

History of English Language and Literature
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Lecture 16
Prose in the Age of Romanticism

Hello everyone. Let me welcome you to yet another session of this NPTEL course titled the history of English language and literature. In today's session where we continue to discuss the romantic age we move away from poetry towards the prose writings of this period. Though the most characteristic genre of this period was poetry it was not wanting in prose literature. We do find that there was incredible kind of output being made in the form of prose writings as well.

Though in comparison to the poetry it does fade a little into oblivion. We do notice that this was the age which also laid the foundation of a new kind of writing particularly a more prosaic form of essay writing which originated in the 18th century and then culminated with the 19th century romanticism. So in general apart from many other kinds of prose writings which were being made available from the 18th century onwards we begin to notice that the most fundamental influence was in the form of essay writing.

And we also find an inaugural movement being witnessed in the case of reviews and magazines which began to flourish from the 19th century onwards. So some prominent reviews were quite fundamental in laying the foundations of proper essay writing in English literature. And in that sense we begin to notice that in 1802 the Edinburgh review was established and the major writers who contributed to this periodical were Jeffrey, Brougham, Sidney Smith and many other writers who were also prominent members of the Whig party.

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+ The Modern Review and Magazine

- *Edinburgh Review* – 1802 – Jeffrey, Brougham, Sidney Smith – other prominent members of the Whig Party
- *The Quarterly* – 1809 – a Tory counterblast
 - The first editor – William Gifford
 - Succeeded by Scott's son-in-law Lockhart (1824)
- *Blackwood's Edinburgh Magazine* – a Tory monthly launched in 1817 – Wilson, Lockhart and Hogg
- *The London Magazine* (rival) – Lamb, Hazlitt, De Quincey (also a Blackwood's man), Tom Hood, Allan Cunningham and Carlyle
- *Fraser's* – founded in 1830

In 1809 *The Quarterly* was established as a Tory counterblast and we also noticed that this was also a forum where these varying supporters of the party members used to articulate their political opinions and also engage in a lot of debates and discussions. So apart from this, this was also a fertile ground for discussing the latest trends in terms of writing, in terms of the socio-political affairs and also the cultural and the changing chase even in terms of fashion and other kinds of related things which were of prominence and importance not just in England but also in rest of Europe.

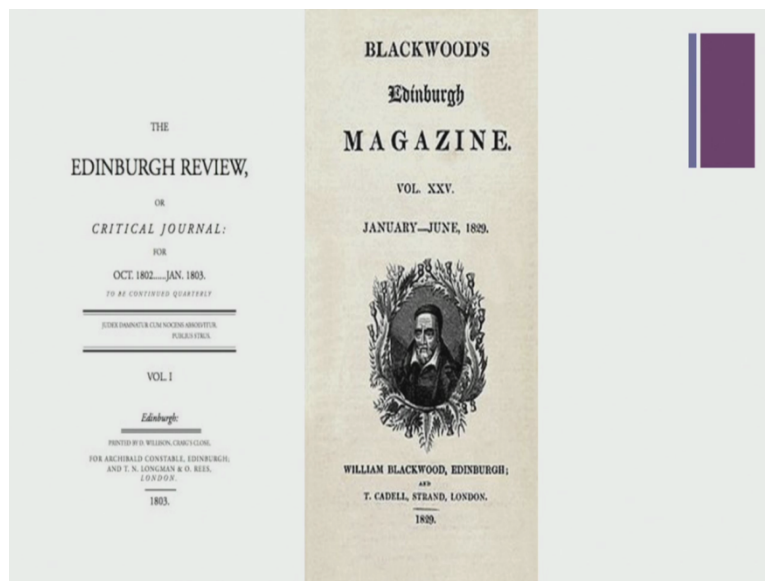
The first editor of *The Quarterly* was William Gifford and he was succeeded by Walter Scott's son in law Lockhart in 1824. So we also see that unlike the 17th and 18th centuries people began to affiliate themselves to particular kinds of periodicals and particular party affiliations and that also became a kind of an identity in addition to their own personality. And another significant periodical was Blackwood's *Edinburgh Magazine*.

This was a Tory monthly which was launched in 1817 and the major contributors included Wilson, Lockhart and Hogg. *The London Magazine* emerged as a rival to Blackwood's *Edinburgh Magazine* and the major contributors were perhaps the most famous prose writers of the 19th century as well. They were Lamb, Hazlitt, De Quincey and some of these writers such as De Quincey they contributed to both these rival magazines and in that sense they were affiliated to both the parties in very different ways.

And the other major writers of the *London Magazine* included Tom Hood, Allan Cunningham and Carlyle. And there was also this periodical titled *Fraser's* founded in 1830 which did not

have a very long lasting influence like the Edinburgh Magazines and the London Magazines. These magazines were very popular during that time. There were immense readership and it was also enjoyed across classes and it also gave a certain sense of what was going on in the London literary circles and also in the London political and socio-cultural circles during those times.

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So even today these continue to be a source of much historical interest and also a source through which we can get biographical and also certain other trivial information about the authors of the 19th century. The emergence of these periodicals they served a very different purpose as well. They were a great encouragement to essay writing and accordingly we find that in the 19th century most of these prose writers they were mostly essayists rather than the makers of books.

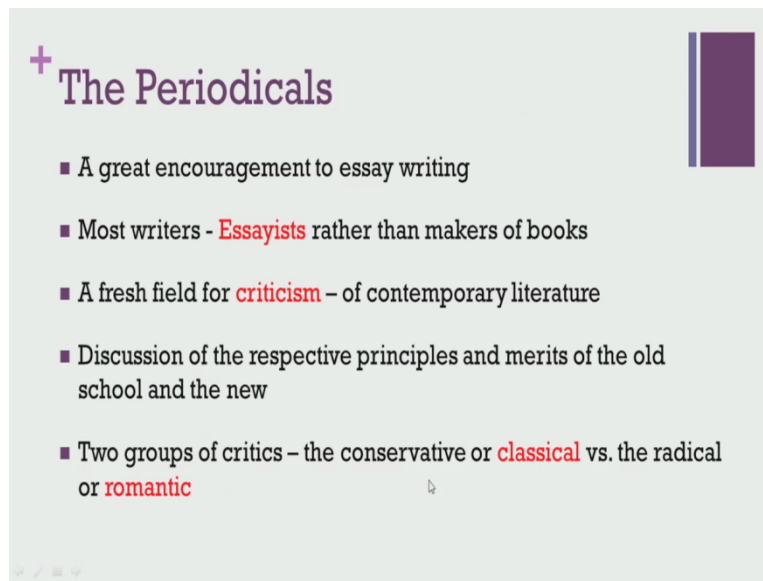
We do find them focusing on individual pieces and also later compiling them into a collection or a volume which included most of their smaller pieces of writing. And this also provided a fresh field for criticism which had begun to emerge from the 18th century onwards. And here we begin to see that criticism of contemporary literature was beginning to be made available through most of these reviews. This also contributed to a fresh growth and a more informed kind of criticism in the field of literature.

