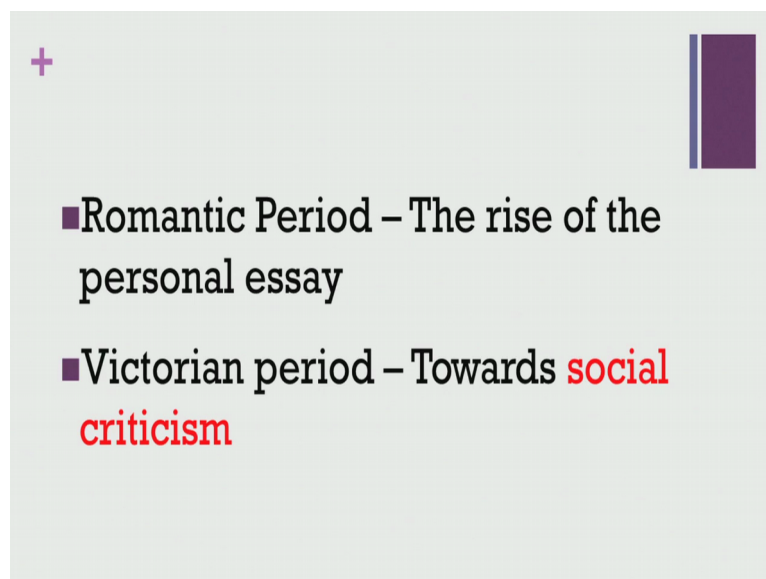


History of English Language and Literature
Professor Dr. Merin Simi Raj
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Lecture 20
Prose in the Victorian Age

Hello and welcome, I am happy to introduce you to yet another session of the NPTL course the History of English Language and Literature in today's session we shall be looking at Prose in the Victorian Age having all way taken a look at the poetic output of the period. When we try to look at the origins of Prose essays from the early times onwards we notice that the romantic period or the 18th century witness a considerable advancement in the field of English essay writing and that was also the time when it was brought were intention that the romantic period contributed to the rise of the personal essay.

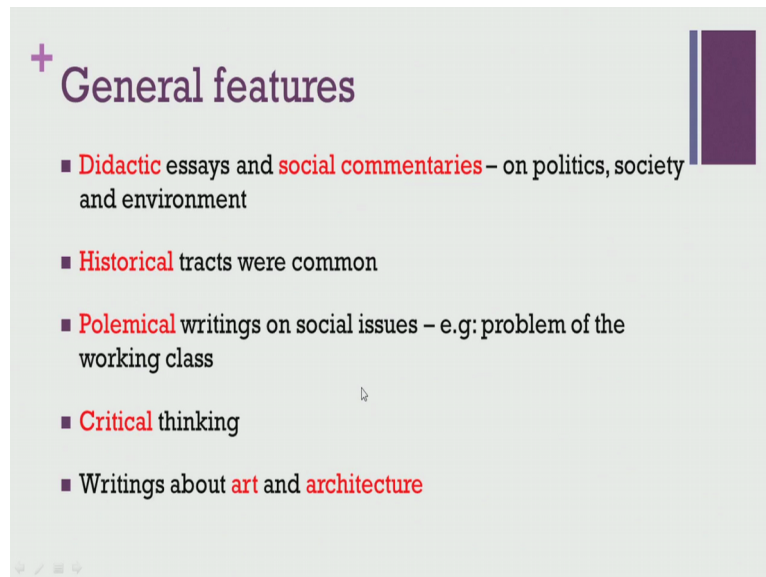
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The personal ideas being more important than all other times in the English literary history. In the Victorian period we find a continuation of this new impact which was the foundations of which was laid in the romantic period onwards but however they were a significant departure from the personal essays towards more social criticism. Because in the Victorian period it was no longer possible to remain a looft to the dominant social-political events of the times and in that sense the writers began to respond to the socio-historical problems though it also had a personal (01:30) to it.

So overall we begin to see the result that the Victorian essay was dominated more by social criticism than by personal essays which we are getting published in the periodicals from the 19th century onwards. If we try to look at the general features of the Prose which was getting published in the Victorian period.

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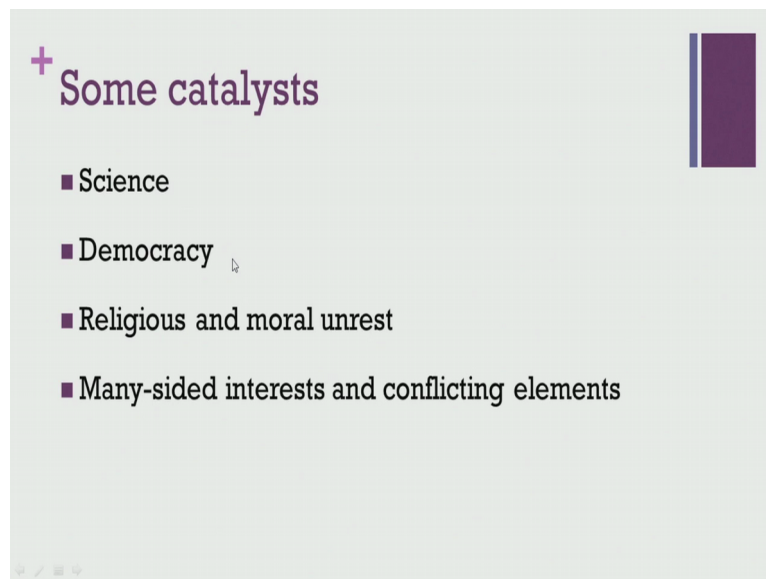
It is important to note right at the beginning that the Didactic essays and social commentaries top the list, they were a lot of essays getting published on various topics and subjects such as a politics society and environment and there was also an increased audience and interest in historical attracts.

