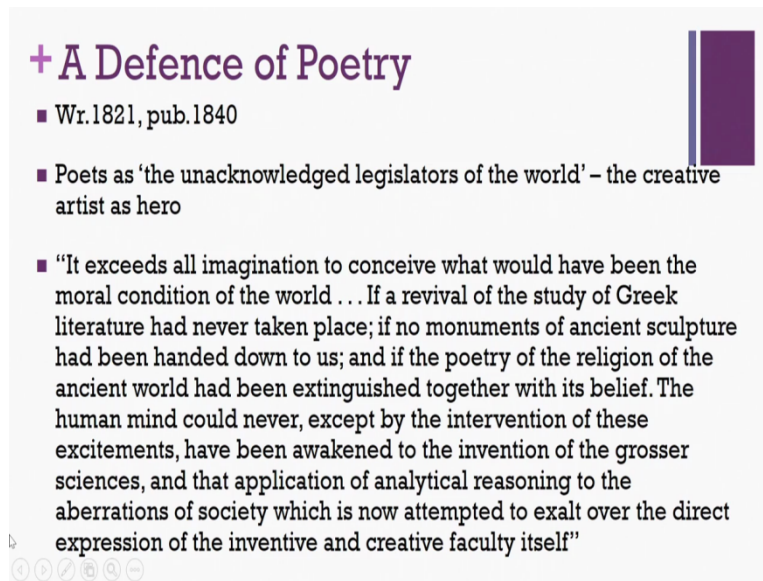
So in that sense this period also lays the foundation to literary criticism in general and it becomes very important when the author himself writes about the poetical productions and also about the various technical and nontechnical and the emotional processes that led to the production of particular kinds of writing. This work alongside the other major works of those times such as *Lyrical Ballads* and *Biographia Literaria* also become yet another foundational text on which the literary criticism of English literature is built upon.

A Defence of Poetry was written in 1821 but it was published only in 1840. It is in this work that he talks about poets as the unacknowledged legislators of the world. And this was also the beginning of the identification of the creative artist as a hero. It would be interesting to read through certain very interesting passage from *A Defence of Poetry* which also makes clear to us some of the basic tenets in which Shelley believed and also by extension the romantic period itself believed in.

It exceeds all imagination to conceive what would have been the moral condition of the world if a revival of the study of Greek literature had never taken place, if no monuments of ancient sculpture had been handed down to us and if the poetry of the religion of the ancient world had been extinguished together with its belief.

The human mind could never except by the intervention of these excitements have been awakened to the invention of the grosser sciences and that application of analytical reasoning to the aberrations of society which is now attempted to exalt over the direct expressions of the inventive and creative faculty itself.

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+ A Defence of Poetry

- Wr.1821, pub.1840
- Poets as 'the unacknowledged legislators of the world' – the creative artist as hero
- "It exceeds all imagination to conceive what would have been the moral condition of the world . . . If a revival of the study of Greek literature had never taken place; if no monuments of ancient sculpture had been handed down to us; and if the poetry of the religion of the ancient world had been extinguished together with its belief. The human mind could never, except by the intervention of these excitements, have been awakened to the invention of the grosser sciences, and that application of analytical reasoning to the aberrations of society which is now attempted to exalt over the direct expression of the inventive and creative faculty itself"

Here we find Shelley articulating the primary responsibilities of a poet and also the prime importance of poetry over other kinds of arts and or all other kinds of faculty. This is also the time when it was easier for the poets to articulate the primacy of all of these finer arts and the creative faculty over the other more (())(24:11) forms of sciences. Shelley having laid the foundation to many of the tenets of the romantic times, it was quite easier also for the later critics to take off from many of the principles which were in place.


Now we come to the last poet who is in our focus. He is the youngest of the lot. He lived only from 1795 to 1821, John Keats. John Keats life and career could be seen a remarkable contrast with that of Byron and Shelley. He was neither a rebel nor a utopian dreamer and it is very interesting to note that he was endowed with a purely artistic nature. And his position politically and personally was that of almost complete detachment.

And accordingly it is said about him that he knew nothing of Byron's stormy spirit of antagonism to the existing order of things and he had no sympathy with Shelley's humanitarian zeal and passion for reforming the world. He only believed in poetry as the incarnation of beauty and he did not identify poetry as the vehicle of philosophy, religion or even socio-political theories.

So as he wrote in one of his poems Endymion, A thing of beauty is a joy forever. He continued to believe in this throughout his writing career. And he has also stated many times that, I have loved the principle of beauty in all things.

