Milton to the Pre-romantics

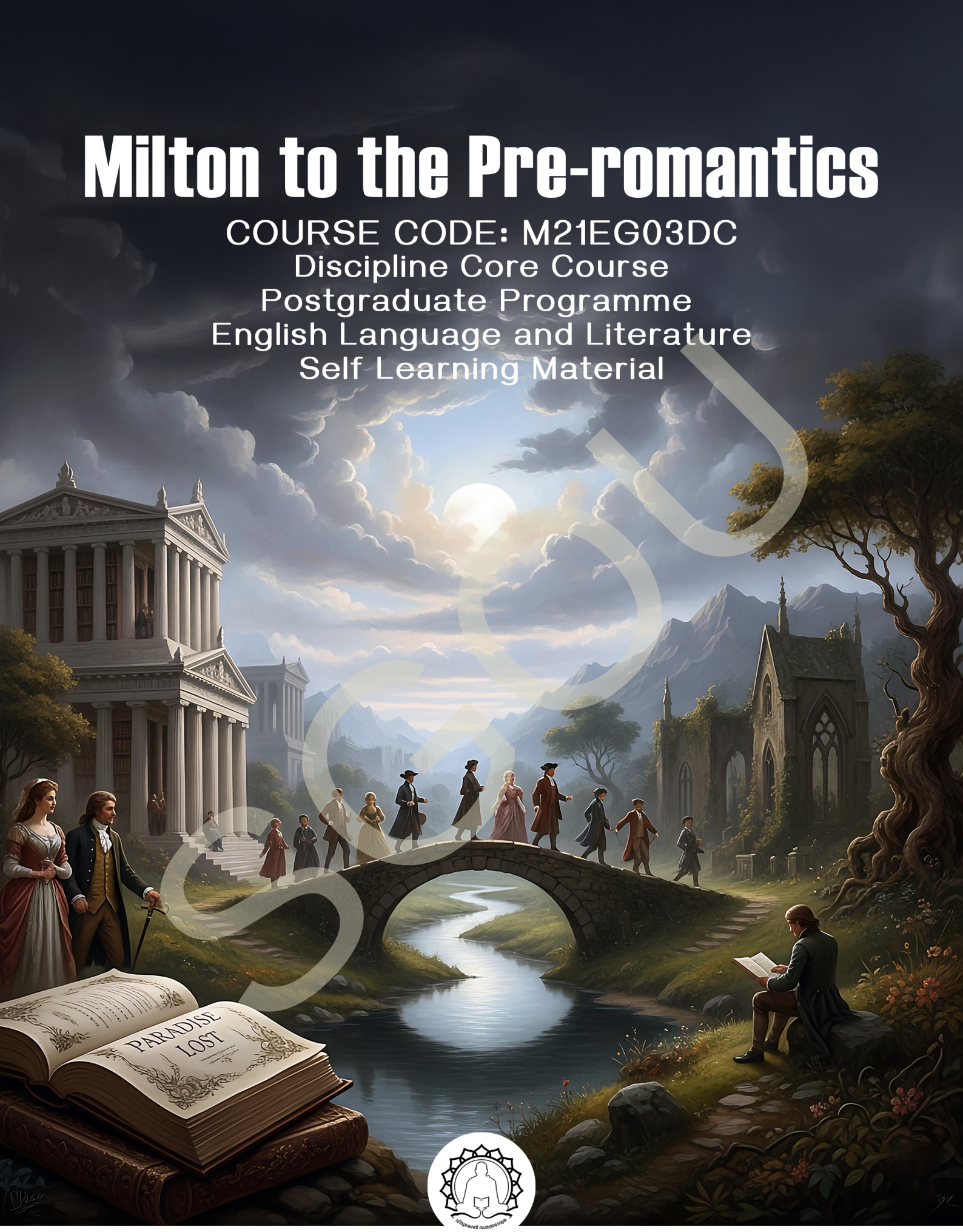
COURSE CODE: M21EG03DC

Discipline Core Course

Postgraduate Programme

English Language and Literature

Self Learning Material



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The State University for Education, Training and Research in Blended Format, Kerala

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Pathway

Access and Quality define Equity.

Milton to the Pre-romantics

Course Code: M21EG03DC

Semester - I

Discipline Core Course
Postgraduate Programme in English
Self Learning Material

(With Model Question Paper Sets)

SGOU

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MILTON TO THE PRE-ROMANTICS

Course Code: M21EGO3DC
Semester-I
Discipline Core Course
Postgraduate Programme in English

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MESSAGE FROM VICE CHANCELLOR

Dear learner,

I extend my heartfelt greetings and profound enthusiasm as I warmly welcome you to Sreenarayanaguru Open University. Established in September 2020 as a state-led endeavour to promote higher education through open and distance learning modes, our institution was shaped by the guiding principle that access and quality are the cornerstones of equity. We have firmly resolved to uphold the highest standards of education, setting the benchmark and charting the course.

The courses offered by the Sreenarayanaguru Open University aim to strike a quality balance, ensuring students are equipped for both personal growth and professional excellence. The University embraces the wide-ly acclaimed "blended format," a practical framework that harmonious-ly integrates Self-Learning Materials, Classroom Counseling, and Virtual modes, fostering a dynamic and enriching experience for both learners and instructors.

The university aims to offer you an engaging and thought-provoking ed-ucational journey. The MA English programme by the University offers a detailed exploration of literature, linguistics, and language studies. We provide rigorous curriculum in literary analysis, linguistic theories, and applied language skills. The Self-Learning Material has been meticulously crafted, incorporating relevant examples to facilitate better comprehen-sion.

