

POINTS TO REMEMBER IN ENGLISH LITERATURE SERIES- 9

- 1) **Symbolism** was an art movement of French, Russian and Belgian origin in poetry. Using symbols, language, and metaphorical images as vehicles, it seeks to represent eternal truth that cannot be questioned. It was a reaction against naturalism and realism.
- 2) The literary style originated with the publication of **Charles Baudelaire's Les Fleurs du mal** (1857). The works of Edgar Allen Poe left a major impression on Baudelaire.
- 3) The aesthetic in the symbolist movement was later developed by Stephane Mallarme and Paul Verlaine during the 1860s and 1870s. The term '**symbolist**' was first coined by **Jean Moreas** to distinguish the half from the decadents.
- 4) **The Symbolist Manifesto** was published on 18 September 1886, in Le Figaro. It named Charles Baudelaire, Stephane Mallarme, and Paul Verlaine as the three leading poets of the movement.
- 5) The Manifesto announced that symbolism was against " plain meanings, declamations, false sentimentality, and matter-of-fact description.'
- 6) The **Decadent Movement** of the late 19th century was an artistic and literary movement focused on Western Europe. It was characterized by excess and artificiality. Felicien Rop's body of work and Joris Karl Huysman's novel Against Nature (1884) are considered to be the prime examples of the Decadent Movement.
- 7) The concept of Decadence dates back to the writings of Enlightenment philosopher, Montesquieu. Latin scholar **Desire Nisard** compared the works of Victor Hugo and the Romantics to Roman decadence, that is, men sacrificing their craft and cultural values to pleasure.
- 8) In **Symbolist school**, the fluid nature of versification can be found in the poems of Gustave Kahn and Ezra Pound. T.S Eliot was influenced by Jules Laforgue, Paul Valery, and Arthur Rimbaud.
- 9) It is also to be noted that Eliot and Pound subscribed more to the Imagists. **Imagism** was a movement in the early 20th century. It called for precise imagery and accuracy in language. It is considered to be the first organised literary movement in the English Language.

10) **Modernist Literature** originated mainly in Europe and North America in the late 19th and 20th century. Modernist writing was generally experimental and was a break from traditional forms of writing and expression. It adhered to Ezra Pound's motto ' **make it new.**'

11) The **devastation and horror of the First World War**, technological advancement, societal changes engaged much of the modernist output. The new sensibilities of the time called for newer expressions. The movement also overlapped with the artistic and literary movement- surrealism, dada, expressionism, futurism, vorticism and cubism.

12) The theories of **Sigmund Freud** (Studies on Hysteria) and **Ernst Mach** (The Science of Mechanics), John Locke's Tabula Rasa, Carl Jung's collective unconscious, Charles Darwin's concept of 'man, the animal', Nietzsche's 'will to power', Henri Bergson's difference between scientific time and human experience of time, and such others are precursors of modernist writing.

13) **Henri Bergson's** work on time and consciousness influenced writers, especially novelists who used stream of consciousness technique. Some examples are: Dorothy Richardson's Pointed Roofs(1915), James Joyce's Ulysses (1922), Virginia Woolf's Mrs. Dalloway (1925) and To the Lighthouse (1927).

14) Though some have marked year 1910 as the beginning of the modernist literary movement, Joseph Conrad's **Heart of Darkness** and Alfred Jarry's absurdist play **Ubu Roi** are considered to be the harbingers of the Modernist movement.

15) Other Important **literary precursors** were:

a) Fyodor Dostoevsky- Crime and Punishment (1866), The Brothers Karamazov(1880)

b) Walt Whitman- Leaves of Grass (1855-91)

c) Charles Baudelaire- Les Fleurs de Mal, Rimbaud

d) Knut Hamsun- Hunger

e) August Strindberg- To Damascus, A Dream Play and The Ghost Sonata.

f) Sherwood Anderson- Winesburg, Ohio (1919)

g) Gertrude Stein- Tender Buttons (1914)

16) **Important Modernist works in the 1920s and 1930s were-**

a) T.S Eliot- The Wasteland (1922)

- b) James Joyce- Ulysses (1922)
- c) Hugh MacDiarmid- A Drunk Man Looks at the Thistle (1928)
- d) Franz Kafka - The Trial
- e) Luigi Pirandello- Six Characters in Search of a Author (1921)
- f) Marcel Proust- In Search of Lost Time

17) In the **1920s and the 1930s-**

- a) D.H Lawrence- Lady Chatterley's Lover (1928)
- b) William Faulkner- The Sound and The Fury, As I Lay Dying, Light in August
- c) Samuel Beckett- Murphy
- d) John Cowper Powys- A Glastonbury Romance
- e) Hermann Broch- The Sleepwalkers
- f) Djuna Barnes - Nightwood (famous lesbian novel published in 1936)

18) Examples in **Late Modernism** are-

- a) Basil Bunting in 1965 published his most important modernist poem **Briggflats**. It is a landmark work in late Modernism.
- b) Herman Broch- The Death of Virgil
- c) Thomas Mann- Dr Faustus (1947), The Magic Mountain (1924), Death in Venice (1912)
- d) The poets Charles Olson and J. H. Prynne have been described as late modernist.

19) **Samuel Beckett** is often described as late modernist. He is also a significant figure in the Theatre of the Absurd. Though Alfred Jarry is considered to be the precursor of this school, it is seen to be beginning in the 1950s with the plays of Samuel Beckett.

20) The Theatre of the Absurd, the term primarily applied to the European playwrights, expresses the belief that human existence primarily has no meaning. Martin Esslin coined the term in his 1960 essay, Theatre of the Absurd. **Albert Camus** uses the term in his 1942 essay, **The Myth of Sisyphus**.

21) Harold Hart Crane (1899-1932) was an American poet inspired by T.S Eliot. His most ambitious work **The Bridge** was intended to write in vein of T.S Eliot's epic poem The Waste Land. John Berryman and Robert Lowell wrote a famous elegy, ' The Dream Song ' and 'Words for Hart Crane' in Life Studies (1959)

22) The **Aesthetic Movement**, a late nineteenth century development, was a reaction to the Victorian belief that literature and art had ethical roles. It gave importance to aesthetics over socio-political functions.

23) It echoes with **Theophile Gautier's** maxim- art for art's sake . He alongwith Arthur Schopenhauer adhered to French literary style Parnassianism. It occurred after Romanticism and before Symbolism. The term, Aestheticism was coined by critic Walter Hamilton in **The Aesthetic Movement of England** in 1882.

24) The origin of phrase, **Art for Art's Sake** is debatable. Some say it was coined by philosopher Victor Cousin. Though, Angela Leighton in her publication On Form: Poetry, Aestheticism and the Legacy of a Word (2007) says the phrase was used by Benjamin Constant around 1804.

25) Friedrich Nietzsche criticised **Art for Art's Sake** saying that there is no such thing as art for art's sake as artists express themselves through art. Marxists say that art should be politicised and should have a socialist end.