In terms of criticism it was a very different approach all together. We find that most of these writers engaged in the discussion of respective principles and merits of the old school and the

new. In that sense we also find a way in which the readers and the audience could also engage with a kind of comparison between writers of the past or also with the contemporary writers.

In that sense we can also say that these critics majorly belong to two different groups, one set belongs to the conservative or the classical side and the other set supported the radical or the romantic kind of writing.

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+ The Periodicals

- A great encouragement to essay writing
- Most writers - **Essayists** rather than makers of books
- A fresh field for **criticism** – of contemporary literature
- Discussion of the respective principles and merits of the old school and the new
- Two groups of critics – the conservative or **classical** vs. the radical or **romantic**

So we also begin to notice that these stark differences laid a foundational pathway for criticism to proceed from the 19th century onwards and also this is perhaps the first time when writers and critics began to take side which were not merely socio-cultural or political but were also had something to do with the kind of writing, the kind of poetry, the kind of the themes that they engaged with.

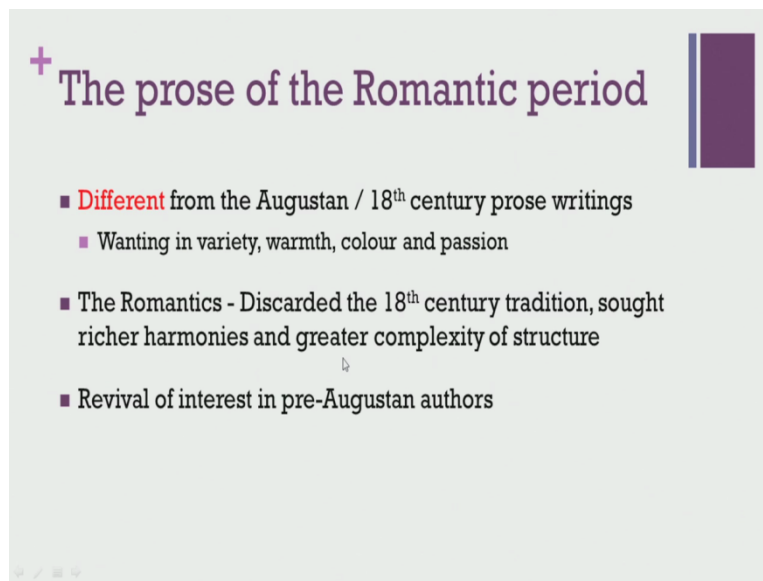
So in that sense we also notice a certain kind of an emergency and affiliation to particular schools of writing and also critics playing an influential role in either promoting or even completely destroying the literary reputation of particular writers. The prose writings which were made available in the romantic period they were quite different from that of the Augustan prose writings.

And though the periodicals and the essay form of a writing they did emerged from the 18th century onwards, we have noted in one of the earlier session how their popularity had played a significant role in the transformation of literary writings all together. However the writings which were made available in the romantic period they departed severely from the themes and treatments of the 18th century.

In the 18th century prose writings though they played an inaugural role they were found to be wanting in variety, warmth, colour and passion. So this was the gap that the romantics began to address though radar unselfconsciously at the beginning.

So they began to discard the 18th century tradition and also sought richer harmonies and greater complexity of structures in their prose style. And this also meant that some of them were interested in reviving the pre Augustan form of writing which were more romantic in nature than the Augustan period.

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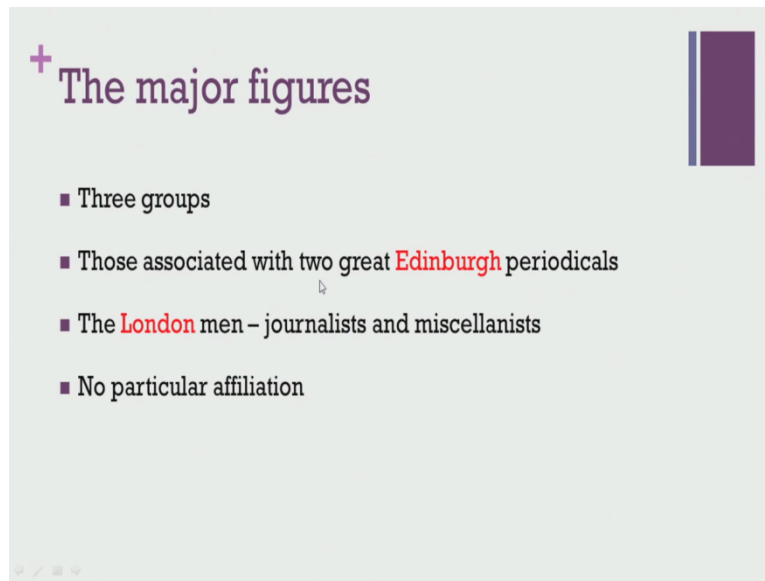
+ The prose of the Romantic period

- **Different** from the Augustan / 18th century prose writings
 - Wanting in variety, warmth, colour and passion
- The Romantics - Discarded the 18th century tradition, sought richer harmonies and greater complexity of structure
- Revival of interest in pre-Augustan authors

So gradually we find the tendency towards romanticism not just in poetry but also in the prose writings of the period. The major writers of this period can be classified into three different groups. The first set was associated with the two great Edinburgh periodicals, the second set of writers were known as the London men and they were mostly journalist and the writers who engaged in miscellaneous form of different kinds of genres. And the third set of writers did not show any particular affiliation.

They used to write for either of the political party or some of them even showed romantic and classical tendencies at the same time. So loosely these set of others could be classified as the London men and the Edinburgh men and also certain people who used to shift between their choices and their loyalties.