Rest assured, the university's student support services will be at your dis-posal throughout your academic journey, readily available to address any concerns or grievances you may encounter. We encourage you to reach out to us freely regarding any matter about your academic programme. It is our sincere wish that you achieve the utmost success.

Regards,
Dr. Jagathy Raj V. P.

01-10-2025

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Socio-Political and Literary Background

BLOCK-01

Block Content

Unit 1 - Socio-Political Background
Unit 2 - Poetry
Unit 3 - Drama
Unit 4 - Prose

Unit 1 Socio-Political Background

Learning Outcomes

After the completion of the unit, the learner will be able to:

- understand the historical and political developments in Britain from the early 17th to the late 18th century
- critically analyse the relationship between monarchy, Parliament, and the people across key transitions
- evaluate the cultural and literary impact of Enlightenment ideals and revolutionary movements
- trace the evolution of literary forms in response to political, social, and intellectual changes

Background

The seventeenth and eighteenth centuries were transformative periods in British history, marked by political upheaval, religious conflict, and profound intellectual and cultural change. From the early Stuart monarchy and the English Civil War to the Glorious Revolution and the rise of constitutional government, this era witnessed the gradual decline of absolute monarchy and the emergence of parliamentary democracy. Simultaneously, the Enlightenment reshaped ideas about reason, individual rights, and the role of government, influencing both literature and society. The Restoration of the monarchy, the formation of Great Britain, and the impact of the French Revolution further accelerated these shifts. This unit explores the key historical events, ideological movements, and literary developments that defined this dynamic period and laid the foundation for the modern British state and its cultural identity.

Keywords

English Civil Wars, Restoration, Enlightenment, French Revolution

Discussion

1.1.1 James I (1603–1625)

- James unites crowns, commissions new Bible.

James VI of Scotland became James I of England in 1603, uniting the crowns of Scotland and England. A firm believer in the Divine Right of Kings, James's accession brought two immediate benefits: the end of the long Elizabethan war with Spain and the dynastic union of England and Scotland. The rise of Protestantism dominated the seventeenth century. While Queen Elizabeth's Anglican Settlement had held, conflicts persisted between Puritans (inside the Church of England) and Roman Catholics (outside it). In 1604, James convened the Hampton Court Conference, which led to the preparation of a new English Bible. The Authorised Version (King James Bible) was published in 1611.

James alienated Puritans by refusing to support many of their clergy. Catholics were also targeted: he ordered priests out of the kingdom. This repression provoked the Gunpowder Plot (1605), led by Robert Catesby. The conspirators aimed to blow up Parliament. Their plan was foiled when Guy Fawkes was caught guarding the barrels of gunpowder. The aftermath intensified suspicion that all Catholics were traitors.

Although no revolution occurred under James, his policies strained the bond between crown and people, tensions that foreshadowed later upheavals.

1.1.2 Charles I (1625–1649)

- Charles dissolved Parliament, angering Puritans.

The son of James I, Charles I, also upheld the Divine Right of Kings and antagonised Puritans. After quarrels with Parliament, he dissolved it in 1626 and ruled personally. His chief advisor, Archbishop William Laud, imposed strict controls on Puritans, censored the press, and fined dissenters. Between 1629 and 1640, thousands of Puritans emigrated to America.

The Long Parliament (1640–1660) was a milestone:

- Summoned when Charles faced a financial crisis.
- Declared Ship Money and other taxes illegal.
- Passed laws preventing its own dissolution without consent.

- Marked the beginning of Parliamentary supremacy.

- Civil war led to Charles's execution

Civil war broke out in 1642 between Royalists (Cavaliers) and Parliamentarians (Roundheads). The First Civil War (1642–1646) ended in Parliamentary victory. In 1647, Oliver Cromwell presented the "Heads of the Proposals," suggesting limits on monarchy. Charles refused, leading to the Second Civil War (1648–1649), where the Scots supported Charles I. Defeated again decisively by Cromwell's New Model Army at the Battle of Preston (648), Charles was tried and executed on 30 January 1649 at Whitehall.

1.1.2.1 The Commonwealth & Protectorate (1649–1660)

After the regicide, England was declared a Commonwealth governed by a Council of State and Parliament. However, power increasingly shifted to the Army.

The Rump Parliament (1648–1653) played a central role:

- Created after Pride's Purge (6 December 1648), when Colonel Thomas Pride, backed by the New Model Army, forcibly excluded about 140 moderate Presbyterian MPs from the Long Parliament.
- This coup left a much smaller body of about 60–80 Independent MPs, later known as the Rump Parliament.
- With the King's supporters removed, the Rump voted to try Charles I for treason.
- This directly led to the execution of Charles I (30 January 1649) and the formal establishment of the Commonwealth.
- The Rump governed during the early years of the republic but was dismissed by Cromwell in 1653 for corruption and inefficiency.

- Commonwealth Period

In 1653, Cromwell assumed the title of Lord Protector under the Instrument of Government, a framework for a stable government. The Protectorate divided England into twelve military districts, enforced Puritan morality, and

temporarily united representatives of England, Scotland, and Ireland.

Oliver Cromwell's death in 1658, his son Richard Cromwell succeeded him as Lord Protector. Unlike his father, Richard had neither military experience nor authority over the New Model Army, which had been the real backbone of the Protectorate. He leaned heavily on Parliament for support, especially the civilian republicans, which alienated the Army officers who wished to retain their political influence. At the same time, the regime faced a crippling financial crisis, England was burdened with heavy war debts, and Richard lacked the skill to resolve it.

