



PURITAN AGE & RESTORATION AGE

- **John Milton, John Donne, John Dryden**

PURITAN AGE – AN OVERVIEW

THE PURITAN AGE OR THE AGE OF MILTON

- The literature of the 17th century divided into two sub period:
- Jacobean period(JAMES 1st 1603-1625)
- Caroline period(Charles 1st 1625-1649)

Characteristics of Puritan Writings

- Purpose of Puritan Literature:
 - Spiritual enlightenment and enrichment
 - Record history
 - Personal reflection
- Puritans were not allowed to read fiction for pleasure.
- Literature and art's main purposes were to teach.
- The Puritans were able to be successful writers because they were incredibly well-educated.
- Supported the idea of education for all of the colonists.

MILTON – LIFE & WORKS

John Milton

❑ Born: Bread Street, London
(middle – class family)

❑ English poet, polemicist, man of letters, and a civil servant for the Commonwealth under Oliver Cromwell

❑ His poetry and prose reflect:

- deep personal convictions,
- passion for freedom,
- self-determination,
- urgent issues, and
- political turbulence

❑ Schools: St. Paul' School and Christ's College, where he wrote in English, Latin, Greek, and Italian.



December 9, 1608 – November 8, 1674

John Milton's eyesight began to fail in 1644. By 1652, he was totally blind. Oddly, he wrote his greatest works.

2. Milton's works

1st period

- the poems *L'allegro* and *Il Penseroso*
- *Comus* → a masque
- *Lycidas* → a pastoral elegy

2nd period

- *Aeropagitica* → a pamphlet
- Prose propaganda

3rd period

- *Paradise Lost*
- *Paradise Regained*
- *Samson Agonistes*

JOHN MILTON (1608 – 1674)

- **Greatest product of Puritanism** – moral & religious influences visible
- Poet, Pamphleteer, Courtier, Historian – 1 poem “**On Christ’s Nativity**” – in College
- **Well-versed: English, Latin, French, German, Greek, Hebrew, Italian, Spanish, Aramaic, Syriac** (lofty thoughts to become a poet from childhood)
- Gradual loss of sight - @ **44 completely blind** – in disappointment wrote 2 Epics ***Paradise Lost*** (man’s first disobedience), ***Paradise Regained*** (Christ as Saviour)
- ***L’Allegro*** (the happy man), ***Il’Penseroso*** (the thoughtful man) – in Latin
- ***Lycidas*** – a pastoral elegy on death of friend, **Edward King** (Shepherd life)
- ***Sonnets*** – on patriotism, duty, music and politics (Themes), ***Comus*** – a masque play
- ***Aeropagitica*** & other prose works concerns church affairs, divorce & freedom
- ***Samson Agonistes*** – a classical drama, modelled on Greek tragedy
- Supporter & Latin Secretary to **Oliver Cromwell** (wrote pamphlets in support)
- Married thrice, but unhappy married life, daughters helped as Scribes for the Epics



Pastel drawing of John Milton at age 62.
William Faithorne, 1670.
Princeton University Library

PARADISE LOST & REGAINED

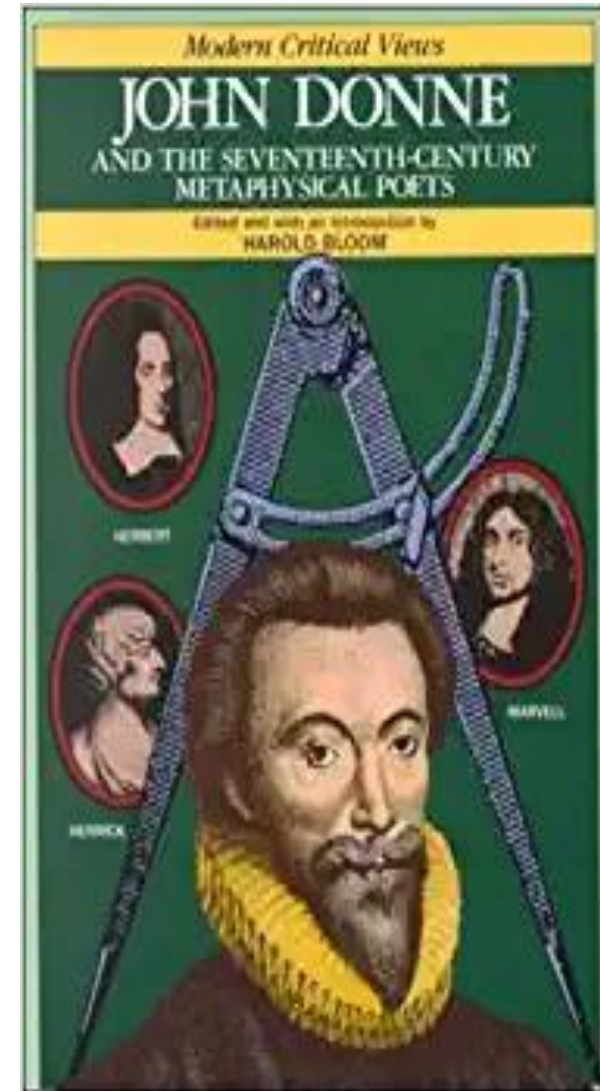
THE MIND IS
ITS OWN PLACE,
AND IN ITSELF
CAN MAKE A
HEAVEN OF
HELL, A HELL
OF HEAVEN.