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+ The major figures

- Three groups
- Those associated with two great **Edinburgh** periodicals
- The **London** men – journalists and miscellanists
- No particular affiliation

Among the Edinburgh men this chief and the most important one was Francis Jeffrey who lived from 1773 to 1850. For his iron supporters he was known as the Arch Critic and the others had nicknamed him as a notorious Judge Jeffrey. And this was a reference to the bloody judge who lived in the 17th century in Europe. And he had composed over 200 articles to the Edinburgh magazine and he was considered as the most influential critic of his time. It was said that he could make or break anyone's literary career in the 19th century.

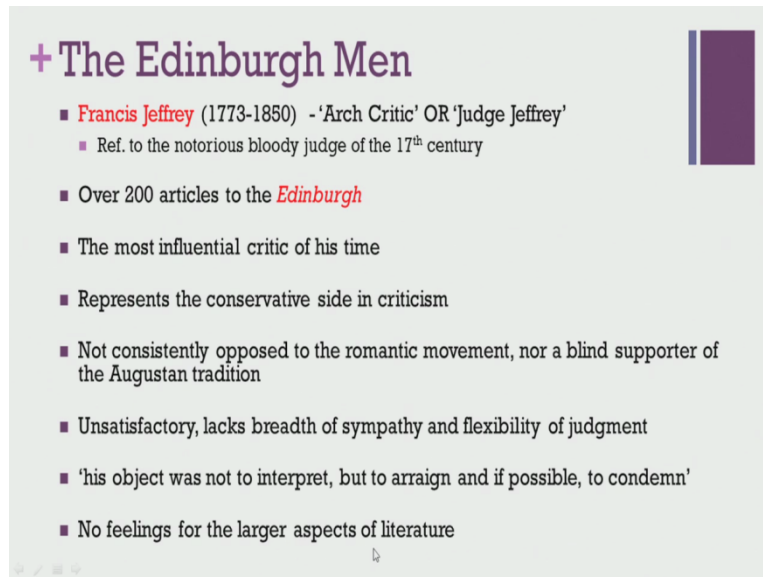
And he also represented the conservative side in criticism and he was not very kind to the ones who were trying to experiment with newer forms of romantic writings. And he was not very appreciative of the quality of imagination which was dominating the major writers of the 19th century. There was however a balance that he is always could achieve in his form of criticism in the sense that he was never consistently opposed to the romantic movement nor was he a blind supporter of the Augustan tradition.

But however regardless of this kind of balance that he seems to achieve in his writings, his work was largely unsatisfactory. Nobody was ever satisfied with the kind of criticism that he was giving. In high insight we also notice that it lacked breadth of sympathy and also flexibility of judgement. the major criticism against his criticism was that, his object was not to interpret but to arraign and if possible to condemn.

So we noticed that without any kind of constructive and informed criticism it is very difficult for a literature to emerge. So in that sense we find Jeffrey's criticism severely lacking and not

contributing to the progress or the advent of any good kind of literature. And he also being a conservative he failed to display any feelings for the larger aspects of literature.

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+ The Edinburgh Men

- **Francis Jeffrey** (1773-1850) - 'Arch Critic' OR 'Judge Jeffrey'
 - Ref. to the notorious bloody judge of the 17th century
- Over 200 articles to the *Edinburgh*
- The most influential critic of his time
- Represents the conservative side in criticism
- Not consistently opposed to the romantic movement, nor a blind supporter of the Augustan tradition
- Unsatisfactory, lacks breadth of sympathy and flexibility of judgment
- 'his object was not to interpret, but to arraign and if possible, to condemn'
- No feelings for the larger aspects of literature

We find him entirely disconnected from the other non literary features which also influenced writings. In that sense he was very narrow in terms of perspective and we to find his overall critical faculty lacking in that sense. The second important figure Sydney Smith who lived from 1770 to 1845 was also very good ally of Jeffrey. He was considered as the chief coadjutor to Jeffrey. He was an exceedingly clever clergyman and this was also a rare combination.

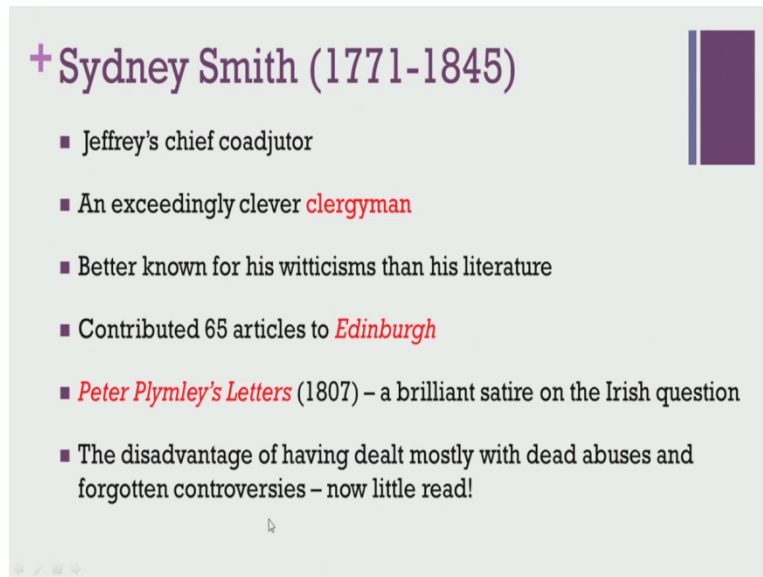
We do notice that some of the writers of this period they did engaged in very diverse kind of (pro) professions such as this. And he was known more for his witticisms and his witty remarks than for the actual writing that he produced. He is said to have contributed to about 65 articles to Edinburgh. In that sense he was a very well known figure in London and Edinburgh during that time.

His most important work however was the work which was published in 1807 titled Peter Plymley's Letters. It was a brilliant satire on the Irish question. If you remember this was an issue that was troubling the English government for quite a long time. We do find Smith engaging satirically with this question and also enjoying a wide reputation for the publication of this.

But however his disadvantage was that Smith wrote mostly for the contemporary times and he also had the disadvantage of having dealt mostly with dead abuses and forgotten

controversies. Because of that it fails to make much essence to the contemporary readers and he is not really enjoyed in today's terms.