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+ John Keats (1795-1821)



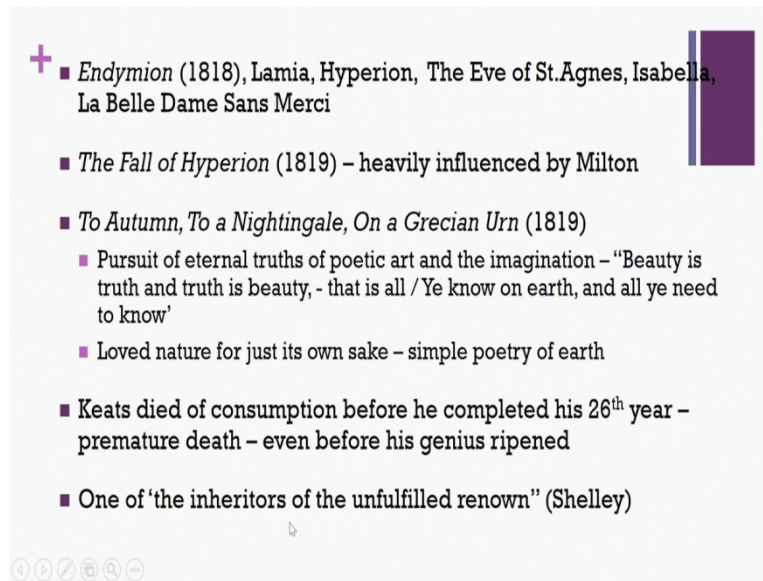
- A remarkable contrast with Byron and Shelley
- Neither a rebel nor a utopian dreamer – endowed with a purely artistic nature – a position of almost complete detachment
- “He knew nothing of Byron’s stormy spirit of antagonism to the existing order of things, and he had no sympathy with Shelley’s humanitarian zeal and passion for reforming the world”
- Poetry as the incarnation of beauty – not the vehicle of philosophy, religion or socio-political theories
- “A thing of beauty is a joy forever” (*Endymion*)
- “I have loved the principle of beauty in all things”

Some of his important works include *Endymion* published in 1818, *Lamia*, *Hyperion*, *The Eve of Saint Agnes*, *Isabella* and *La Belle Dame Sans Merci*. *The Fall of Hyperion* written in 1819 was heavily influenced by Milton and we also see him going back to the past in that sense to receive inspiration and also to identify certain important principles of writing. And some of his odes and lyric poem include *To Autumn*, *To a Nightingale* and *On a Grecian Urn* published in 1819.

And in all of these works we find certain common elements such as the pursuit of eternal truths of poetic art and the imagination. And he wrote as well, Beauty is truth and truth is beauty, that is all ye know on earth and all ye need to know. And we find him loving nature just for its own sake and he also celebrate the simple poetry of earth keeping in tune with the true spirit of the romantic period.

Keats unfortunately died of consumption much before he completed his 26th birthday. He does met with a premature death even before his genius ripened into a proper form. Shelley in his most famous elegy on Keats death remarked about him that he is one of the inheritors of the unfulfilled renown.

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- *Endymion* (1818), *Lamia*, *Hyperion*, *The Eve of St. Agnes*, *Isabella*, *La Belle Dame Sans Merci*
- *The Fall of Hyperion* (1819) – heavily influenced by Milton
- *To Autumn*, *To a Nightingale*, *On a Grecian Urn* (1819)
 - Pursuit of eternal truths of poetic art and the imagination – “Beauty is truth and truth is beauty, - that is all / Ye know on earth, and all ye need to know’
 - Loved nature for just its own sake – simple poetry of earth
- Keats died of consumption before he completed his 26th year – premature death – even before his genius ripened
- One of “the inheritors of the unfulfilled renown” (Shelley)

In terms of the writing style and the form of poetry Keats is considered as the most romantic of the romantic poets. He also rejected the classic couplet and did not resort to the writing models which were inspired from the 18th century. He also had an immense admiration for the middle ages. He was fascinated by Thomas Percy’s *Reliques of Ancient English Poetry* published in 1765 and he was also immensely fascinated by the pre-romantic figure of the poet Thomas Chatterton who had met with an untimely death at the age of 15.

And we also noted how many of the romantic poets were immensely fascinated by the interesting life and career of Thomas Chatterton. About Keats it is said that with him poetry breaks away from the interest of contemporary life, returns to the past and devotes itself to the service of beauty. It is for this reason that he seems to stand definitely at the end of this age.