▶ Cromwell's sons' rule fails

In April 1659, the Army forced him to dissolve Parliament, and by May, he was compelled to step aside altogether. His downfall demonstrated that the Protectorate had rested more on Oliver's personal prestige and military leadership than on stable constitutional institutions. In the months that followed, England drifted into confusion: the recalled Rump Parliament clashed with the Army, John Lambert's experiment in military government quickly lost legitimacy, and popular resentment against years of high taxation and Puritan restrictions deepened.

In this climate of instability, General George Monck marched from Scotland to London in early 1660, restored the Long Parliament by reinstating previously excluded members, and arranged for free elections. The resulting Convention Parliament invited Charles II to return, while his Declaration of Breda (April 1660) offered pardon, religious moderation, and respect for property, reassuring both political elites and the wider public. Thus, after a decade of republican experiments that had failed to produce lasting stability, the monarchy was restored on 29 May 1660, when Charles II entered London in triumph.

▶ Monarchy restored after failed republic experiment.

1.1.3 Charles II and the Restoration (1660–1685)

The Restoration refers to the return of Charles II to the English throne in 1660, following the collapse of the Cromwellian Protectorate and the end of the Interregnum (1649–1660). This moment marked not only the restoration of the Stuart monarchy but also a broader cultural and social renewal after more than a decade of Puritan rule under Oliver Cromwell.

The "Merry Monarch" and Social Change

Charles II, a clever and politically flexible king, was known as the "Merry Monarch." His reign was a stark contrast to the severe Puritanism that had preceded it. Theatres, which were closed under Cromwell's rule, were reopened, leading to the birth of a vibrant new theatrical genre, Restoration comedy. These plays were known for their witty dialogue and satirical, often bawdy, portrayals of court life and London society. For the first time, women were permitted to act on stage. This cultural liberalisation extended beyond the theatre, with a new emphasis on pleasure, fashion, and the arts. The court became a hub of intellectual and scientific inquiry, most notably with the founding of the Royal Society in 1660. Samuel Pepys's famous diary provides an intimate, first-hand account of this era, capturing everything from the political intrigues of the court to the devastating Great Plague of 1665 and the Great Fire of London in 1666.

- Charles II's Restoration brought social change

Political and Religious Tensions

While the Restoration brought cultural revival, it was also a period of constant political tension. The new Parliament, though initially royalist, was determined to curb the monarch's power and prevent a return to the absolute rule that led to the English Civil War. A key issue was religion. The Clarendon Code was passed, establishing the supremacy of the Anglican Church and imposing severe penalties on Protestant dissenters and Catholics. Charles II himself had Catholic sympathies, and he secretly signed the Treaty of Dover in 1670, in which he pledged to convert to Catholicism in exchange for financial aid from the French King Louis XIV.

The most significant political crisis of the era was the Exclusion Crisis (1679-1681). Charles had no legitimate children, and his brother and heir, James, Duke of York, was an open and devout Catholic. Public fear of a Catholic monarch, fuelled by the fabricated Popish Plot to assassinate the king, led to a political firestorm. Parliament's Whig faction attempted to pass a bill to exclude James from the succession. The crisis solidified the first two political parties in England: the Whigs (who supported exclusion) and the Tories (who supported the hereditary right of succession). Ultimately, Charles outmanoeuvred the Whigs by dissolving Parliament multiple times, and the bill failed

- Political turmoil over religion and succession.

to pass, allowing his Catholic brother to eventually inherit the throne.

The 1677 marriage of William of Orange to Mary (daughter of James, Duke of York) would later prove decisive. Charles II died in 1685, succeeded by his brother James II.

1.1.4 James II (1685–1688)

- James II's controversial Catholic rule.

James II, the last Catholic monarch to rule England, Scotland, and Ireland, came to the throne upon the death of his brother, Charles II. His reign, though brief, was fraught with tension. As a committed Catholic in a predominantly Protestant country, James sought to promote religious toleration through the issuance of the Declaration of Indulgence (1687), which suspended laws penalising Catholics and Protestant dissenters. While framed as a gesture of tolerance, the move was widely viewed as an assertion of royal prerogative over parliamentary authority.

His autocratic tendencies and overt promotion of Catholics to key positions in government, the military, and the universities fuelled widespread suspicion. The trial and acquittal of the Seven Bishops, who were imprisoned for seditious libel after refusing to read the Declaration in their churches, galvanised opposition across political and religious lines. James's disregard for the Test Acts and his efforts to create a standing army independent of Parliament alarmed even his natural allies among the Tories.

- Catholic king's heir triggered Glorious Revolution

The birth of James Francis Edward Stuart, the so-called "Old Pretender," in June 1688 deepened the crisis. Until then, the Protestant Mary (James's daughter by his first marriage) had been heir presumptive. The birth of a Catholic heir raised fears of a dynastic shift that would cement a Catholic monarchy for generations. This triggered a political and military response that would become known as the Glorious Revolution.

1.1.5 The Glorious Revolution and the Joint Reign of William III and Mary II (1688–1702)

In November 1688, William of Orange, Stadtholder of the Netherlands and husband to Mary, landed at Torbay with a formidable force under the invitation of a group of English nobles, later known as the Immortal Seven. James II, faced with desertion by his troops and his daughter's defection, fled to France, an act that Parliament interpreted as abdication.

In 1689, Parliament offered the crown jointly to William III and Mary II, an unprecedented constitutional arrangement that effectively subordinated the monarchy to parliamentary authority. This moment signalled a crucial shift in the English political tradition: the doctrine of the divine right of kings was definitively repudiated in favour of contractual monarchy, a government by consent.

- William and Mary's contractual monarchy

The Bill of Rights (1689) codified this transformation. It enshrined key liberties such as regular parliamentary sessions, free elections, and freedom of speech within Parliament. It also explicitly barred Catholics, and those married to Catholics, from inheriting the throne, thereby institutionalising religious discrimination as a political safeguard. The Toleration Act (1689), passed in the same year, granted limited religious freedom to Protestant dissenters, though not to Catholics or atheists.