John Milton

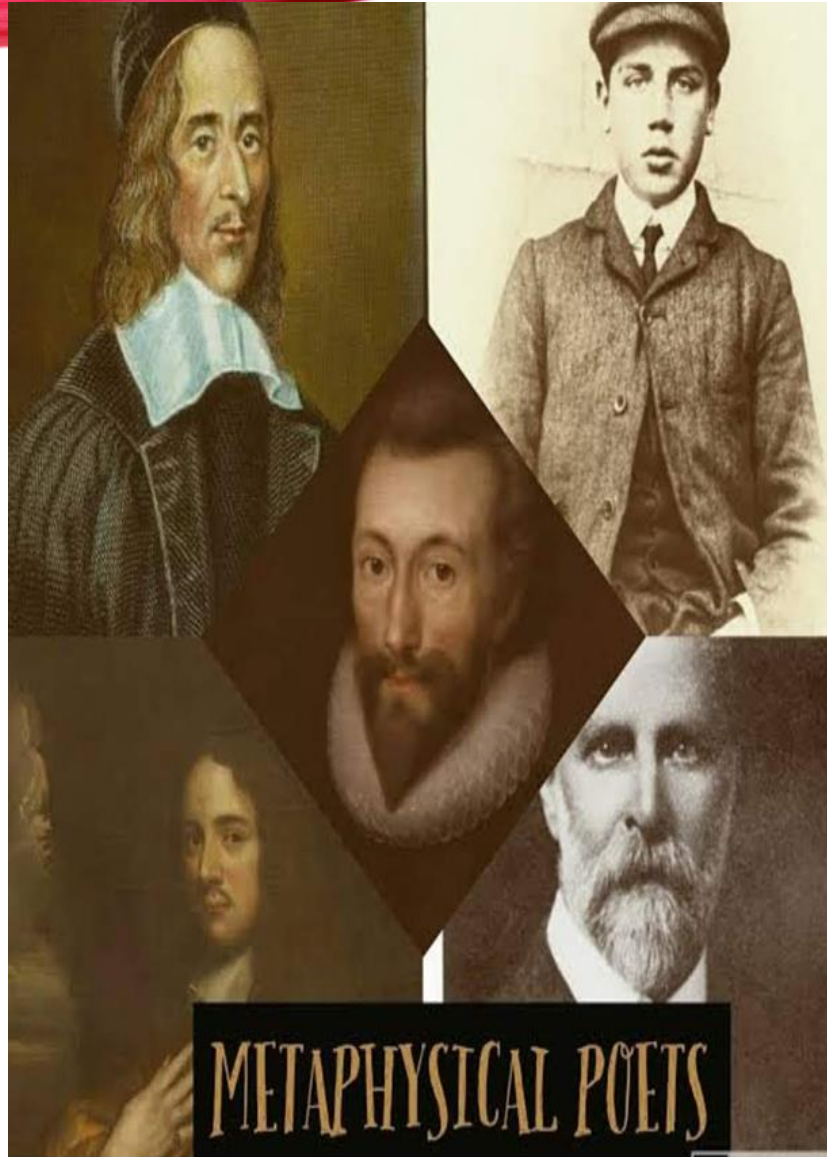
- **Para. Lost** - an **Epic poem in Blank Verse** -one of the greatest English works
- Publ.1667:10 books with 10,000 lines/ II Edition :**1674, 12 books**
- **Theme**: the Biblical story of the “**Fall of Man**” – temptation of Adam & Eve by the fallen angel Satan, their expulsion from the Garden of Eden – states in Book I ‘**to justify the ways of God to men**’
- **Other themes**: Free Will / Fate, Predestination, Freedom/ responsibility
- **Epic qualities** : Language - supreme & sublime, grand scale & majestic style, exploits of a Superhuman hero engaged in quest
- **Supernatural Chars**: Satan, God, Christ, Adam & Eve, Lucifer, Beelzebub, Michael, angels & demons @ war
- **Paradise Regained** as a **sequel** to *PL* in **4 books - with 2,065 lines** : tells the story of Christ’s temptation by Satan and his ultimate victory
- **Conclusion** : although Satan may control man in Hell for a time, he remains defeated and tormented by **Christ’s victory and will**