So we find many of the writers of this period resorting to a lot of historical writing some of them were accurate historical attracts and some of them only relied on a lot of imagination and a lot of (02:18) to produce some kind of a historical writing. This was also at the time of a lot of Polemical writings on social issues, for example we find many of these writers are talking and writing about the problems of the working class our Polemical essays also include lot of debates and a lot of argumentativeness built into their structure of the essay.

This period keeping in tune with the Victorian temper and the Victorian spirit also encouraged a lot of critical thinking in these essays. It was impossible to engage with a any topic without being critical or without being rationally sensible about it. So this is the significant departure that we note from the early times and it was no longer possible to just to give a personal opinion, but one had to present it through a rationalized argument and also had to be quite aware of what is happening in and around the socio-political or the ambience.

It is needless to say this period also contributed to a lot of development about writings on art and architecture and this was also the time when literary critical writings were getting further advance and further refined. Some major catalyst which propel the writing of the Polemical essays in the Victorian period they also remain a centre to understanding of Victorian literature in general.

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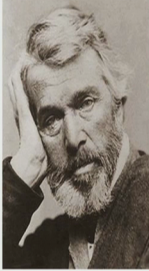
They include the improvement and the advancements in field of science, it was a wage which was characterise by a significant move towards democracy.

There was also a lot of religious and social unrest because of the various things which were happening the prominent one being the publication of (03:53) hypothetical arguments. There was also many sided interests and conflicting elements which completely had taken away the accent or the foundation from the many believe systems that the English people held.

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+ Thomas Carlyle

- Sprang straight from the rugged **Scottish** peasantry
- Moved away from the doctrines of Calvinism – radical changes in his religious views – dropped the idea to enter the Scottish church
- *Life of Schiller* – 1825
- 1826 – married Jane Welsh
- *Sartor Resartus*
- 1834 – moved to London
- *French Revolution* - 1837

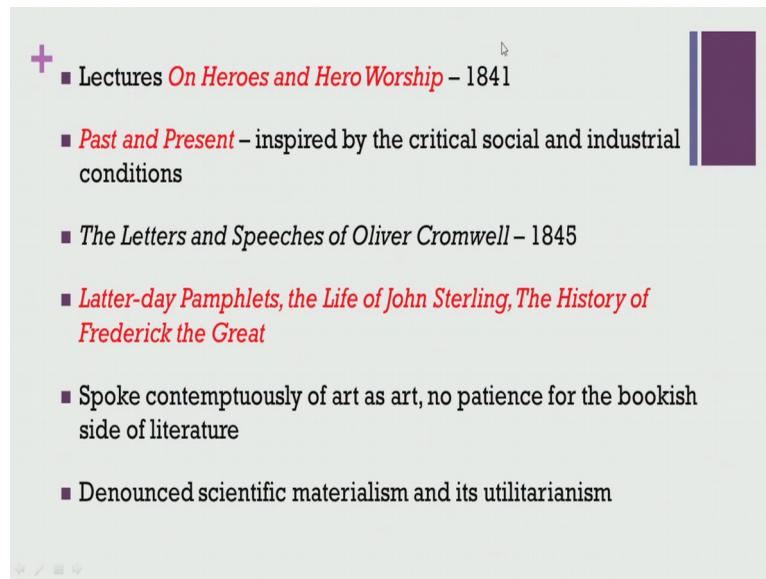


The most important Prose writer of this period is Thomas Carlyle, he is one writer who had sprang straight from the rugged Scottish peasantry and that since we continue to notice a relationship between the Scottish writers and the English writers and the ways in which both continue to inform each other.

We notice the beginnings of this from the period of the Scottish enlightenment onwards if you recall. Carlyle was one writer whose personality also underwent a radical change as an when the age progressed, we find him moving away from the doctrines of Calvinism based on which he was raised. His parents also had it in mind that he would eventually enter the Scottish church but however radical changes in his religious views made him to come to this decision to not to enter the Scottish church or not to pursue a religious carrier.

The work that brought him too much prominence in the Scottish circles was the publication of the *Life of Schiller* in 1825 this ensured that he had a promising literary carrier ahead. In 1826 he married Jane Welsh and following which he also published the most important work of his lifetime *Sartor Resartus* by 1834 he made a decision to move to London and after that also we find him continuing to be a very important figure in the English literary circles.

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- Lectures *On Heroes and Hero Worship* – 1841
 - *Past and Present* – inspired by the critical social and industrial conditions
 - *The Letters and Speeches of Oliver Cromwell* – 1845
 - *Latter-day Pamphlets, the Life of John Sterling, The History of Frederick the Great*
 - Spoke contemptuously of art as art, no patience for the bookish side of literature
 - Denounced scientific materialism and its utilitarianism

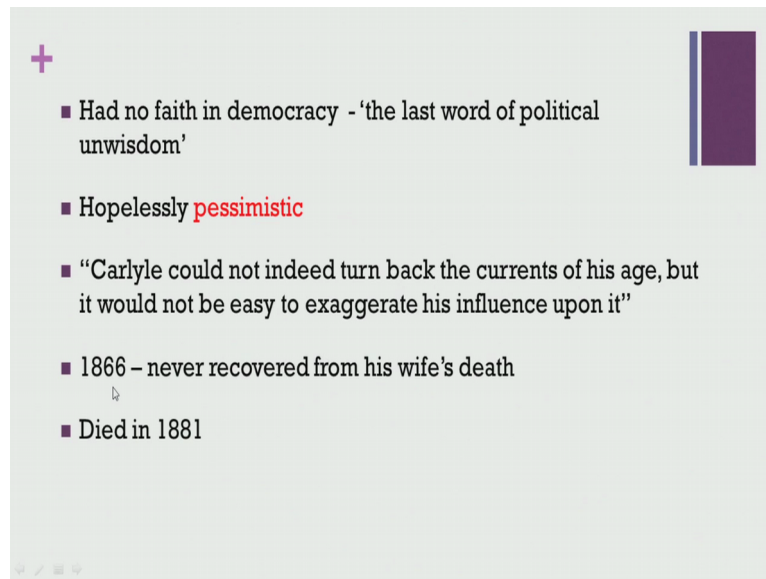
In 1837 he published a work a title the French Revolution followed by a compilation of his lectures On Heroes and Hero Worship which was published in 1841 and talking about the lectures this was also a time when the public and even the accommodations were identifying a lot of interests in listening to the eminent people of those times many of those times many of those people who were giving lectures were also later compiling it and publishing it so that it could reach a farer and wider audience.