Keats is said to have been standing at the end of his age not for just this reason, he also represents the exhaustion of the impulses is generated by the social upheaval and the humanitarian enthusiasms of the revolution. As Keats himself wrote in one of his famous letters, Do you not see how necessary a world of pains and troubles is to school an intelligence and make it a soul. So this was the kind of influence and the contribution that Keats gave to romantic poetry.

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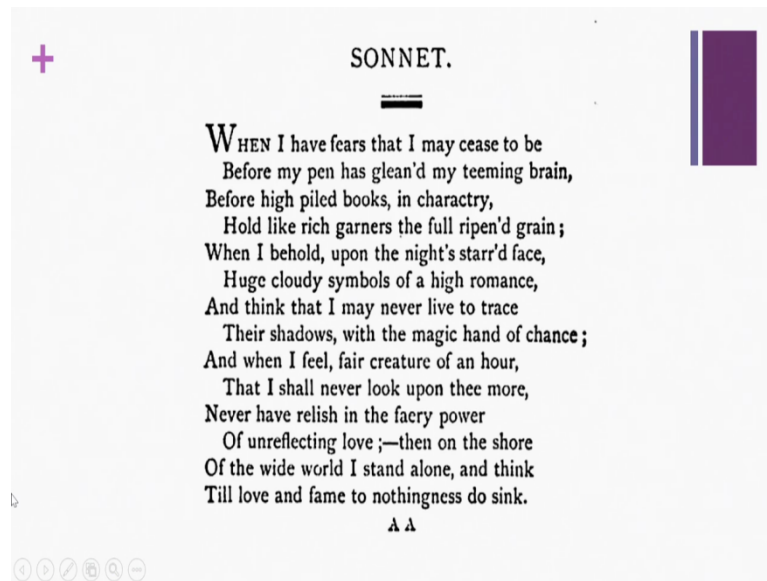
- Form and style – ‘the most romantic of the romantic poets’ – rejection of classical couplet
- Keats' Admiration for the middle ages
 - Fascinated by Thomas Percy's *Reliques of Ancient English Poetry* (1765) and by the pre-Romantic figure of the poet Thomas Chatterton
- “With him poetry breaks away from the interests of contemporary life, returns to the past, and devotes itself to the service of beauty. It is for this reason that he seems to stand definitely at the end of his age”
- Represents the exhaustion of the impulses generated by the social upheaval and the humanitarian enthusiasms of the Revolution
- “Do you not see how necessary a world of pains and troubles is to school an intelligence and make it a soul” (from Keats' letters)

And let us wind up our discussion on Keats with this particular poem that he wrote when he was very young and this also seems to have foreshadowed these events that were to happen in his life considering his premature death.

His Sonnet titled When I have fears that I may cease to be, goes like this, When I have fears that I may cease to be before my pen has glean'd my teeming brain, before high piled books in charactry, hold like rich garners the full ripen'd grain, when I behold upon the night's starr'd face, huge cloudy symbols of a high romance, and think that I may never live to trace their shadows with the magic hand of chance.

And when I feel fair creature of an hour, that I shall never look upon thee more, never have relish in the faery power of unreflecting love, then on the shore of the wide world I stand alone and think till love and fame to nothingness do sink.

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This sonnet was indeed quite prophetic given that he had to leave the earth much before this time and this was also considered as one of the ways in which he could perhaps foresee the events that would happen in his life. Keats though he lived for a very little time wrote quite prolifically and immensely and also considered as one of the representative poets of the age.

Though the most important in the representative figures of the later revolutionary period of romanticism include that of Byron, Shelley and Keats, we also have a few other contemporaries who are of notable worth. The other major contemporaries of these poets include James Henry Leigh Hunt who wrote the Story of Rimini in 1816. He also maintained very close relations with Shelley and Keats. The second important one was Thomas or Tom Hood.

He was more notable for his humorous writing. He published works such as The Dream of Eugene Aram, The Song of the Shirt, The Bridge of Sighs and Fair Inez and the Ode to Melancholy.

But he spent much of his lifetime, almost 24 years as a hack writer so that severely had hampered his reputation as a literary writer. The other important figure was Winthrop Mackworth Praed and he wrote admirable society verses and they were a little popular during his lifetime but they did not really considered by the critics and the historians at a later point.