Culturally and intellectually, this period also saw the rise of political pamphleteering, early party politics, and a growing print culture that reflected and shaped public opinion. Figures such as John Locke, whose Two Treatises of Government (1689) provided philosophical justification for the revolution, became central to the ideological landscape.

1.1.6 Queen Anne (1702–1714)

Anne, the younger Protestant daughter of James II, succeeded William in 1702 following Mary's death (1694) and William's childless demise. Deeply pious and committed to the Anglican Church, Queen Anne presided over a period marked by both national consolidation and partisan instability.

Her reign was pivotal for several reasons. First, the Act of Union (1707), negotiated during her reign, unified the parliaments and crowns of England and Scotland into the Kingdom of Great Britain, forging a new British identity and centralised state. This was partly a response to geopolitical concerns, including threats from France and the economic instability in Scotland following the failed Darien Scheme.

Second, Anne's reign was dominated by the long-running War of the Spanish Succession (1701–1714), in which Britain, allied with the Dutch and Austrians, sought to prevent French hegemony in Europe. The war brought military glory to figures like the Duke of Marlborough but also strained domestic politics and finances.

Domestically, Queen Anne's court was a theatre of Whig-Tory rivalry, intensified by the rise of ministerial government and the early seeds of cabinet rule. The Marlboroughs, once her closest allies, fell out of favour, and Anne increasingly relied on Tory advisers in her later years. The lack of a surviving heir, despite seventeen pregnancies, forced Parliament to resolve the succession with the Act of Settlement (1701), which bypassed numerous Catholic claimants in favour of Sophia of Hanover, a granddaughter of James I, and her Protestant descendants. After Anne's death in 1714, the crown passed to George I of Hanover, ending the Stuart dynasty.

1.1.7 The Hanoverian Dynasty

The Hanoverian Dynasty began in 1714 when George I, the Elector of Hanover, ascended the British throne under the Act of Settlement (1701), which ensured a Protestant succession. George I (1714–1727) and his son George II (1727–1760) had limited English language skills because they were born and raised in Germany as the Electors of Hanover; in fact, George I was 54 when he took the throne and had little interest in learning the language. This reliance on ministers led to the rise of Parliamentary power and the office of Prime Minister, notably Robert Walpole. Under George III (1760–1820), who was the first Hanoverian monarch born in Britain, the nation faced significant challenges, including the loss of the American colonies after the American War of Independence (1775–1783) and the political unrest caused by the French Revolution (1789). By 1800, the monarchy's power had significantly declined, Parliament had grown stronger, and the seeds of a modern

constitutional government were sown. While this period of transformation was significant, the Hanoverian dynasty itself did not end until the death of Queen Victoria in 1901, who reigned for over 63 years.

1.1.8 The Enlightenment

- Reason, progress, and rights emphasised

The Age of Enlightenment was a far-reaching intellectual and cultural movement that reshaped European thought in the 17th and 18th centuries. It was characterised by a profound emphasis on reason, empirical inquiry, secularism, and the potential of human intellect. Historians often place the Enlightenment between the Glorious Revolution (1688) in Britain and the French Revolution (1789), a period marked by an increasing belief in progress, rational governance, and individual rights.

- British Enlightenment shaped democracy, science

In Britain, the Enlightenment laid the philosophical and ethical foundations for modern liberal democracy, scientific thinking, and literary realism. Central to Enlightenment thought was the conviction that human reason could combat ignorance, superstition, and tyranny, and that society could be improved through education, reform, and rational dialogue. Literature of this period reflected these ideals through its preference for clarity, logic, satire, and a didactic purpose.

- Humanism revived classical rational thinking

Although often associated with the 18th century, the intellectual roots of the Enlightenment go back several centuries. The revival of Aristotelian logic by thinkers like Thomas Aquinas in the 13th century laid early foundations by encouraging rational theology. Later, the Renaissance introduced humanism, a movement that emphasised the study of classical texts and the dignity and creative potential of humankind. Humanists like Erasmus and Petrarch believed that understanding human nature was central to understanding God and the universe. They argued that the arts, sciences, and literature were sacred callings through which humans expressed their divine likeness.

- Scientific inquiry transformed worldview

This humanist legacy directly influenced the rise of scientific inquiry. Pioneers such as Francis Bacon, Nicholas Copernicus, and Galileo Galilei advocated for observation-based science. Isaac Newton and Gottfried Wilhelm Leibniz developed mathematical systems to explain the physical universe, offering a vision of a world governed by natural laws rather than divine intervention.

These discoveries fundamentally altered the way people perceived nature, God, and the human mind.

The Enlightenment also benefited from the aftermath of the Protestant Reformation, which had challenged the authority of the Catholic Church and promoted individual interpretation of scripture. This rebellion against religious dogma opened the door to secular humanism and the idea that knowledge should be pursued independently of theological restrictions. One of the most influential Enlightenment philosophers, René Descartes, exemplified this intellectual break. His statement "Cogito, ergo sum" ("I think, therefore I am") became a foundational principle of modern Western philosophy.

- Reformation weakened Church authority

British Enlightenment thinkers made significant contributions to this intellectual revolution. John Locke proposed the idea of the mind as a tabula rasa, a blank slate, arguing that knowledge and moral development stem from experience rather than innate ideas. His theories on natural rights and governance deeply influenced both literature and political thought. Thomas Hobbes introduced a more cynical view of human nature, suggesting that humans are driven by the desire for pleasure and avoidance of pain, and require strong authority to maintain social order. This tension between rational idealism and human selfishness frequently appears in the literature and political satire of the period.