His work the Past and Present was immensely inspired by the critical social and industrial conditions of those times which were not really promising but were mostly bleak in nature he also showed immense interest in historical writings in 1845 he published the Letters and the Speeches of Oliver Cromwell this was also at time when the English public in genre was more interested in knowing the historical past which had brought the nation forward.

The other important works of Carlyle include a Latter-day Pamphlets, the Life of John Sterling and The History Frederick the Great we find him oscillating between historical writings and biographical sketches and significantly though he lived in an era which was also the high point of art he spoke contemptuously of art as an art form and he had no patience for the bookish side of literature. So needless to say he was stark contrast with the Pre-Raphaelites who believed in art for art's sake.

He also was not a very happy about the turn of events which were dominating the 19th century he denounced scientific materialism and its utilitarianism which also became the founding principles on which Britain had placed much of its theory of advancement.

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- Had no faith in democracy - 'the last word of political unwisdom'
- Hopelessly **pessimistic**
- "Carlyle could not indeed turn back the currents of his age, but it would not be easy to exaggerate his influence upon it"
- 1866 - never recovered from his wife's death
- Died in 1881

And more importantly he had no faith in democracy in his own words it was a last word of political unwisdom. So overall we find him being hopelessly pessimistic and that was a not very surprising thing given how gloomy the Victorian period was.

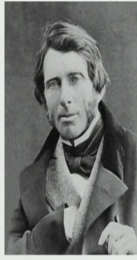
And said about Carlyle influence that he could not indeed turn back the currents of his age but it would not be easy to exaggerate his influence upon it, remaining quite a loof from many of the things which were happening in and also having rather unconventional ideas about arts, literature, and even about the political ideals of democracy it is not surprising that he failed to impact the audience in a way that he hoped to. In 1866 he loses his wife and we do not find him recovering from the grief that had resulted on him and he died in 1881.

And talking about Carlyle's influence it is important to note it he was not a very popular during his lifetime but there is a canonical and historical as well as a literary critical interest that has been formed on his writing and his ideals in the later point of time. So Carlyle rises into eminence and his part of major English literary history only at a later point when literary history began to be written in a more structured and a more concerted form.

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+ John Ruskin (1819-1900)

- Won the Newdigate prize at Oxford – *Salsette and Elephanta* – 1839
- 1843 – published the first volume of *Modern Painters* – to vindicate the genius of Turner, to expound the true principles of landscape-painting
 - Successive volumes arrived at intervals
- Occupied with architecture and painting
- *The Seven Lamps of Architecture, The Stones of Venice, The Two Paths*
- Later - the study of social conditions, interest in the practical problems of his own day, the inspiration of **Carlyle**
- Transformation of the art critic into the philanthropist and reformer



The second significant Prose writer of this period was John Ruskin who lived from 1819 till 1900, he also began to show signs of early success right from 1839 when he won the Newdigate prize at Oxford and he was a brilliant student and he was also quite commended for the publication of *Salsette and Elephanta* and in 1843 he again got in early start with the publication of his the first volume of his *Modern Painters* it has already brought to an attention that modern writers was a work that heavily defented the work of the Pre-Raphaelite and also that Ruskin was one of the major influences and the major inspirations for the Pre-Raphaelite poets.

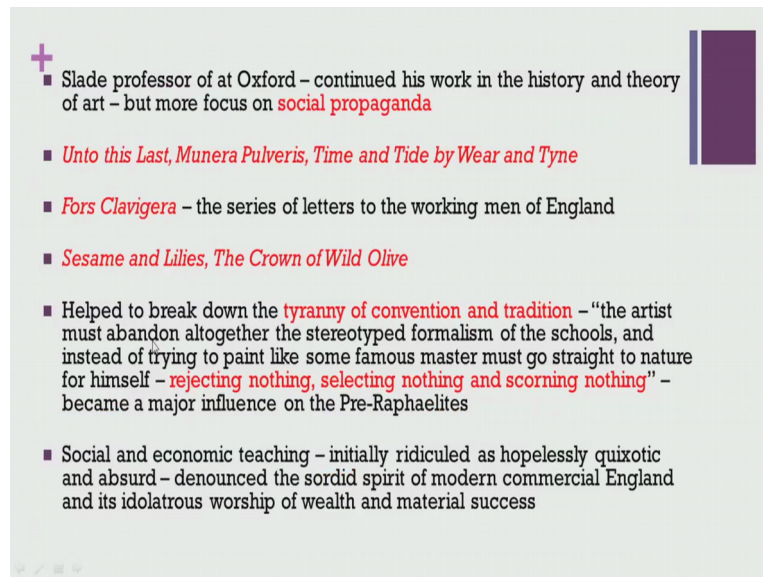
And in this work the *Modern Painters* we find him trying to vindicate the genius of Turner and also trying to expound the true principles of landscape a painting and he also came up with successive volumes were which was possession at various intervals. In most of his writing career Ruskin was occupied with architecture and painting and not a really with literary arts and some of his works do exemplify this important trait of his work title *The Seven Lamps of Architecture, The Stones of Venice* and *The Two Paths* where mostly about the art and architecture of those times and also giving a voice to many different and unconventional opinions that he had.