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+ Sydney Smith (1771-1845)

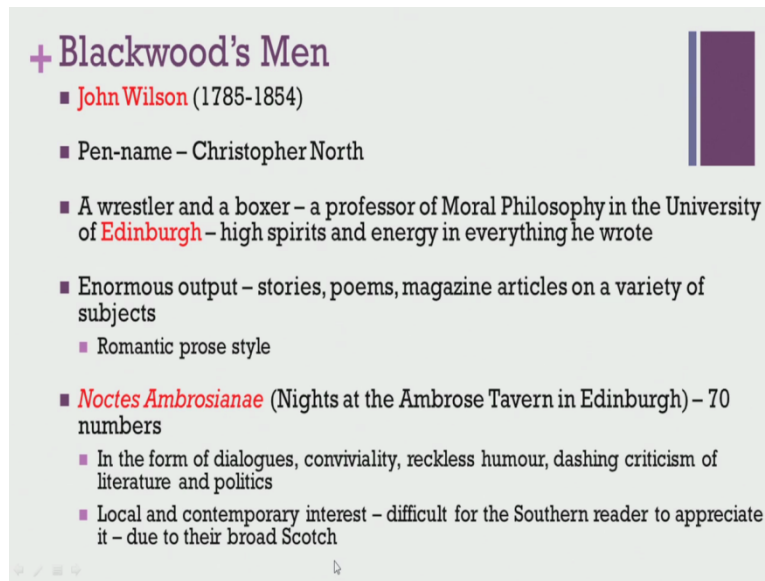
- Jeffrey's chief coadjutor
- An exceedingly clever **clergyman**
- Better known for his witticisms than his literature
- Contributed 65 articles to **Edinburgh**
- **Peter Plymley's Letters** (1807) – a brilliant satire on the Irish question
- The disadvantage of having dealt mostly with dead abuses and forgotten controversies – now little read!

Among the Blackwood's Men the most important one was John Wilson who lived from 1785 till 1854. He also had a pen name under which he wrote, Christopher North. He was a wrestler and a boxer, yet another very rare combination for a writer. And he was also a professor of moral philosophy in the University of Edinburgh. With this very influential precession he tried to bring in high spirits and energy in everything that he wrote. And his literary output was enormous.

He has written stories, poems, magazines, articles on a variety of subjects and his prose style in general was more inclined towards romanticism. His most significant work was titled *Noctes Ambrosianae* translated as *Nights at the Ambrose Tavern* in Edinburg. It ran into a both 70 numbers and it was usually enjoyed during that time. This was written in the form of dialogues and it also had a lot of conviviality, it had reckless humour built into it and it was also a dashing criticism of literature and politics.

So it was much enjoyed in terms of contemporary interest. And but the same thing became a huge disadvantage for him in the posterity because of the local and contemporary interest it which it was much rooted in. It was very difficult for the southern readers even during those times to appreciate much of the humour in it and much of the content in it. And because of the broad Scotch element built into it, it also failed to make sense to the later readers.

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+ Blackwood's Men

- **John Wilson** (1785-1854)
- Pen-name – Christopher North
- A wrestler and a boxer – a professor of Moral Philosophy in the University of **Edinburgh** – high spirits and energy in everything he wrote
- Enormous output – stories, poems, magazine articles on a variety of subjects
 - Romantic prose style
- **Noctes Ambrosianae** (Nights at the Ambrose Tavern in Edinburgh) – 70 numbers
 - In the form of dialogues, conviviality, reckless humour, dashing criticism of literature and politics
 - Local and contemporary interest – difficult for the Southern reader to appreciate it – due to their broad Scotch

As we noted at the outset there were a groups of writers who wrote for all of these different magazines irrespective of the kind of political affiliations that they held and among them the most important one was Thomas De Quincey who lived from 1785 till 1859. He was essentially a magazinist and he could compile 17 volumes of his enormous work at a later point. He wrote for the London Magazine and for the Blackwood. So in that sense he also served as a common factor for both of these rival magazines.


His work was not free from glaring defects. He abused his extraordinary learning in multiple ways through his expressions and often it was found that he sank into obscurity and pedantry and he also got captious and trivial arguments which did not make much sense. And his writing also includes a lot of long winding digressions which took him away from the main point and also robbed his writings of the brevity and also the clarity.

Nevertheless we find that his work was quite rich and rhetorical in style and he is also considered as one of the chief masters of romantic impassioned prose. His work in that sense keeping in tune with the romantic spirit also had a lot of narrative and descriptive power which made some of his writings hugely popular for the readers of those times and as well as for the readers of the posterity.

His most important works include Joan of Arc, English Mail Coach and Dream Fugue. But however the work which brought him much fame during his lifetime was Murder considered as one of the Fine Arts, in which he combined grim humour with the horrible. And he is now best known for his fascinating autobiography titled Confessions of an English Opium Eater.

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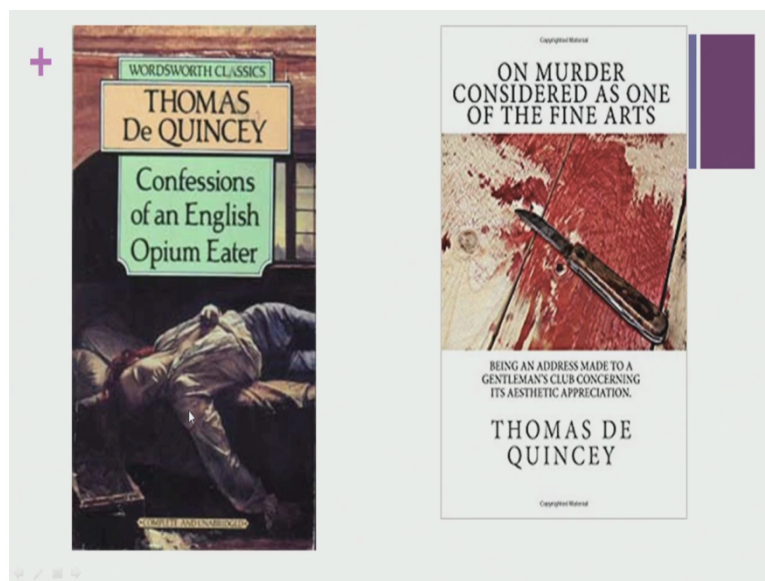
+ Thomas De Quincey (1785-1859)



- Essentially a magazinist - 17 volumes of his work
 - Wrote for *London Magazine* and *Blackwood*
- Glaring defects – abusing his extraordinary learning, sinking into obscurity and pedantry, captious and trivial arguments, unwieldy digressions
- Rich and rhetorical style, one of the chief masters of romantic impassioned prose, narrative and descriptive power
- *Joan of Arc, English Mail Coach, Dream Fugue*
- *Murder considered as one of the Fine Arts* – combining grim humour with the horrible
- *Confessions of an English Opium Eater* – fascinating autobiography

This continues to hold much popular intention even in the contemporary.

