

[Q-3] (11)

Age of Pope / Augustan Age

* General characteristic of the Age of Pope

* Introduction :-

The eighteenth century in England was the self-styled "Augustan Age," that is an age equal to the age of Augustus Caesar. When society had reached a higher peak of glory than ever before or after. The name "Augustan Age" was chosen by the writers themselves, who saw in Pope, Addison, Swift, Johnson and Dryden the modern parallels of Horace, Virgil, Cicero and all that brilliant company who made Roman literature famous in the day of Augustus.

According to Hudson 'Augustan Age' was a term applied as a term of high praise, because the Age of Augustan was the golden age of Latin literature. So the Age of Pope was the golden age of English literature.

12)

Pope has said

" Those rules of old discovered
Are natural, not devised
still, but nature
metaphorized."

Including Points :-

(1) Political and Social conditions

(2) Coffee Houses and Literary Activities :-

(3) The use of only one Metre -
The Heroic couplet

(4) Literary Characteristics of the Age :-

(1) Prose and Realism

(2) Age of Satire

(3) Age of Neo-classicism

(5) To The French influence :-

16)

(6) Town and city life AS a Theme of Literature :-

(i) Essay and Journalism

(ii) Dictionaries and Lexicons

(7) The 18th century - An excellent and indispensable Age :-

★ Augustan Age also called The Age of Pope because Pope was the dominant figure of this period. The Age of Pope (1700-1740) also called Pseudo Classical Age.

(1) Political and Social condition :-

Politically, this age witnessed the rise of two political parties.

- (i) The Whigs
- (ii) The Tories

The Whigs Party stood for the pre-eminence of personal freedom and the Tory Party supported the Royal Divine right. The politicians took the authors into their confidence. Consequently most of the writers showed a strong

Political bias.

(2) Coffee Houses and Literary activities:-

A number of clubs and coffee houses came into existence. The coffee houses were dominated by either of the parties. The coffee houses were the haunts of prominent writers, thinkers, artists, intellectuals and politicians. The coffee houses were literary associations, such as "Scribblers" and "Kit-cat clubs".

[3] Literary characteristic of the Age :-

(A) Prose and Realism

Prose being the dominant medium of expression, the rules of exactness. In a classical Prose, we find neatness, uniformity, balance, style and correctness in technique.

The Prose writers of this age were Alexander Pope, Jonathan Swift his main works are - The Battle of the Books, Tale of Tub and Addison and Steele.



(B) Age of Satire :-

Satire was the prominent form of literature developed during the age of Pope. In the age of Pope, the love for satire came to the upper surface and the cold hard-worldliness of Augustan life found its expression in published wit and satire.

Age W. J. Long writes;

"

A Satire is like a labourer who clears a way. Clears the ruin and rubbish of an old house before the architect and builders begin on a new and beautiful structure. The work may sometimes be necessary, but it robs our enthusiasm."

Dryden used satire in his powerful poems like Absalom and Achitophel and The Medal. Pope's gift of sharp satire can be founded in his The Rape of The Lock, The Dunciad and in his essay and epistles.

(C) Age of Neo-classicism :-

The Age of Pope is often called neo-classical age. The term-classic refers to the writers of highest rank in any nation. Neo-classical period became an interpretation of life. It was first applied to the works of Greek and Roman writers like Homer and Virgil. Dryden, Pope and Johnson pioneered the revival of classicism.

(D) The use of only one meter- The Heroic Couplet :-

Heroic Couplet is the only verse was used with rare brilliance and effect for satirical and intellectual poetry. John Dryden used Heroic Couplet in his verse. He gave elegance and a noble rhythm. After him, Pope gave the heroic couplet, its final shape.

He used it in his light mood.

" We think our Father's Fools
So wise we grow
our wisest Sons no doubt."

The French Influence :-

The 18th century was indebted to the growing influence by the French models of French literature.

Pope has said

"What oft was thought, but never so well expressed."

The Neo-classist imitated the French masters like Boileau and Horace. Pope imitated the rules of Boileau into English in his Essay on criticism.

Town and city life as a theme of literature :-

Another feature of the literature of the age is that it has a limited theme. It is literature of the town and fashionable upper circles of the city of London. Pope, Johnson, Addison, Steele etc.

(i) Essay and Journalism :-

English essayists were aware of continental models, but they developed

their form independently from that tradition. and Periodical literature grew between 1692 and 1712. "The Spectator" associated with Addison and Richard Steele. Samuel Johnson published 200 essays.

Dictonaries and Lexicons :-

Johnson published "Dictionary of the English Language" in 1755. Johnson's great knowledge of letters.

The 18th century - An excellent and indispensable Age.

- The cradle of English Novel.
- Great Periodicals and Journals such as The Tatler, The Spectator, The Rambler, The Examiner etc.
- Great writers - Addison, Steele, Swift, Burke, Gibbon and Pope.
- Extra-ordinary development in Prose, Novel and Periodical essay.

Conclusion
The Augustan Age flourished almost in all the forms of literature. We find a great change between the literature of Restoration Age and that of the Augustan Age.