Later in his life we find a shifting a kind of an interest in Carlyle's life we find him focusing more on the study of social conditions and also developing an interest in the practical problems of his own day and his inspiration being Carlyle we also find him trying to focus more on giving a kind of practical solution to the difficult times of the day. So we do see that

in becomes almost impossible for most of the writer of this time to remain distanced from the pressing issues of the society.

They also think that it is also their responsibility to respond to the times with practical and pragmatics solutions. Eventually in John Ruskin we identify a transformation of the art critic into the philanthropist and the reformer, he is best known is in his later years.

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- Slade professor of art at Oxford – continued his work in the history and theory of art – but more focus on **social propaganda**
- *Unto this Last, Munera Pulveris, Time and Tide by Wear and Tyne*
- *Fors Clavigera* – the series of letters to the working men of England
- *Sesame and Lilies, The Crown of Wild Olive*
- Helped to break down the **tyranny of convention and tradition** – “the artist must abandon altogether the stereotyped formalism of the schools, and instead of trying to paint like some famous master must go straight to nature for himself – **rejecting nothing, selecting nothing and scorning nothing**” – became a major influence on the Pre-Raphaelites
- Social and economic teaching – initially ridiculed as hopelessly quixotic and absurd – denounced the sordid spirit of modern commercial England and its idolatrous worship of wealth and material success

Ruskin also received many accolades to his credit he was a Slade a professor at Oxford he continued to work in his in the area of history and theory throughout his life.

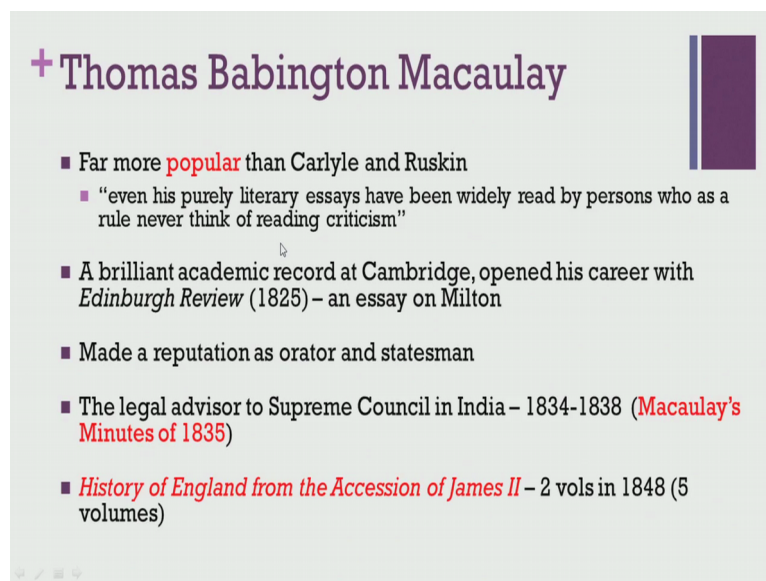
But the focus of his work in the latest stage we pointed out was on social propaganda and this conflicting interest rather this complimenting interest is found in his work such as *Unto this Last, Munera Pulveris, Time and Tide by Wear and Tyne* and *Fors Clavigera* is an exemplification of his move towards the interest of social propaganda this is a series of letters written to the working men of England exhorting them to any kind of positive and systematic action. His work which is *Sesame and Lilies* and *The Crown of Wild Olives* also try to exemplify these varying interest that he had towards the end of his carrier.

Altogether it would a fine to say that he was one among the very few who helped breakdown the tranny of convention and tradition he strongly believed that the artist must abandon altogether the stereotyped formalism of schools and instead of trying to paint like some famous master must go straight to nature for himself, rejecting nothing, selecting nothing and scorning nothing his call to reject nothing, select nothing and scorn nothing is was a major influence on the Pre-Raphaelite ports of the time.

And we also as we noted we find him continuing to be a source of inspiration for many who wanted to follow the slogan art of art's sake. Though Ruskin shifted towards social and economic teaching we do not find him getting any immediate success then after he was even initially ridiculed as a being hopelessly quixotic and also absurd and we also find him denouncing the sordid spirit of modern commercial England and it is idolatrous worship of wealth and material success.

Some of these writers were real visionaries in beginning to identify the ugly turn of events that would perhaps overtake England in the 20th century and they did not find many of these commercial turn of events being more promising as the rulers of day thought. So though Ruskin was a visionary he fail to gain any kind of popularity during his lifetime and again as we noted earlier some of these writers they were brought back into the cannon and they were reinstated because of the quality and the influence of their work even on the latter ages.

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The slide features a purple header with a plus sign and the name 'Thomas Babington Macaulay'. Below the header is a list of five bullet points, each preceded by a purple square. The text is in a dark purple font, with some words in red. A vertical purple bar is on the right side of the slide.

- Far more **popular** than Carlyle and Ruskin
 - “even his purely literary essays have been widely read by persons who as a rule never think of reading criticism”
- A brilliant academic record at Cambridge, opened his career with *Edinburgh Review* (1825) – an essay on Milton
- Made a reputation as orator and statesman
- The legal advisor to Supreme Council in India – 1834-1838 (**Macaulay's Minutes of 1835**)
- ***History of England from the Accession of James II*** – 2 vols in 1848 (5 volumes)

Now we look at the figure of Thomas Babington Macaulay who was far more popular and than Carlyle and Ruskin during his lifetime it said about Macaulay that even his purely literary essays have been widely read by persons who as a rule never think of reading criticism. So that was a kind of popularity that Macaulay enjoyed and it said that every literate person in England had already read atleast one piece by Macaulay and the all used to thoroughly enjoy it.

