1. Trace the evolution of the British Novel during the nineteenth century.

Ans: The first half of the 19th century was influenced by romanticism and the focus was on nature and imagination. Gothic (horror) and romantic novels were written during this time. Jane Austen wrote highly polished novels about the life of the landed gentry and social issues like marriage and property from women’s perspective.

In the period between 1837 to 1901, the Victorian novelists became popular. They portrayed middle-class, virtuous heroes responding to harsh society. Stories of working class poor people were directed to incite sympathy. The development of the middle-class and the manners and expectations of this class, as opposed to the aristocrat forms were the focus of the novelists of this period. Charles Dickens emerged as a literary figure and wrote about London life and struggles of the poor in Oliver Twist.

In the early twentieth century, Rudyard Kipling wrote highly versatile novels, short stories and poems, often based on his experience in British India. E.M. Forster also wrote A Passage to India which reflected challenges to imperialism. Novels from this era reflected great world events such as The Great Depression, World War II, Hiroshima, The Cold War and Communism. Crime, political and military confrontations were the areas of novelists and readers interest.

By looking at the history or genesis of novel in England above, we realise that author’s of different eras have provided the readers with a glimpse, if not a complete picture of a society, economic trends, cultural and religious beliefs of the time they wrote in. With change in time and situation of the world, the focus area of the novelist kept on moving. They covered varied subjects in their work starting from romances to naturalism, marriage and property, middle-class and landed gentry and so on.

The phrase Romantic novel has several possible meanings. Here it refers to novels written during the Romantic era in literary history, which runs from the late 18th century until the beginning of the Victorian era in 1837. But to complicate matters there are novels written in the romance tradition by novelists like Walter Scott, Nathaniel Hawthorne. George Meredith. In addition the phrase today is mostly used to refer to the popular pulp-fiction genre that focusses on romantic love. The Romantic period is especially associated with the poets William Blake, William Wordsworth, Samuel Taylor Coleridge, George Byron, Percy Shelley and John Keats, though two major novelists, Jane Austen and Walter Scott, also published in the early 19th century.

Victorian novel

It was in the Victorian era (1837–1901) that the novel became the leading literary genre in English. Another important fact is the number of women novelists who were successful in the 19th century, even though they often had to use a masculine pseudonym. At the beginning of the 19th century most novels were published in three volumes. However, monthly serialization was revived with the publication of Charles Dickens’ Pickwick Papers in twenty parts between April 1836 and November 1837. Demand was high for each episode to introduce some new element, whether it was a plot twist or a new character, so as to maintain the readers’ interest. Both Dickens and Thackeray frequently published this way.

The nineteenth century, like no other single century before or since, was for the inhabitants of the British Isles an era of change. The general population would nearly triple while some twenty million Britons—driven by desire and, in many cases, desperation—emigrated to destinations across the globe. A vast internal migration at the same time turned villages and towns into large cities and made London the world’s most populous urban center. And while various scientific enterprises disclosed the need to gauge the earth’s history by factors of tens of millions of years, the rise of electrified, steam-powered systems for transport and communication were said to annihilate barriers of space and time. The size of the planet, many observed, seemed to shrink even as astronomers and physicists began to imagine an expanding universe of infinite scope.

These transformations were only the backdrop for further social change born in class conflict and various demands for equality before the law. As industrialization in general accelerated forms of material production, writers were pressured by creativity in experimental, innovative literary forms. Narratives of self-invention achieved prominence while tradition was flooded in an effort to adjust to the disorienting advent of modernity. Popular genres—notably the domestic novel and a new colloquial poetry of everyday life—would gain influence and prestige. But democratic and demotic literary manifestations would not be echoed and betrayed by authoritarian and hieratic notions of cultural authority.

2. Would it be correct to say that Heathcliff is ‘dark’ and ‘evil’? Discuss in the light of your understanding and analysis of Wuthering Heights.

Ans: Heathcliff is a fictional character in Emily Brontë's novel Wuthering Heights. Owing to the novel's enduring fame and popularity, he is often regarded as an archetype of the tortured romantic hero whose all-consuming passions destroy both him and those around him. His complicated, mesmerizing, consumable and altogether bizarre nature makes him a rare character, with components of both the hero and villain. Thus, this paper is a step to illuminate the “The Portrayal of Heathcliff's Character in "Wuthering Heights”.

Upon first glance, it is easy to assume that the main character in Wuthering Heights, Heathcliff will either be a hero or a villain. In the nineteenth century during the Romantic Era, the idea of an anti-hero or Byronic heroes was slowly emerging. The idea of heroes began to change throughout history, creating the emergence of anti-heroes. The idea of Byronic heroes or anti-heroes primarily emerged from the works of Lord Byron. This idea can be further traced back to Milton and his poem Paradise Lost. Paradise Lost was the book that changed the perceptive of mankind. In this poem, the audiences begins to sympathize with Satan in the war between Heaven and Hell, admiring him as the arch enemy who no less an antagonist than Omnipotence. Although he did evil deeds, Satan was the true hero of the poem. Byronic heroes are romanticized but wicked protagonist who over come their obstacles with evil rather than good. Heathcliff in Emily Bronte's Wuthering Heights is considered a Byronic hero or antihero. But why did Bronte make Heathcliff an antihero?