- Locke and Hobbes shaped politics

David Hume, the great Scottish empiricist, extended Enlightenment thought by applying reason and scepticism to religion and morality, laying the groundwork for later secular philosophies. Meanwhile, Jeremy Bentham, the founder of utilitarianism, argued that the greatest happiness of the greatest number should be the basis for ethical and political decision-making, an idea that would influence not just politics but also Victorian literature and reform movements.

- Hume and Bentham advanced ethics

In a broader European context, thinkers like Voltaire, Jean-Jacques Rousseau, and Immanuel Kant contributed to shaping Enlightenment ideals across national boundaries. Their writings inspired revolutionary change and helped develop the modern idea of universal human rights. In the American colonies, Thomas Jefferson, Thomas Paine, and Benjamin Franklin brought Enlightenment thought into

- Voltaire, Rousseau, Kant inspired revolutions

the formation of the new democratic republic, creating a transatlantic intellectual movement.

In literature, Enlightenment principles led to a focus on satirical writing, moral essays, and rational discourse. The works of Swift, Pope, Addison, and Steele often critiqued corruption, religious hypocrisy, and irrational customs through humour and irony. The rise of the novel as a literary form during this period also reflects Enlightenment values- emphasising realism, psychological depth, and the individual's role in society. Writers such as Daniel Defoe, Samuel Richardson, and Henry Fielding explored human nature through stories rooted in personal experience and moral development.

- Novels reflected realism and morality

Ultimately, the Enlightenment was not just a philosophical movement, but a cultural and literary one. It reshaped how people wrote, read, governed, and believed. Its impact on 18th-century literature is immeasurable, laying the groundwork for later developments in Romanticism, modern democracy, and the scientific worldview.

- Enlightenment reshaped culture and literature

1.1.9 Social and Cultural History- The Clubs and Coffee Houses

During the 18th century, Great Britain emerged as a well-organised and increasingly powerful commercial nation within Europe. The integration of modern science, Enlightenment thought, and growing consumer culture brought a wide range of material and intellectual benefits to British society. This period saw significant developments in public life, urban infrastructure, and national identity.

- Britain grew as commercial power

The early decades of the 18th century are known as the Augustan Age, named after the Roman Emperor Augustus. British writers and thinkers drew parallels between their own era and the classical Roman period, particularly in terms of political stability, artistic refinement, and literary achievement. Just as Horace, Ovid, and Virgil flourished under Augustus, English writers like Alexander Pope, Jonathan Swift, Joseph Addison, and Richard Steele brought a new level of polish and sophistication to English literature. The age was marked by a strong influence of neoclassicism, with literature emphasising clarity, order, balance, and reason.

- Augustan Age embraced neoclassicism

The period is also called the Age of Prose and Reason, reflecting the rise of rational, essayistic, and journalistic prose writing. Literature became more public, moralistic, and didactic. Periodicals such as The Tatler and The Spectator played a key role in shaping public opinion and literary taste. The essays published in these periodicals focused on manners, ethics, education, and politics, appealing to a newly literate middle-class audience. These works also reflected the growing interest in reason, wit, and civility, core Enlightenment values.

- Prose and journalism shaped society

The growth of urban centres transformed England into an increasingly modern and interconnected society. Agriculture declined as tenant farming increased, prompting large numbers of people to migrate from rural areas to towns and cities. Between 1700 and 1800, the population of England nearly doubled. Urbanisation also led to the development of public institutions like libraries, hospitals, schools, and museums. The British Museum, for example, was established in 1753 and became a symbol of national pride and intellectual curiosity.

- Urbanisation spurred institutions and growth

One of the most distinctive features of 18th-century urban life was the rise of coffeehouses and clubs. These spaces became vibrant centres of intellectual discussion, political debate, and literary production. Known as "penny universities," coffeehouses were accessible to the expanding middle class and served as key venues for writers, publishers, politicians, and readers to meet. They fostered the exchange of ideas and played a crucial role in the development of the public sphere. The popularity of periodical essays, debates, and club meetings reflected the moral temperament and civic-mindedness of the age.

- Coffeehouses offered debate and exchange

The economic expansion brought by colonial trade and industrial growth gave rise to a wealthier and more educated middle class. As literacy rates increased, so did the demand for books, newspapers, and journals. The spread of education and the establishment of libraries helped to create a vibrant reading public, which in turn supported the rise of new literary forms such as the essay, realistic novel, and satire. These trends laid the groundwork for the later Age of Sensibility and Romanticism, while remaining firmly rooted in the values of reason, restraint, and civic engagement.

- Middle-class literacy boosted publishing

The mid-to-late 18th century witnessed a literary and cultural shift often termed the Age of Sensibility. This period emphasised emotion, introspection, and the sublime, marking a transition from the rationalism of the Augustan Age to the imaginative depth of Romanticism. Writers explored themes of melancholy, nature, mortality, and the inner workings of human feeling. Dr. Samuel Johnson, one of the era's most towering figures, combined Enlightenment clarity with a profound sensitivity to human suffering and moral complexity, particularly in works like The Rambler and his moving biographical essays. Graveyard poets such as Thomas Gray and William Collins reflected on death and the passage of time, while Laurence Sterne's Tristram Shandy blended wit with emotional nuance and narrative experimentation. Meanwhile, James Macpherson's Ossian poems, though questioned for their authenticity, captured a spirit of heroic nostalgia and early Romantic longing. Collectively, these voices laid the emotional and aesthetic groundwork for the more radical literary developments that followed in the Revolutionary and Romantic periods.