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The image shows two book covers side-by-side. The left cover is for 'Confessions of an English Opium Eater' by Thomas De Quincey, part of the Wordsworth Classics series. It features a dark, atmospheric illustration of a man lying on a bed. The right cover is for 'On Murder Considered as One of the Fine Arts' by Thomas De Quincey. It has a white background with a central illustration of a blood-stained knife. The text on the cover includes the title, a subtitle 'BEING AN ADDRESS MADE TO A GENTLEMAN'S CLUB CONCERNING ITS AESTHETIC APPRECIATION.', and the author's name.

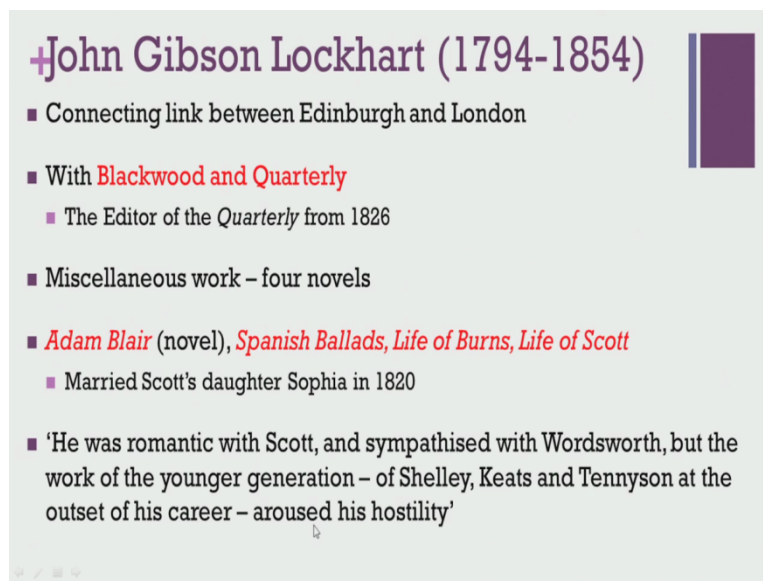
Alongside De Quincey, John Gibson Lockhart also served as a connecting link between Edinburgh and London. He lived from 1794 till 1854. He worked with a Blackwood and Quarterly and also contributed heavily to both these rival magazines. He also served as the editor of the Quarterly from 1826 onwards. His work was mostly of miscellaneous nature. He produced a lot of essays and lot of works from different genres including four novels.

His most noted novel work was Adam Blair and he also published a collection known as Spanish Ballads and also the Life of Burns and Life of Scott. Life of Burns and Life of Scott

was much appreciated during those times. It also gave a much insight into these well known poets of those times. Lockhart incidently also married Scott's daughter Sophia in 1820.

And in terms of his general sympathies and his general treatment of his prose works it is said that he was romantic with Scott and sympathized with Wordsworth but the work of the younger generation of Shelley, Keats and Tennyson at the outset of his career aroused his hostility.

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John Gibson Lockhart (1794-1854)

- Connecting link between Edinburgh and London
- With **Blackwood and Quarterly**
 - The Editor of the *Quarterly* from 1826
- Miscellaneous work – four novels
- **Adam Blair** (novel), **Spanish Ballads**, **Life of Burns**, **Life of Scott**
 - Married Scott's daughter Sophia in 1820
- 'He was romantic with Scott, and sympathised with Wordsworth, but the work of the younger generation – of Shelley, Keats and Tennyson at the outset of his career – aroused his hostility'

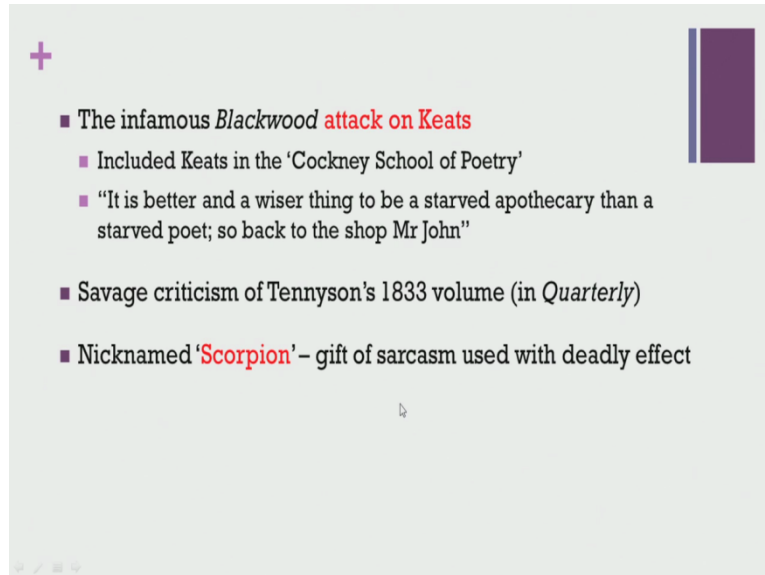
And this hostility was also found expression in manifest criticisms. He is now well known for his infamous Blackwood attack on Keats in which he identified Keats as one of the members of the Cockney School of Poetry which was also a parody of the Lake School of Poets. And he wrote about Keats which also drew much flat during those times and also in the later decades and centuries. It is better and a wiser thing to be a starved apothecary than a starved poet, so back to the shop Mr John.

So this was a very (15:48) comment that he made about Keats's poetry because he was extremely unhappy with the kind of overflow of romanticism. And he in that sense also was a supporter of the earlier kind of romanticism and also in a certain way he encouraged the kind of classicism which was found in some ways even in the 19th century. He also launched a severe criticism of Tennyson's 1833 volume when he wrote in the *Quarterly*.

And because of these scathing attacks and because of these infamous remarks he was also nicknamed the Scorpion. But however we need not forget that he could use his gift of

sarcasm with a deadly effect which made him hugely unpopular during his lifetime. But his wit and his sarcasm continues to be a lot of interest even to the contemporary readers.

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- The infamous *Blackwood* **attack on Keats**
 - Included Keats in the 'Cockney School of Poetry'
 - "It is better and a wiser thing to be a starved apothecary than a starved poet; so back to the shop Mr John"
- Savage criticism of Tennyson's 1833 volume (in *Quarterly*)
- Nicknamed '**Scorpion**' – gift of sarcasm used with deadly effect

When we talk about the writers who are classified as the London Men, there are three major important names that come to our mind, Charles Lamb, William Hazlitt and Leigh Hunt.