THE METAPHYSICAL POETS

- 17th C British Poets : later applied by **Samuel Johnson** for their uniqueness
- “**meta + physical**” means “**beyond physical nature**” – poetry that goes beyond the physical world of senses & explores the spiritual world
- Deals with **abstract/ philosophical subjects** : love, religion, faith, beauty, etc
- **Main features** : Full of affectations, strained metaphors, **far-fetched similies, most extravagant hyperbole**, cultivate ingenuity, Philosophical subtleties & logical expressions (**most common : Wit**)
- Poetry filled with paradoxes & puns results in strange, comparing unlikely things as ‘**conceits**’ (**lovers with two legs of compass**, soul to a drop of dew)
- **Major theme** : *carpe diem* (seize the day):both thought & feeling combined
- **Members**: John Donne, George Herbert, Andrew Marvell, Abraham Cowley, Robert Southwell, Richard Crashaw, Thomas Traherne, Henry Vaughan
- **Dr. Johnson**: “ They are men of learning. They neither copied nature nor life, Their thoughts are new, but not natural. **They are neither clear nor just**”
- In general : **They are violent, harsh, cold and obscure (limitations)**



JOHN DONNE (1572- 1631)



- Most independent of Elizabethan poets (**Master** among the others)
- Poet, divine Preacher (spirituality @ the centre of his works)
- **Works** : **Satires, Songs and Sonnets** (publ. @ religious oppression), **Holy Sonnets** (deals with divinity and morality)
- **Uniqueness**: **Originality in ideas, thoughts, feelings & diction**, fusion of thoughts & feelings (passion & reason), colloquial lang., complicated conceits, brevity, Platonic love (as spiritual entity), Wit
- John Donne as “**Monarch of Wit**” in History of English Literature (eg) “A Valediction Forbidding Mourning”, “The Canonization”
- **Characteristics** : Abrupt beginning, Colloquial language, Conceits, far-fetched similes, dramatic effect, argumentative form in poetry
- **Caroline Poets** : Robert Herrick, Thomas Carew, Francis Quarles, Sir John Suckling, Richard Lovelace, **Andrew Marvell**, **George Herbert**, **Richard Crashaw**, **Henry Vaughan** (religious)
- **Caroline Prose Writers** : Jeremy Taylor, Richard Baxter, Sir Thomas Browne, Izaak Walton, Edward Hyde, Thomas Hobbes

RESTORATION AGE (1660-1700)

- A Sweeping reaction **against Puritanism** / It was laughed at / Theatres re-opened
- Spirit of Corruption spread far & wide – contrast to ‘Truth & Honesty’
- **Charles II restored** to the throne in 1660, after Oliver Cromwell’s rule
- France became the world’s great arbiter of taste, **smooth relationship**
- Lit – **lack moral strength** & spiritual fervour – resulted in creative Prose
- **John Dryden** – “**the great man of a little age**”: representative & exponent
- Birth of **Modern English Prose** : **Dryden** (I Prose Writer – modern style), **Samuel Butler**’s *Hudibras* (satire on Puritans: fashioned on Don Quixote), **John Bunyan**’s *Grace Abounding* (autobiography), *The Pilgrim’s Progress* (long prose allegory), *The Life & Death of Mr. Badman*, *The Holy War*
- John Bunyan as “**the Child of Puritanism**” & *Pilgrim’s Progress* as **greatest product of Puritanism** & forerunner of Modern Novel (dialogue, dramatic power)
- **Diarists**: **John Evelyn & Samuel Pepys** (covers -10 years, includes the Restoration, the Great plague, the Great Fire, habits, fashions & scandals)
- **Dramatists** : **Will. Wycherley**’s *The Wife of Bath*, **Will. Congreve**’s *The Way of the World* (**Resto./artificial comedy** – presents the demoralised world of fashion)