- Age of Sensibility started to lean on emotion

1.1.9.1 The French Revolution and Its Impact

The French Revolution (1789–1799) was a landmark political event in Europe that had a profound impact on British society and literature. Inspired by Enlightenment ideals of liberty, equality, and fraternity, it aimed to overthrow the ancien régime, the feudal system dominated by monarchy and aristocracy. Though it began with promises of reform and democratic freedom, it soon descended into violence and political chaos, particularly during the Reign of Terror. In Britain, the Revolution sparked intense debate: radicals like Thomas Paine supported its democratic ideals, while conservatives like Edmund Burke warned against its excesses. The turmoil in France helped shape British political thought, contributed to rising fears of revolution at home, and played a key role in the emergence of Romanticism, as writers reacted to the collapse of Enlightenment optimism with a deeper focus on emotion, nature, and individual experience.

- Revolution inspired, then disillusioned Britain

Transition to Romanticism: From Reason to Emotion

One of the most significant literary consequences of the French Revolution was the shift from Enlightenment rationalism to Romantic emotionalism. As the idealism of

the early revolution gave way to disillusionment, British writers turned inward, focusing on individual emotion, imagination, nature, and the sublime. The belief in progress and reason was now tempered by a sense of loss, complexity, and existential reflection.

Poets such as William Wordsworth and Samuel Taylor Coleridge, who were initially sympathetic to the revolution's aims, later became disenchanted with its excesses. Wordsworth's Prelude reflects this transformation, moving from revolutionary excitement to a deeper, more introspective exploration of personal growth and moral struggle. Coleridge's "France: An Ode" similarly reveals early revolutionary hope giving way to sorrow over the Revolution's betrayal of its ideals.

- Romanticism shifted focus to emotion

The French Revolution also influenced the development of Gothic fiction, which emerged as a literary form concerned with instability, fear, and the darker sides of human nature, fitting for an age of political terror and moral uncertainty. Writers such as Ann Radcliffe, Mary Shelley, and Matthew Lewis used the Gothic to explore themes of tyranny, anarchy, repression, and the limits of reason, all central concerns in a post-revolutionary world.

- Gothic fiction explored fear, tyranny

The French Revolution marked the end of the Enlightenment's optimism and heralded the rise of the Age of Sensibility, which placed greater emphasis on emotion, morality, and subjective experience. Dr Samuel Johnson, along with his literary circle, stood at the crossroads of these two worlds, maintaining Enlightenment ideals of clarity and reason, yet deeply sensitive to the fragility of the human condition.

- Revolution ended Enlightenment optimism

Summary of Key Shifts: 1600 to Early 1800s

Period	Approx. Years	Dominant Values / Ideas	Literary Forms	Key Figures
Renaissance / Early Modern	c. 1558–1603 (Elizabethan) c. 1603–1625 (Jacobean)	Humanism, exploration of the self, religious tension, and courtly ideals	Drama (especially tragedy), lyric poetry, sonnet, and historical narrative	William Shakespeare, Christopher Marlowe, Edmund Spenser, Ben Jonson
Metaphysical & Cavalier Poetry	c. 1625–1660	Religious introspection, wit, intellectualism (Metaphysical) Loyalty, elegance, pleasure (Cavalier)	Lyric poetry, religious verse, epistolary poetry	John Donne, George Herbert, Andrew Marvell (Metaphysical) Robert Herrick, Richard Lovelace (Cavalier)
Restoration & Neoclassicism	1660–1700	Reason, order, decorum, satire, imitation of classical ideals	Comedy of manners, heroic drama, neoclassical poetry, essay	John Dryden, William Congreve, Aphra Behn
Augustan Age / Age of Prose & Reason	1700–1745	Rationalism, satire, social order, moral clarity, political commentary	Periodical essays, satire, didactic verse, and early novel	Alexander Pope, Jonathan Swift, Joseph Addison, Richard Steele, Daniel Defoe
Age of Sensibility / Pre-Romanticism	1745–1785	Emotion, moral introspection, nature, imagination, the sublime	Graveyard poetry, sentimental novel, odes, biography	Samuel Johnson, Thomas Gray, William Collins, Laurence Sterne, James Macpherson
Revolutionary Period / Early Romanticism	1789–1799	Radicalism, liberty, equality, disillusionment with reason, inner emotion	Political essays, Romantic lyric, Gothic fiction	Mary Wollstonecraft, Thomas Paine, William Blake, Ann Radcliffe
High Romanticism	1798–1830	Imagination, individuality, nature as divine, rebellion against industrialism and neoclassicism	Autobiographical epic, ballads, lyric poetry, and Gothic novel	William Wordsworth, Samuel Taylor Coleridge, William Godwin, Percy Bysshe Shelley

Summarised Overview

The unit traces the sweeping political, cultural, and intellectual transformations of Britain from the early 1600s through the Enlightenment era. It begins with James I's unification of the crowns and ends with the birth of modern constitutional government. It explores the reigns of key monarchs- James I, Charles I, Charles II, James II and the revolutionary developments they incited, culminating in the Glorious Revolution and the establishment of Parliamentary supremacy under William and Mary. The Enlightenment period witnessed a new valuation of reason, individual liberty, and empirical inquiry, which profoundly influenced literature, governance, and society. By the end of the 18th century, the effects of the French Revolution further altered British consciousness, shifting literary and cultural focus from rationalism to emotion and introspection.

Assignments

1. Discuss the concept of the Divine Right of Kings and its political consequences during the Stuart reigns.
2. Evaluate the role of the English Civil War in shaping the relationship between the monarchy and Parliament.
3. Analyse the cultural and literary impact of the Restoration period, with special reference to Restoration comedy.
4. How did the Enlightenment challenge traditional religious and political authority in 18th-century Britain?
5. Examine the influence of the French Revolution on the transition from the Enlightenment to Romanticism in British literature.