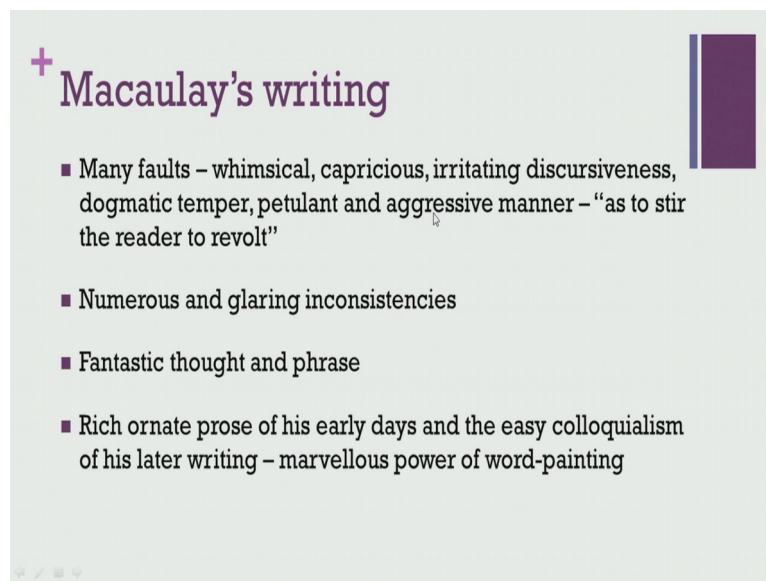
Macaulay had brilliant academic record at Cambridge and he opened his carrier through an essay on Milton letters he published in the *Edinburgh Review* in 1825 if you recall *Edinburgh*

Review was one of the successful periodicals that we have launched in the 19th century which also had a significant impact on the romantic writers as well. Macaulay was a quite famous in the London literary circles he made reputation as a orator and a statesman. He even eventually secure the position of a legal advisor to Supreme Council in India this was between 1834 and 1838 that he served in Colonial India.

He is now also a better known as a the statesman who produce the now in famous Macaulay's Minutes of 1835 the event which also laid a very strong foundation to the establishment of formal English education in India. Today his best known for his work the History of England from the Accession of James Second, this was initially published in two volumes in 1848 but he did follow up with a three more volumes to make it a five volume history and altogether publish the publication of this was over in about a decade.

When we talk about Macaulay's writings though he was hugely popular during his lifetime they were many faults that we can identify in his style of writing and also in his content.

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+ Macaulay's writing

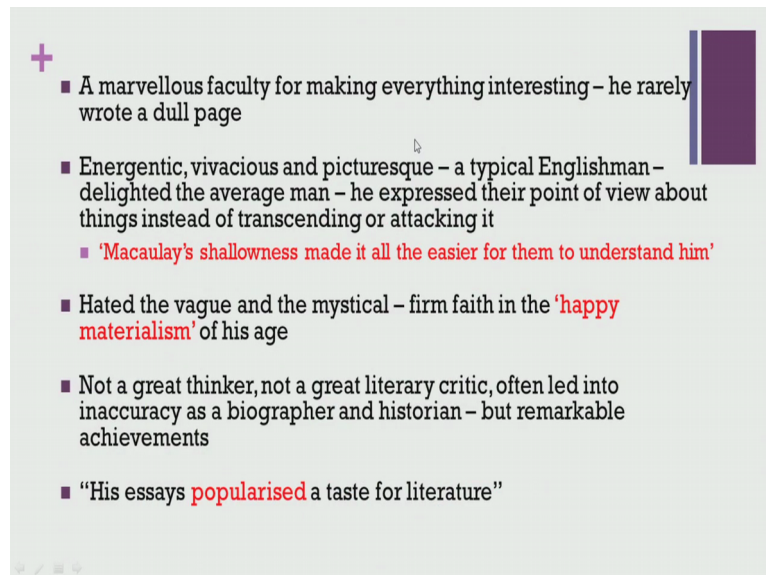
- Many faults - whimsical, capricious, irritating discursiveness, dogmatic temper, petulant and aggressive manner - "as to stir the reader to revolt"
- Numerous and glaring inconsistencies
- Fantastic thought and phrase
- Rich ornate prose of his early days and the easy colloquialism of his later writing - marvellous power of word-painting

He was whimsical, capricious and had an irritating discursiveness about his writing his temper was dogmatic and his manner was very petulant and aggressive and Hudson feels that he was writing as to stir the reader to a revolt, and they were also numerous and glaring inconsistencies in his writing but nevertheless his thought and his a phrasing was fantastic which is why he also became quite popular in the Victorian period.

In the early days of his carrier we find him focusing more on the rich ornate prose and which also was a kind of exhibitionism that he resorted to because he had a very brilliant education

and also had an excellent command over language towards the second phase of his writing we find him resorting to an easy colloquialism this also was a papered with a marvellous powerful word painting and this is what made him quite enduring to the reading public of those times.

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- A marvellous faculty for making everything interesting – he rarely wrote a dull page
 - Energetic, vivacious and picturesque – a typical Englishman – delighted the average man – he expressed their point of view about things instead of transcending or attacking it
 - 'Macaulay's shallowness made it all the easier for them to understand him'
 - Hated the vague and the mystical – firm faith in the 'happy materialism' of his age
 - Not a great thinker, not a great literary critic, often led into inaccuracy as a biographer and historian – but remarkable achievements
 - "His essays popularised a taste for literature"

It said that because of his popularity that he had a marvellous faculty for making everything interesting and it is a it also seems that he rarely wrote a dull page. Whatever he wrote even though it was inaccurate and it was inconsistent in times he managed to make it very interesting for the common reader and there is a kind of energy and vivacious spirit and picturesque that we find in most of his writings and in addition Macaulay was also seen as a typical successful Englishman.

