

Q.3
The Neoclassical Age / Age of Alexander Pope / Augustan Age (1700 - 1745)

(1) General Background :-

The term "Neoclassical" which is given to the time of "Pope" & "Swift", is highly suggestive. The term makes it clear that it is a new classical age and this proves that they've already existed even before one classical age, even before the age of Pope & Swift. This classical age existed in Greece & Rome during the time of "Homer", "Horace" & "Virgil". They were not the contemporaries but the title "The classical Age" is given to their time, keeping in view the lit. of quality that they produced.

(2) The Pattern of Neoclassical Writers :-

The Augustan writers followed the same pattern which was originally practised by those ancient writers and so the title "Neoclassical Age" is given to the time. There are several remarkable features of this age. They distinguish the lit. of this time from the lit. of ^{the} other literary eras. Those features are as under.

(3) The Characteristics of "The Neo-classical Age" :-

Importance of Intellect :- Neoclassical age is more in continuation with the restoration literary

tendencies. During the restoration era imagination fell from supremacy and its place was taken by element of intellect. The same was the condition even in the age of Pope. All most all the writers of Neoclassical Age used intellect as a major force and source for their literary activities. Imagination became a subordinate element for them.

(ii) Literature - As a Weapon:

One more literary tendency rather a major literary tendency which existed during the restoration era is visible even in the Neoclassical Lit. This lit. tendency ^{was} ~~the~~ use of lit ~~was~~ as a weapon. The Neoclassical poets & writers chiefly wrote to criticise and correct contemporary political & social drawbacks. Lit. became a weapon for them, to participate in political conflicts. Two major political parties which existed during this age were - "The Tory" and "The Whig". The writers were also divided into two parties. "Jonathan Swift" supported "The Tory" and to celebrate that party, he wrote "The Examiner". "Addision"

was the member of "The Whig" and to respond to "The Examines", he began "The Whig Examines". Pope concentrated on passing satire on social life of the people. "Essay On Man", "The Rape Of The Lock" and "The Dunciad" are some of the eg. of his satires. examples

(VII) Development of Prose:

The age of Pope marks a remarkable growth in the field of prose writing. Poetry generally remained deductive & satirical. Prose was aimed at correcting mankind in general. The same age witnessed good prose writers like Steele and Addison. Steele began his literary activities with a periodical named "The Tatler". Addison later on satired, writing in collaboration with Steele & Budgell and the periodical was named "The Spectator". The aim of The Spectator, as it is analysed by Addison in one of his essays "Uses of The Spectator", clearly states that the desire was to correct and improve contemporary society in general and youth in particular. Addison in his essay - "The Uses of the Spectator" says that, he feels sorry to see the whole contemporary age that has fallen into a ditch of

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moral decay. (By writing The Spectator his desire is to uplift & to improve contemporary youth. Addison refers to Aristotle and Socrates & says that, formerly philosophy, which existed in heaven, was brought to earth by Aristotle & Socrates. Unfortunately that philosophy ~~directly~~ entered the cubboards of the library. The desire of Addison behind publishing The Spectator was to bring that philosophy out of the cubboards of the library and to make human mind that dwelling place of it. In the same essay, he refers to some rich noble families. The members of such families get together early in the morning for their bread, butter & milk. Addison says that it is nutritious for their body. Such families should take something nutritious for their mental health also. He says that The Spectator can serve the purpose of good food for their mental development. These clarifications of Addison state that the literary activities ~~which~~ which were conducted by the Augustan poets & writers, were highly intentional. There was no

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spontaneous overflow in case of these writers & poets. They wrote with a view to correcting mankind.

(IV) Importance of Satire

The age of Alexander Pope should not be remembered & discussed without remembering Dr Johnson. He passed his early life in utter poetry. It was writing of a poem - "London" which brought some fame & fortune to him. It was followed by one more poem - "The Vanity of Human Wishes". Both these poems are satirical in their temper & they reveal Dr Johnson's experience and hardship that he faced in London. It is not for these poems that he is remembered today. His reputation purely lies on "Diction-ary of The English Lang." and "Lives of The English Poets". His dictionary was the first one of its own kind and he widely commented on the metaphysical poetry, while describing the lives of the English poets.

(4) Conclusion:

In brief, satirical temper, resting of a subject matter & style, development of the prose and viewing mankind with attachant are some of the out-standing literary features of "The Neoclassical Age".