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## B.A. Part I (English Honours)

### Chaucer's Place in English Literature

Chaucer was fitted by both natural genius and the circumstance of his life to become the most technically accomplished, the most widely ranging, and the most universally appealing of medieval English writers, and indeed, one of the most skilful and attractive of English writers of any period. He was the first great English poet, who combined the French and the Italian streams of literature and brought forth a type of poetry unrivalled in its sunny atmosphere and realism. His sunny soul provided him themes with an inexhaustible flow of humour which tinged all incongruities with sympathy and distinguished him from his bitter contemporary Langland and moralist Gower. He was one of the finest of literary artists and his services to the English language

what he calls plot-obliquity, the plot suggests many significant details. The different sections are so arranged that they imply many things. The poet has complete control over his emotions, he has a sense of "power". The first two sections express grief, diffidence, disappointment and indignation. The third section, which is in the nature of an interlude gives us a quite colourful description of flowers. The climax is reached in the speech of St. Peter, and the poet begins to recover from the sterner mood. There is an escape into a region of pure romance.

The fourth section strikes a note of calm and perfect joy. The conflict in the poet's mind is resolved and the obstinate questions have been provided with an answer that brings solace. He is assured that "the loss or

possible loss of human fame  
is made good by fame in  
heaven " the corrupt clergy  
are balanced by

" All the saints above  
The solemn troops and  
Sweet societies "

and the forebodings of St. Peter  
are forgotten

" Through the dear might  
of him that walk'd the  
waves "

Mr. Tillyard thinks that the  
plot suggests many things beside  
the " power "

" The sudden plunge from bit-  
ter actuality to Arcadia,  
from contemporary politics  
to utter escape, reveals a  
mind both vastly capacious  
and exquisitely aware of  
different states of feeling.  
But out of the whole poem,  
not implied by the plot,  
emerged one of the supre-  
me commonplaces. The po-  
em ends with the poet's  
resolution to go on with

was the worship of beauty and knowledge for their own sake. "Maud" gives a dramatic rendering of the revolt of a cultured mind against the hypocrisy and corruptions of a society degraded by the worship of mammon". His 'Idylls of the King' reveal another deep conviction of his Age - "the spreading mischief of moral taint". In another poem, an Memoriam, the poet traces the triumph of 'Faith and Scepticism'. In all these ways Tennyson represents the Victorian Age.

Chaucer represents his own Age and holds the mirror to the life of his time. He is as truly the social chronicler of England in the late 14th century as Froissart, is the political and military chronicler of France during the same period. His poetry reflects the fourteenth century not in fragments but as a complete whole. Other poets of his

autobiography or travel notes rather than novels" and includes his two other works 'The Bible in Spain' and 'Wild Wales'. Even if they are the author's life sketches in parts, they are autobiographical in character.

Samuel Butler - The son of a clergyman he was also a great writer. He emerged on the scene after George Eliot and George Meredith. Samuel Butler was a rebel. Originally he was destined for the church but rebelled against the clerical discipline. His posthumously published novel entitled 'The Way of All Flesh' is a kind of autobiographical in which we find the evils of 'ecclesiastical upbringing' and the author's attack on the family life.

Thomas Hardy - He is very famous and last novel 'Jude the Obscure' is also, to some extent, autobiographical in

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a direct transcription of reality and a true picture of daily life as it was actually lived in its most familiar aspects. Chaucer symbolises the Middle Ages, and his world is medieval. But beneath the medievalism the heaven of the Renaissance is already at work, and the poet stands at the dividing of ways, linking himself with the old world of medievalism that was passing away and heralding the birth of the new age that was peeping at the horizon.

The end.

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