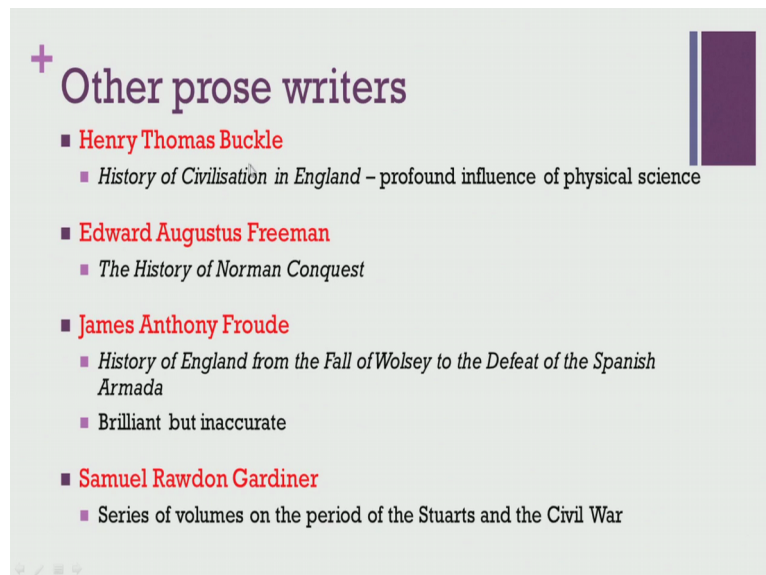
He was also part of the Colonial empire and that also made him quite a pre-eminent person in London and he his writings and he's viewpoints infact it delighted the average man and it is said that Macaulay could successfully express the viewpoint of the typical average English man and a this he achieved without transcending any of the theories or any of the beliefs system of the time or attacking anything like most of the Victorian writers did.

It was Macaulay's shallowness some critics feel made it all the easier for them to understand. So one does not know whether it was the critical ability or the genius faculty of Macaulay which made him very popular or whether it was his shallow spirit and his popular expressions which made him more enduring.

Keeping in tune with the kind of popularity that he enjoyed he also hated the vague and the mystical and we also find him having a very firm faith in the Happy Materialism of his age which many other writer has denounced as being ugly and also being quite detrimental future of the nation. Macaulay was not a great thinker he was not a great literary critic either and he also had a lot of inaccuracies in his work as a biographer and a as a historian but his achievements were so remarkable that it is almost impossible to now exclude him from the (())(17:07) of literary history.

The most important contribution of Macaulay is that his essays popularised a taste for literature which also became quite foundational in the understanding and the reception of literature from the 19th towards the 20th century.

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The slide is titled '+ Other prose writers' and lists four authors with their notable works and characteristics:

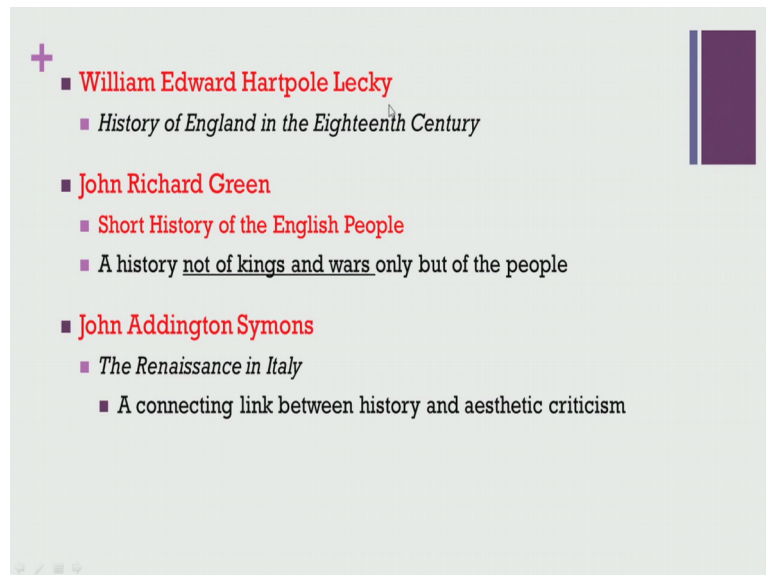
- **Henry Thomas Buckle**
 - *History of Civilisation in England* – profound influence of physical science
- **Edward Augustus Freeman**
 - *The History of Norman Conquest*
- **James Anthony Froude**
 - *History of England from the Fall of Wolsey to the Defeat of the Spanish Armada*
 - Brilliant but inaccurate
- **Samuel Rawdon Gardiner**
 - Series of volumes on the period of the Stuarts and the Civil War

The other important prose writers of this period included Henry Thomas Buckle he had written *History of Civilisation in England* and in this we also find a profound influence of physical sciences. We find that most of these writers have a quite well read that they also try to bring in all this different disciplines into a single book.

We also notice that this was the time when assumes the writers were even trying to bring together these contradictory elements in order to give a very variant taste to the audience and to the reader. Edward Augustus Freeman was the author of *The History of Norman Conquest*, James Anthony Froude wrote *History of England from the Fall of Wolsey to the Defeat of the Spanish Armada*, it was brilliantly constructed it was also popular and hugely receptive, but at the same time it said that it had a lot of inaccuracies built into it.

Samuel Rawdon Gardiner he published a series of volumes on the period of the Stuarts and the Civil War, we find the English public hogging onto a lot of material on historical past of England and also trying to (18:18) look at the previous kings and the previous rulers and try and compare with, with the Victorian gloom that had settled.