JOHN DRYDEN (1631- 1700)

John Dryden (1631-1700)

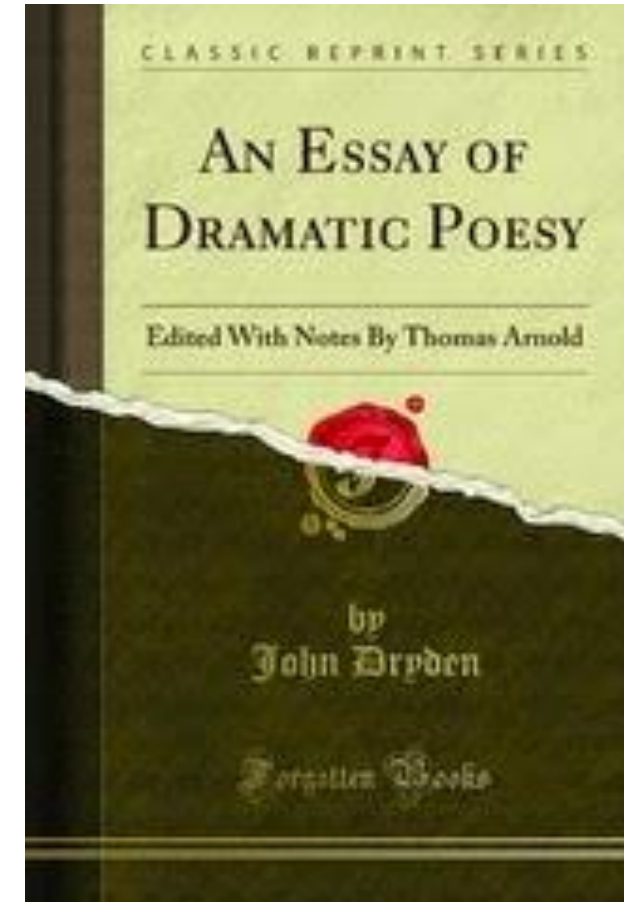
- Born 1631, Aldwinckle, Northamptonshire;
- Landed gentry family;
- Dryden was educated at Westminster School and Trinity College, Cambridge.
- After the Restoration he established a literary reputation in London.
- In 1662 he became a fellow of the new Royal Society but let his membership lapse.



- Dramatist, Critic, Translator & Representative Poet (great Satirist)
- One of the **chief-exponent of Neo-Classical** School (advocate)
- Great influence by **Abraham Cowley**, as ‘the darling of my youth’
- The Poet Laureate in 1659: works faithful mirror of age
- **Works:** *Annus Mirabilis* (3 events: Great Plauge, Great Fire, War with Holland), *Absalom and Achitophel* (satirical allegory on Shaftesbury), The Medal (satire), *Mac-Flecknoe* (attack on Thomas Shadwell), *Religio Leici* (supports English Anglican Church), *The Hind and the Panther* (allegorical defense of RC Church)
- **Translations :** *The Fables – Ancient and Modern* (Homer, Ovid, Boccacio into English), also Chaucer’s Works into modern English
- **Lyrics :** “A Song for St.Cecilia’s Day”, “Alexander’s Feast”
- **Verse Drama:** *All for Love* (retelling of Antony & Cleopatra); Heroic Play – *The Conquest of Granade*
- **Critical work :** *Preface to Fables(best), Of Heroic Plays, Discourse on Satire , An Essay on Dramatic Poesy (famous)*

DRYDEN'S CONTRIBUTION

- Dryden wrote **an elegy** on the death of **Oliver Cromwell** :
 - *Heroic Stanzas on the Death of Cromwell*
- Written a play on the Mughal Emperor : **Aurang - Zebe**
- Dryden brought **3 elements into Lit:**
 - 1) use of **Heroic Couplet** for Satire, didactic & descriptive poetry
 - 2) direct **Prose style**, 3) Development of **art of literary Criticism**
- Perfected everything he attempted : Satire & Heroic couplet
 - **Dr. Johnson:** “**Dryden found English poetry brick and left it marble**”
- Satires comments on the low moral tone of the Restoration Society
- **Master of the didactic verse**, the first to teach English to determine the merits of composition based on principles, Dr. Johnson calls Dryden as “**the Father of English Criticism**”
- **Significant Work** : *Essays on Dramatic Poesy* : A Critical treatise on dramatics are developed through dialogues





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