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+ The London Men

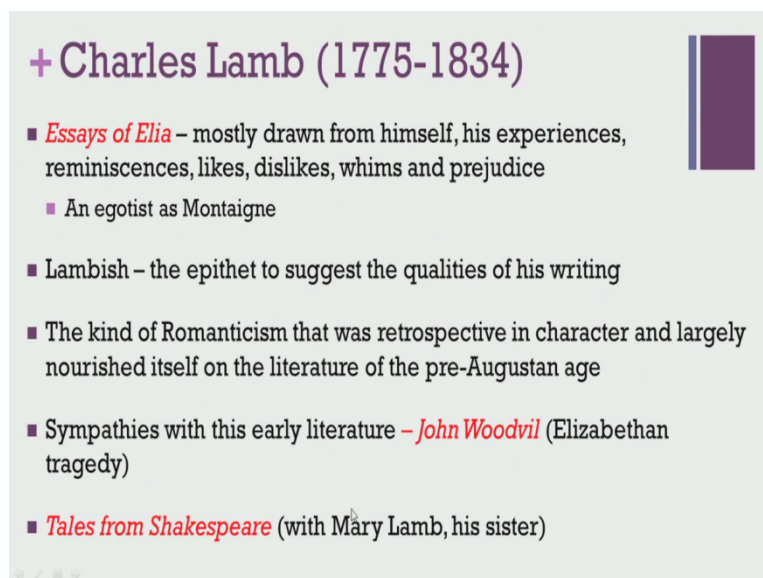
- Charles Lamb
- William Hazlitt
- Leigh Hunt

Charles Lamb who lived from 1775 till 1834 is best known for his work *Essays of Elia*. He in his work it is said that he was more like an egotist as Montaigne, the father of the essays was and Lamb also in that sense draws mostly from his own life, his experiences and he talks about his reminiscences, his likes, dislikes, whims and prejudices.

So he wrote a very personal kind of essay in the 19th century and this term Lambish was coined to suggest the qualities of his writings and also it serves as an appetite to talk about very personal form of essay writing. His romanticism was again still different from the romanticism that the others practiced. It was more retrospective in character and largely nourished itself on the literature of the pre Augustan age.

So we did not find allying himself with the other dominant writers of this period but rather he goes back in time to draw inspiration. His sympathies with this early form of writing, the early pre Augustan literature, it even led to him composing Elizabethan tragedy titled John Woodvil. He also wrote Tales from Shakespeare in collaboration with Mary Lamb, his sister.

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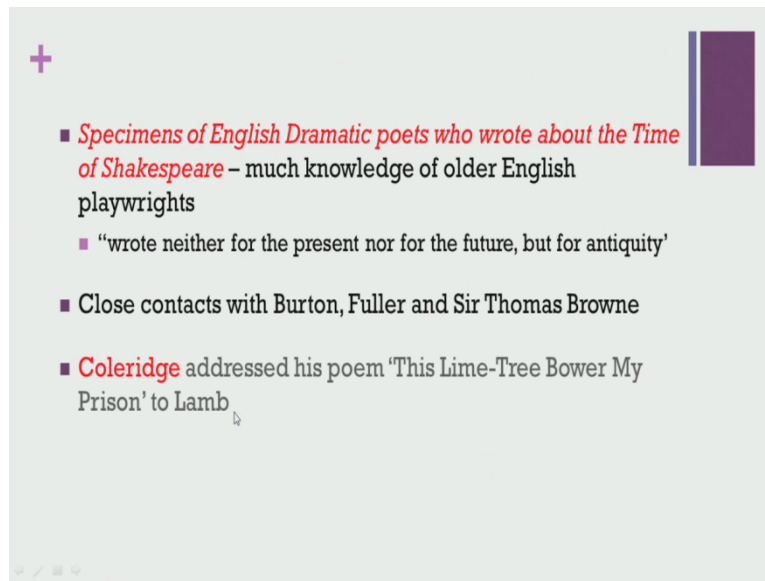
+ Charles Lamb (1775-1834)

- *Essays of Elia* – mostly drawn from himself, his experiences, reminiscences, likes, dislikes, whims and prejudice
 - An egotist as Montaigne
- Lambish – the epithet to suggest the qualities of his writing
- The kind of Romanticism that was retrospective in character and largely nourished itself on the literature of the pre-Augustan age
- Sympathies with this early literature – *John Woodvil* (Elizabethan tragedy)
- *Tales from Shakespeare* (with Mary Lamb, his sister)

So we find him reviving an interest in the pre Augustan period and also focusing much on the Elizabethan times. And we find him even coming up with a very interesting compilation, Specimens of English Dramatic poets who wrote about the Time of Shakespeare. This is also a source of much knowledge for older English playwrights. So in that accordingly Lamb remarks about his own writing that he wrote neither for the present nor for the future but for antiquity.

In spite of this fervour interest in the pre Augustan period he maintained very close relationships and close contacts with the contemporaries such as Burton, Fuller and Sir Thomas Browne. He was also considered as quite a good acquaintance of Coleridge who addressed his poem This Lime Tree Bower My Prison, to Lamb himself.

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- *Specimens of English Dramatic poets who wrote about the Time of Shakespeare* – much knowledge of older English playwrights
 - “wrote neither for the present nor for the future, but for antiquity”
- Close contacts with Burton, Fuller and Sir Thomas Browne
- Coleridge addressed his poem ‘This Lime-Tree Bower My Prison’ to Lamb

Addressing the influence that Charles Lamb had in the prose writers of the 19th century it is said that Lamb’s memory will retain its fragrance as long as the best spice extended on the Pharaohs. This was a comment made by Robert Southey, one of his contemporaries. And we also find him continuing to be one of the most celebrated prose writers from the 19th century. And his essays are still of much interest, even taught across different universities even today.