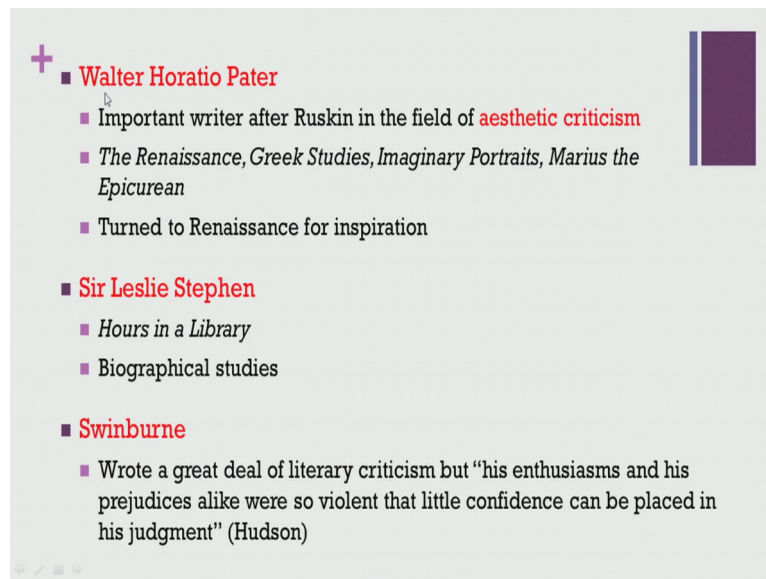
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William Edward Hartpole Lecky was the author of the *History of England in the Eighteenth Century*, John Richard Green published *Short History of the English People* his work was a very significant work in the field of history because the focus was not on the king's and the wars as a historical writings usually were but the focus was more on the people. So this also marked a shift towards the writing of history as a history of the people and not just as a history of events or particular people who made it really successful.

John Addington Symonds wrote *The Renaissance in Italy* and this work is seen as a connecting link between history and aesthetic criticism as a [Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood](#) would suggest there was a growing link and a growing connection between aesthetic arts and also between literary arts and this is also the time when both of these different kinds of arts were increasingly getting influence by the political and social development of the periods and for this to get reflected in the works of the times it was a quite a marvellous feel.

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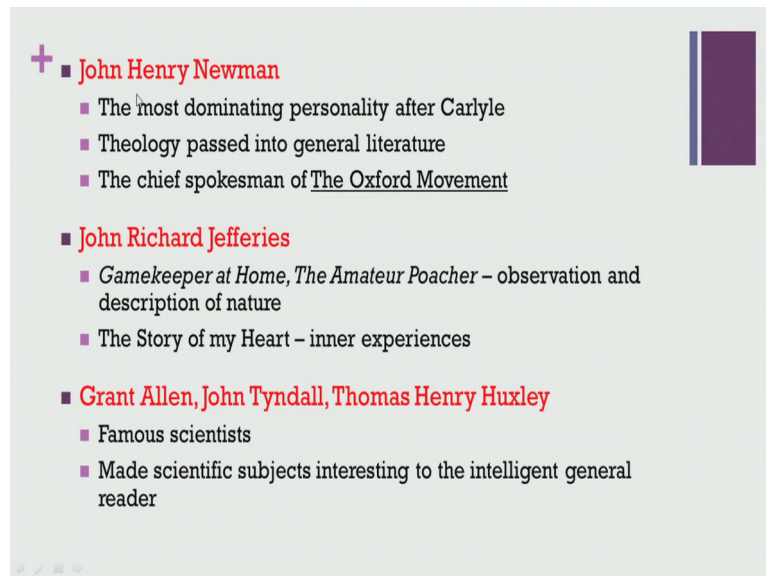
- **Walter Horatio Pater**
 - Important writer after Ruskin in the field of **aesthetic criticism**
 - *The Renaissance, Greek Studies, Imaginary Portraits, Marius the Epicurean*
 - Turned to Renaissance for inspiration
- **Sir Leslie Stephen**
 - *Hours in a Library*
 - Biographical studies
- **Swinburne**
 - Wrote a great deal of literary criticism but "his enthusiasms and his prejudices alike were so violent that little confidence can be placed in his judgment" (Hudson)

Walter Haratio Pater is perhaps the best known among the minor writers of this time. He is considered as a most important writer after Ruskin in the field of aesthetic criticism. He's important work include *The Renaissance*, *Greek Studies*, *Imaginary Portraits* and *Marius the Epicurean*. He was also one of the very few who turn to the Renaissance for the inspiration and were seen is quite an anachronism during their own lifetime because they relied heavily on the older mediaeval ideas than on the contemporary kind of inspirations.

Sir Leslie Stephen authored *Hours in a Library* it is considered as one of the best biographical studies available in the 18th century. It is considered as one of the best biographical studies available in the 19th century. Now we come back to Swinburne again and he was also a prose writer but his work is not considered with much importance by most of the literary historians and critics of the later times.

Infact Hudson continues to be quite unkind on the kind of productions at Swinburne made did write a great deal of criticism but as Hudson would evaluate it, his enthusiasms and his prejudices alike were so violent that little confidence can be placed in his judgement. This is also perhaps the (())(20:36) time for us to remember that the reputation of the individual writer rest heavily on the cannon making process and also a the literary criticisms which make its way into the general public.

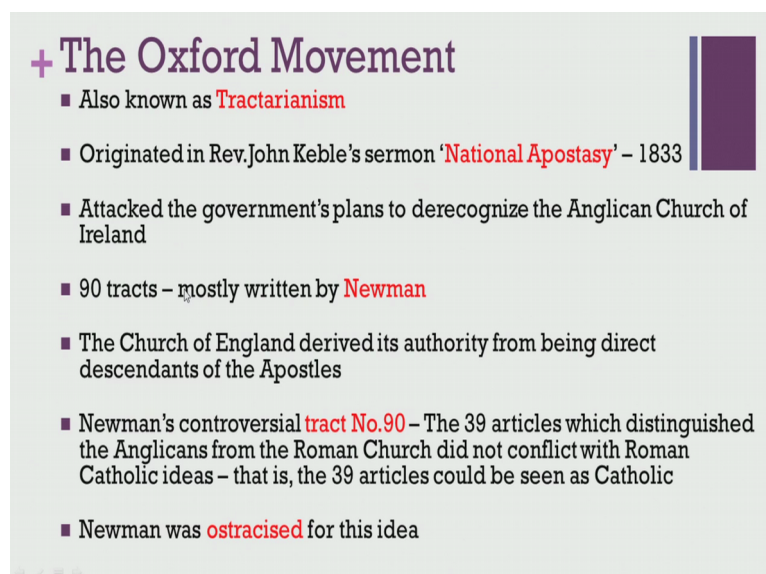
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- + ■ **John Henry Newman**
 - The most dominating personality after Carlyle
 - Theology passed into general literature
 - The chief spokesman of The Oxford Movement
- **John Richard Jefferies**
 - *Gamekeeper at Home, The Amateur Poacher* – observation and description of nature
 - The Story of my Heart – inner experiences
- **Grant Allen, John Tyndall, Thomas Henry Huxley**
 - Famous scientists
 - Made scientific subjects interesting to the intelligent general reader

John Henry Newman was considered as a most dominating personality after Carlyle and in his works we find theology was also passing into general literature. So the Victorian times are a time when we find the amalgamation of many different ideologies and different contesting items coming into contact with one another and we also identify that he was the chief spokesman of The Oxford Movement it also becomes important to take a look at what the Oxford Movement is.