Suggested Reading

1. Purkiss, Diane. *The English Civil War: A People's History.* Harper Perennial, 2007.
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5. Paine, Thomas. *The Age of Reason: Being an Investigation of True and Fabulous Theology.* Edited by Philip S. Foner, Citadel Press, 1974.

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1. Hill, Christopher. *The World Turned Upside Down: Radical Ideas During the English Revolution*. Penguin Books, 1991.
2. Porter, Roy. *Enlightenment: Britain and the Creation of the Modern World*. Penguin Books, 2001.
3. Hobsbawm, Eric. *The Age of Revolution: 1789–1848*. Vintage Books, 1996.
4. Speck, W. A. *Stuart Britain, 1603–1714*. 2nd ed., Routledge, 2002.
5. O'Gorman, Frank. *The Long Eighteenth Century: British Political and Social History, 1688–1832*. 2nd ed., Bloomsbury Academic, 2016.

Space for Learner Engagement for Objective Questions

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1.

SGOU

Unit 2

Poetry

Learning Outcomes

Upon completion of the unit, the learner will be able to:

- identify the place of English poetry in 17th and 18th-century literary backgrounds
- know the different stages of English poetry in the 17th and 18th centuries
- point out the key poetic figures of the period and their contributions
- evaluate major poetic styles of the period

Background

As the cases of William Shakespeare and John Milton, the twin geniuses of seventeenth-century England, demonstrate, great poets do not always determine the literature of their century. Both are "not of an age, but for all time," as Ben Jonson said of Shakespeare. However, John Donne and John Dryden are poets who appear to have imprinted their personalities on much of the poetry of their own and subsequent generations. Many of the late Renaissance ideas seeped into the 17th century, known as the Caroline, Interregnum, and Restoration periods. For example, metaphysical poetry persisted and gained one of its most famous practitioners in Andrew Marvell, whose poem "To His Coy Mistress" is one of the most celebrated poems of English language.

Keywords

Poetry, Style, Stages, Figures, Features, Significance

Discussion

1.2.1 Literary Significance of the 17th and the 18th Centuries

- The flourishing of literary works of various genres in the 17th and 18th centuries

Literature of the Eighteenth Century: Early 18th-century literature includes works by Alexander Pope, John Gay, Thomas Sheridan, Jonathan Swift as well as Joseph Addison, Daniel Defoe, Lady Mary Wortley Montagu. Important prose fiction writers from the early 18th century are the authors like Behn, Haywood, Defoe, Swift, Richardson, Fielding, and Smollett. Significant novelists of the period are Johnson, Sterne, MacKenzie, Walpole, Goldsmith, and Burney. The age also witnessed the publication of non-fiction prose, including political and polemical prose and a wide range of dramas.

Caroline Age (1625-1649): The major poets like John Milton, the poetry of the Cavalier poets, religious poems and Samuel Butler's *Hudibras* belong to this period.

Commonwealth Period (1649-1660): Milton's prose writings, Hobbes' *Leviathan*, and the Prose writings of Sir Thomas Browne, Thomas Fuller, Jeremy Taylor, and Izaak Walton belong to this period.

- Four key stages of poetry in the 17th and 18th centuries

The Neoclassical Age (1660-1785): The literature of the period can be classified as Restoration Literature (1660-1700)

The Age of Pope (1700-1745) and the **Age of Johnson** (1745- 1785) also played crucial roles in the making of the literature of the period.

1.2.2 Poetry of the 18th Century

1.2.2.1 Caroline Lyricists

- Metaphysical features in the poems of Caroline poets

Caroline Poets were a group of poets of the mid-seventeenth century. They were Robert Herrick, Thomas Carew, John Suckling, Richard Lovelace and Abraham Cowley. Among them, Herrick held a disciplined Puritan spirit and wrote religious poems. Carew, Suckling and Lovelace are the Cavalier poets and they were the followers of King Charles I. Herbert, Crashaw, Lovelace and Cowley wrote poems of profound thought and used conceits and syllogisms, and they were called Metaphysical poets. George Herbert's "*The Temple*" is a collection of poems

celebrating the beauty of holiness, the sacraments, the church and the Christian life. Other notable poems are "Virtue," "The Pulley," "Love" and "The Collar."

1.2.2.2 John Milton

John Milton was born on December 9, 1608, in London. Milton had his education at St. Paul's school in about the year 1610. Milton had a tutor at home, Thomas Young, an eminent Puritan clergyman and an inspirer of much of Milton's Puritan sentiments. In 1625, Milton took his B.A. degree from Christ's College, Cambridge and joined for M.A. in 1632, but left Cambridge shortly after. Short poems like "At a Solemn Music" and "Nativity Hymn" were written in the year 1629.

- John Milton's Educational career

Milton devoted himself to his studies and prepared himself to become a poet through intense self-discipline. He completed his self-education with a deeper knowledge of the classics than any other English poet. He also studied music, astronomy and Italian Literature

- Milton's wide knowledge and poetic skills

1.2.2.3 Milton's Poems

Milton's Horton period is the years in which he spent studious leisure time at his parents' house between 1635 and 1638. His Horton period produced a number of great works like - "L'Allegro", "Il Penseroso", "Arcades" and *Comus* and *Lycidas*. 'Allegro' is an Italian term meaning cheerful man and it is the poetic expression of a happy state of mind while his other poem 'Il Penseroso' means Melancholy. Comus is a type of masque that prophecies the downfall of the court party. It is a form of drama from Italy. It shared the renaissance spirit and was filled with moral spirit and meaning. *Lycidas* is an elegy which mourns the death of Milton's friend Edward King. Like Spenser's "Astrophel", it is in the conventional style of the classical pastoral elegy. The poem is noted for its attack upon the corrupt church and the hireling clergy of the time and it proclaims Milton's adherence to the puritan cause. The poem is admired for its classical form and has been grouped with Shelley's "Adonais", Tennyson's "In Memoriam" and Arnold's "Thyrsis."