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- Lamb’s memory “will retain its fragrance as long as the best spice extended on the Pharaohs” (Robert Southey)

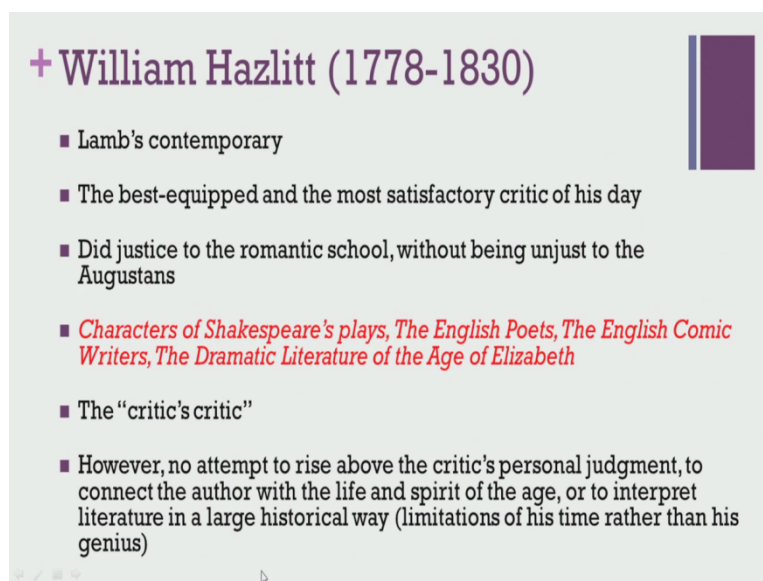
William Hazlitt who lived from 1778 till 1830 was Lamb’s contemporary. He was considered as the best equipped and the most satisfactory critic of his day. And it is said that he could do justice to the romantic school without being unjust to the Augustans. This was considered as a very rare feat to achieve and he did just that. And some of his important works include

Characters of Shakespeare's plays, The English Poets, The English Comic Writers and The Dramatic Literature of the Age of Elizabeth.

Because of his profound influence and the prolific output of his critical energy he was considered as the critic's critic. But however there were also limitations to the criticism that he practiced. This could be attributed more to the age that he was part of than his own poetic genius. It is said that he did not make any attempt to rise above the critic's personal judgement. He could not also effectively connect the author with the life and spirit of the age.

In that sense and in the overall scheme of things we find that his interpretation lacked in a very large historical way because he could not really see the continuity or the connections. This limitation is attributed largely to the many things which were wanting in criticism in general in the 19th century because it was still at a stage of infancy in many ways.

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+ William Hazlitt (1778-1830)

- Lamb's contemporary
- The best-equipped and the most satisfactory critic of his day
- Did justice to the romantic school, without being unjust to the Augustans
- *Characters of Shakespeare's plays, The English Poets, The English Comic Writers, The Dramatic Literature of the Age of Elizabeth*
- The "critic's critic"
- However, no attempt to rise above the critic's personal judgment, to connect the author with the life and spirit of the age, or to interpret literature in a large historical way (limitations of his time rather than his genius)


Hazlitt was considered more as a contemporary in terms of his prose style of writing. If I could read to you an excerpt from one of his essays, On the Feeling of Immortality in Youth published in 1850. Here it goes, No young man believes he shall ever die. It was a saying of my brothers and a fine one. There is a feeling of eternity in youth which makes amends for everything.

To be young is to be as one of the Immortal Gods. One half of time is indeed flown, the other half remains in store for us with all its countless treasures, for there is no line drawn and we see no limit to our hopes and wishes. We make the coming age our own.

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+ **An excerpt from Hazlitt**

"No young man believes he shall ever die. It was a saying of my brother's and a fine one. There is a feeling of Eternity in Youth, which makes amends for every thing. To be young is to be as one of the Immortal Gods. One half of time indeed is flown - the other half remains in store for us with all its countless treasures; for there is no line drawn, and we see no limit to our hopes and wishes. We make the coming age our own"



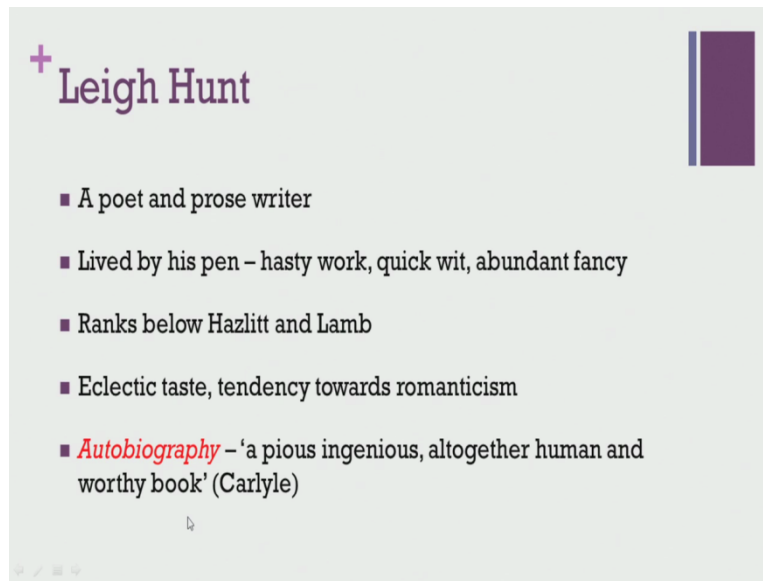
(On the Feeling of Immortality in Youth, 1850)

In terms of language we also begin to notice that the 19th century prose style in English literature was closer to what we now recognise as the modern English. And it was freer from cliched forms of expressions. It was also closer to the language of the common man. And in that sense we also find a very supreme example of the romantic schools influenced in the evolution of English language in the 19th century.

Leigh Hunt was another one who was considered as one among the London men. He was a poet and a prose writer and at the same time he was also one of those very few who was forced to live by his pen. So accordingly there is a lot of hasty work that he had to produce but he was also very well known for his quick wit and abundance fancy which also classifies him as one of the most important romantic writers. However in terms of his criticism he is ranked way below Hazlitt and Lamb.

It is said that he did not have that kind of critical genius to compete with either Hazlitt or with Lamb. He had an eclectic taste and he also showed a very heavy tendency towards romanticism. His most important work is titled Autobiography. This is considered as a pious and ingenious and altogether human and worthy book by Carlyle.

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The slide features a title 'Leigh Hunt' in a purple serif font with a small purple cross icon to its left. To the right of the title is a vertical purple bar. Below the title is a list of five bullet points, each preceded by a small purple square. The text is in a dark purple serif font. The last bullet point includes the word 'Autobiography' in red. At the bottom left of the slide, there are small navigation icons.