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The slide features a purple plus sign icon to the left of the title '+ Other contemporaries'. To the right of the title is a vertical purple bar. The content is organized into three bulleted sections, each starting with a dark purple square bullet point. The first section lists James Henry Leigh Hunt with sub-bullets for *Story of Rimini* (1816) and his relations with Shelley and Keats. The second section lists Thomas (Tom) Hood with sub-bullets for humorous writing, a list of works including *The Dream of Eugene Aram*, *The Song of the Shirt*, *The Bridge of Sighs*, *Fair Inez*, and *Ode to Melancholy*, and 24 years of hack-writing. The third section lists Winthrop Mackworth Praed with a sub-bullet for admirable society verses.

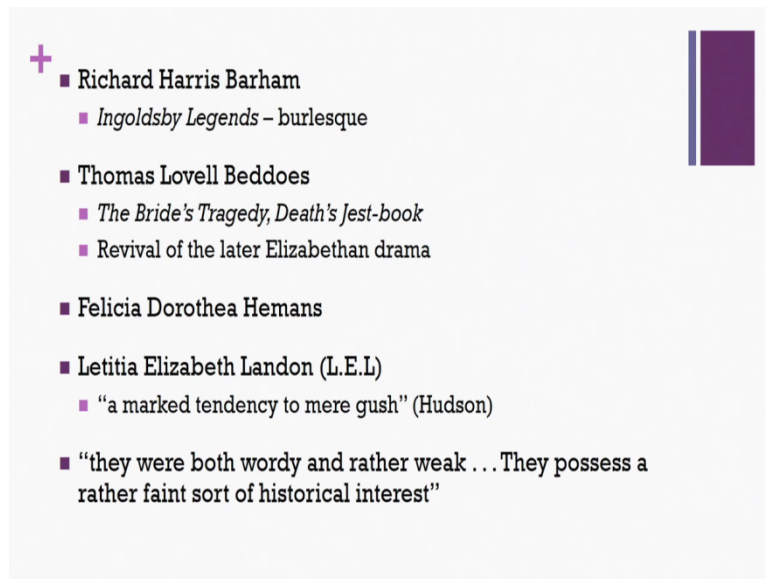
- James Henry Leigh Hunt
 - *Story of Rimini* (1816)
 - Close relations with Shelley and Keats
- Thomas (Tom) Hood
 - Humorous writing
 - *The Dream of Eugene Aram*, *The Song of the Shirt*, *The Bridge of Sighs*, *Fair Inez*, *Ode to Melancholy*
 - 24 years of hack-writing
- Winthrop Mackworth Praed
 - Admirable society verses

Richard Harris Barham published an important burlesque known as *Ingoldsby Legends*. Thomas Lovell Beddoes was best known for *The Bride's Tragedy* and *Death's Jest Book* and he was also responsible for the revival of the later Elizabethan drama. It is important to recall that even at this point in the 19th century when romanticism was at its peak there were many writers such as Beddoes who were looking back to the Elizabethan age and also trying to recreate the some of the works from that age.

So in that sense the romantic age in multiple ways loved a lot of influences to come in and it is very difficult to say what kind of poetry was more acceptable than the other during the romantic age. Felicia Dorothea Hemans and Letitia Elizabeth Landon were two important women writers of this period but however it is quite unfortunate to note that most of the conventional historians have not paid adequate attention to them.

We shall be coming back at a later session when we talk centrally about the women writers of the romantic age to particularly look at the life and works of these two women writers. In fact the historian Hudson has even marked about Letitia Elizabeth Landon that she had a marked tendency to mere gush. It is also noted in some of the histories that they were both wordy and rather weak and that they possess a rather faint sort of historical interest only.

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- Richard Harris Barham
 - *Ingoldsby Legends* – burlesque
- Thomas Lovell Beddoes
 - *The Bride's Tragedy, Death's Jest-book*
 - Revival of the later Elizabethan drama
- Felicia Dorothea Hemans
- Letitia Elizabeth Landon (L.E.L)
 - “a marked tendency to mere gush” (Hudson)
- “they were both wordy and rather weak . . . They possess a rather faint sort of historical interest”

In that sense many of these women writers were not given adequate attention in the canon or in the literary history. So in one of the later sessions we shall be talking about the major women writers of this period who did not enjoy much of a canonical status but were quite popular and noted during their own lifetime.

So with this observation we come to the end of today's lecture and we shall come back in the next session to continue looking at some of the other significant aspects of romantic age and also begin to see how this age began to produce various forms of writings and also encouraged various individualistic tendencies in the literary sphere. Thank you for listening and I look forward to seeing you in the next session.