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- + **The Oxford Movement**
- Also known as **Tractarianism**
- Originated in Rev. John Keble's sermon '**National Apostasy**' – 1833
- Attacked the government's plans to derecognize the Anglican Church of Ireland
- 90 tracts – mostly written by **Newman**
- The Church of England derived its authority from being direct descendants of the Apostles
- Newman's controversial **tract No.90** – The 39 articles which distinguished the Anglicans from the Roman Church did not conflict with Roman Catholic ideas – that is, the 39 articles could be seen as Catholic
- Newman was **ostracised** for this idea

The Oxford Movement as also known as Tractarianism it originated in Rev. John Keble's sermon National Apostasy which was also published in 1833.

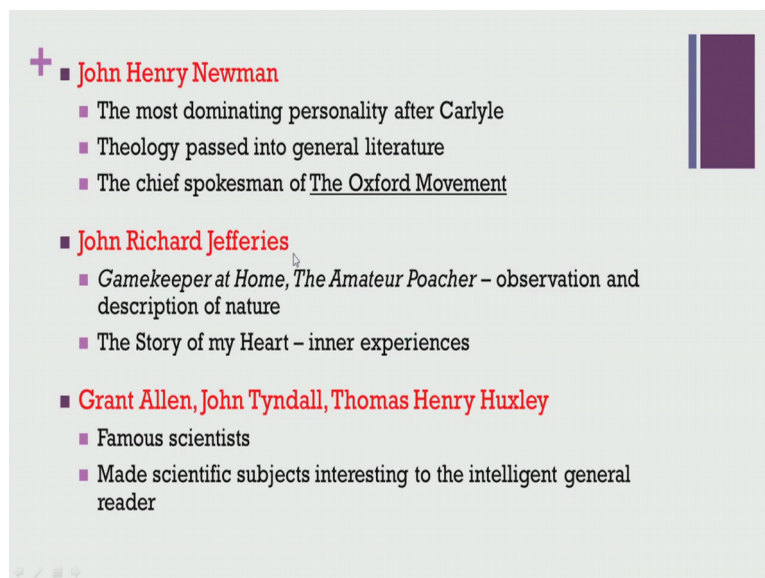
In this Reverend Keble attack the governments plans to derecognize the Anglican Church of Ireland and this had let hold lot of outrage from within the church and they published 90 tracks altogether against the government's move and most of these track among the (90) tracks it was written by John Henry Newman and one of the arguments of Newman was that the Church of England derived its authority from being direct descendants of the Apostles and they by one need to be quite careful while derecognizing another church.

And Newman's controversial track was the final one the 90th track and he argued that the 39 articles which distinguished the Anglicans from the Roman Church did not conflict with Roman Catholic ideas. If you remember there was a point of time when England moved away from the Catholic church and establish its own Church of England then he also had taken a detail look at the turn of political and social events which had let to the separation following which England remain a protestant nation with the Anglican church as it official church.

And now to derecognize the Church of Ireland it was not an easy move to make a Newman's arguments further reiterated the fact that these 39 articles which formed the basis of the distinction between the Anglican church and the Catholic church they were not radically different from each other and accordingly the 39 articles could be even seen as Catholic. This was a very scandalist thing to say in protestant England and we even find Newman getting ostracised for proposing this idea.

And eventually as we noted early Newman also leaves the Anglican Church and joins the Catholic Church and this also was the result of the many things which were happening in the Victorian period. Coming back to look at the other important figures of the time.

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- **John Henry Newman**
 - The most dominating personality after Carlyle
 - Theology passed into general literature
 - The chief spokesman of The Oxford Movement
- **John Richard Jefferies**
 - *Gamekeeper at Home, The Amateur Poacher* – observation and description of nature
 - The Story of my Heart – inner experiences
- **Grant Allen, John Tyndall, Thomas Henry Huxley**
 - Famous scientists
 - Made scientific subjects interesting to the intelligent general reader

John Richard Jefferies wrote *Gamekeeper at Home, The Amateur Poacher* and in his books we find an observation description of nature we also find him continuing the kind of ideals which were set from the romantic period onwards.

His work *The Story of the Heart* it is a very detailed account of the inner experiences that he faced as a person and this also becomes important with because the Victorian period was characterize by a lot of personal gloom and also personal distressed and personal dilemma which the even the common people were facing. The final set of writers are quite important Grant Allen, John Tyndall and Thomas Henry Huxley were famous scientist of the Victorian period. They also had a commitment to bring science closer to the common people.

So we find them making scientific subject interesting to the intelligent general reader and also talking about a lot of scientific principles and the scientific inventions which were hitting the headline in the Victorian period. So altogether when we try to survey the popularity and the interest that the people had on the essay form on the Prose form in

the Victorian period. We begin to see that it was not just a literary product it was also a writing which could bring together all the contesting notions and the contesting honours, ideals and disciplines of those times and we also find this move leading towards the production of better and more well-formed essays in the 20th century.

So with this it is time for us to wrap up this session, thank you for listening and we look forward to seeing you in the next session.