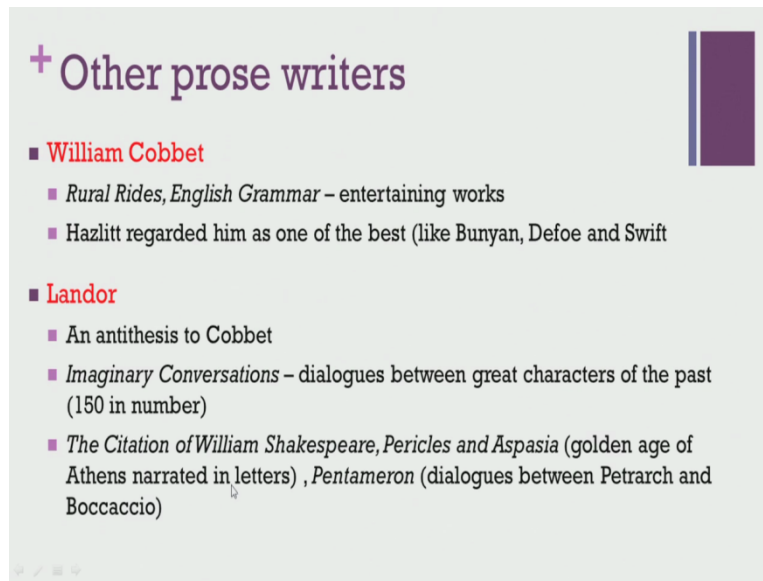
- A poet and prose writer
- Lived by his pen – hasty work, quick wit, abundant fancy
- Ranks below Hazlitt and Lamb
- Eclectic taste, tendency towards romanticism
- *Autobiography* – ‘a pious ingenious, altogether human and worthy book’ (Carlyle)

There were also other prose writers of notable merit during this period, the important ones being William Cobbet who authored *Rural Rides* and *English Grammar*. These were considered as very entertaining works in the 19th century. And Hazlitt, one of the foremost leading critics of the time he regarded Cobbet as one of the best and equated him along with Bunyan, Defoe and Swift. Landor was a writer who exhibited an antithesis to Cobbet. His *Imaginary Conversation* which ran into about 150 in number.

It engages with the dialogues between great characters of the past. Many of Landor's work in fact follow the same structure and the same inspiration. We find him authoring *The Citation of William Shakespeare*, *Pericles* and *Aspasia* which was more like a discussion of the golden age of Athens narrated through letters. And *Pentameron*, it was the dialogue between Petrarch and Boccaccio.

We find all of these writers experimenting in many different ways and articulating the spirit of romanticism through various genres and also through various forms of imaginary expressions.

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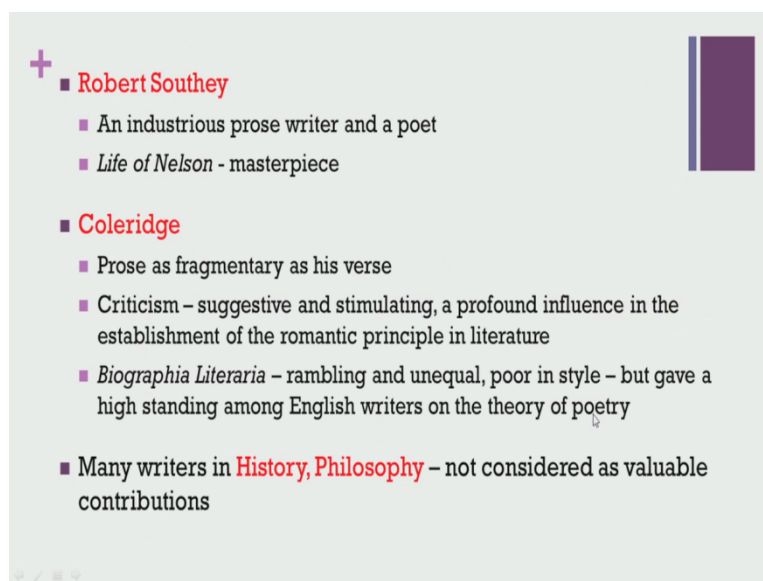
+ Other prose writers

- **William Cobbet**
 - *Rural Rides, English Grammar* – entertaining works
 - Hazlitt regarded him as one of the best (like Bunyan, Defoe and Swift)
- **Landor**
 - An antithesis to Cobbet
 - *Imaginary Conversations* – dialogues between great characters of the past (150 in number)
 - *The Citation of William Shakespeare, Pericles and Aspasia* (golden age of Athens narrated in letters) , *Pentameron* (dialogues between Petrarch and Boccaccio)

Roberts Southey, the poet whom we have already taken a look at. He was industrious prose writer as well and his supreme masterpiece in terms of prose writings was the Life of Nelson. Coleridge's prose was considered as fragmentary as his verse.

And his criticism, though it was suggestive and stimulating and also made a profound influence in the establishment of the romantic principles in literature, it was in general considered as written in a very poor and rambling style. So his *Biographia Literaria*, though it gave a high standing for him among the English writers on the theory of poetry, his style was not appreciated.

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+ Robert Southey

- An industrious prose writer and a poet
- *Life of Nelson* - masterpiece
- **Coleridge**
 - Prose as fragmentary as his verse
 - Criticism – suggestive and stimulating, a profound influence in the establishment of the romantic principle in literature
 - *Biographia Literaria* – rambling and unequal, poor in style – but gave a high standing among English writers on the theory of poetry
- Many writers in **History, Philosophy** – not considered as valuable contributions

So because of that *Biographia Literaria* failed to reach to the level of *Lyrical Ballads* which was very profoundly authored by Wordsworth. In addition to all of these writers that we have now discussed there were also many writers in history and philosophy who continued to dominate the 19th century scene. But however the literary historians in general do not consider them as valuable contributions to the prose writings of this period and hence refrain from including them in the many discussions which are part of literary history.

Having gone through an array of writers who contributed to the prose writings of the 19th century we have also noticed that just like the poets of this period was quite different and individual in their passion and in their contribution, we find that the prose writers also exhibited a certain sense of individuality which also makes it difficult for us to find a common elements which connected them.

They used to take inspiration from the contemporary times, from the classical times and even from the Augustan and the pre Augustan times. So in that sense there is a varied kind of raw materials that they draw from and also their inspiration is quite eclectic and sometimes even esoteric in nature. This in fact highlights the individual nature of all of these contributions and it also makes the romantic period all the more interesting, radical and revolutionary. So with this we wrap up today's lecture. Thank you for listening and I look forward to seeing in the next session.