- Milton's works in Horton's period

The period from 1639 to 1660 was the period of his prose works. It was during this period that he became blind. After the Puritan Interregnum came the Restoration and this also ruined his puritan hopes. So, he once more

turned to poetry, at the age of 52. He began his work on the epic *Paradise Lost* in 1658, and it was finished in 1663 and published in 1667. *Paradise Lost* is the greatest of English epics. It is noted for its intellectual energy and creative power. The epic is an exposition of Milton's theology, which "assert[s] eternal providence and justifies the ways of God to men." In the epic, he narrates the story of Satan against God, the war in Heaven, the fall of the rebelled angels, the creation of the world and man, the temptation of Eve and Adam and their expulsion from Eden. His central purpose is to show the man's first disobedience to God. Before the publication of *Paradise Lost,* Milton had started to work on *Paradise Regained* and *Samson Agonistes*. There is hardly any action in the epic, and the entire space is taken up by the spiritual conflict between good and evil. On November 8, 1674, Milton died and was buried at St. Giles Church.

▶ *Paradise Lost* and Milton's theological views

1.2.2.4 Grand Style

Milton's style of diction is often called the grand style because of its sublimity and majesty. His language and diction are not the language of ordinary life. The use of epic similes, Latin words and Latin constructions, elevates it from the ordinary language. The high seriousness and lofty thoughts make his style 'grand'. His appreciation of beauty also is combined with a stateliness and dignity of manner which befits a grand occasion.

▶ Milton's diction of grand style

1.2.3 Neoclassicism

1.2.3.1 Neoclassical Age

Neoclassical period in England spans from the period after the Restoration and extends up to the outbreak of the French Revolution or up to the publication of *Lyrical Ballads* in 1798.

▶ Duration of Neoclassical period

Classical Age: The word 'classic' refers to 'classici' which means work of the highest order. Every national literature had at least one period in which an unusual number of great writers wrote books of superior quality. The age of Augustus is called the classic or golden age of Rome. The age of Dante is the classical age of Italian literature, and the age of Louis XIV is the classical age of French literature. In England, the age of Queen Anne is often called the neoclassical age with great writers like Joseph Addison, Edmund Burke, Edward Gibbon and Alexander Pope.

▶ Classic period of different nations

- Features of the Augustan Age

The poet Oliver Goldsmith addressed the early 18th century as "The Augustan Age" though the epithet "Augustan" had been employed by Atterbury to describe "the classicism of poetry", influenced by Waller. The age was marked by its precision and order in literature. Writers were governed by set principles and rules. They were influenced by writers like Boileau.

- Enlightenment and diffusion of knowledge

The Age of Reason and Good Sense: It was an age of understanding and an age of enlightenment; it became an age to diffuse knowledge among a growing public.

- Preference of rational thoughts over emotion

Rational outlook: The period was rational in religious, political and literary matters. Imagination was considered to be the most dangerous thing. The poets of the age strove to repress all emotion and enthusiasm. There was the hatred of the extravagant, the mystical and the visionary. The literature of the 18th century is mostly marked by formality, correctness and expression instead of spontaneity, simplicity, emotionalism and enthusiasm.

- Disappearance of narrations about rural life in poems

The literature of the age was concerned with exposing the vices and follies of society. Alexander Pope's "The Rape of the Lock" is the finest example of the exhibition of the social and political life of the 18th century. Poetry became the poetry of the town, the coffee house and the artificial society. Poetry lost touch with the narrations of country life. As most of the people moved to towns as part of urbanisation, country life faced a setback.

- Development of satire and heroic couplet in poetry

The literature of the age saw the development of satire. The age was popular for the prominent satires of Dryden and Pope. In poetry, the heroic couplet was recognised as the only medium of expression. It was Matthew Arnold, who summed up the 18th century as "the age of prose and reason, our excellent and indispensable 18th century."

Satires

- Classification of Juvenalian satire and Horatian satire

The word 'satire' takes its origin from the Latin *Satura Lank* which is the name of a plate full of the various fruits of the year offered in worship to Ceres, the goddess of agriculture. It was developed by Juvenal, Horace and Persius in Rome. English satirists were influenced by the Romans. Those who followed Juvenal are the Juvenalian satirists and those who followed Horace are the Horatian satirists. Juvenalian satirists were more vigorous, venomous

and caustic, whereas Horatian satirists were milder, gentler and less sarcastic.

The 18th century being the age of prose and reason, exhibited the vices and follies of the age. Thus, satires became one of the most popular genres. John Dryden was a master of political satires. His satire "Absalom and Achitophel" is an allegory of the Biblical story of Absalom's revolt against David and it is used to glorify the Tories and castigate the whigs. "MacFlecknoe" satirised certain poets. The satires of Dryden were largely influential in popularizing the heroic couplet.

- John Dryden's Political satires

Among the English satirists, Alexander Pope occupies a prominent place. "The Rape of the Lock" is a blend of mock-heroic satire and delicate fancy. "The Dunciad" was influenced by Dryden's "Mac Flecknoe," and the poem became a satire against the succession of dunces, each outdoing the other in dullness. "The Dunciad" is an onslaught on the tribe of dullness itself, governing the wild field of personal and general life. It is in *Satires and Epistles* that Pope's brilliance and vicious writing nature are seen fully developed. The poem "Epistle to Dr Arbuthnot," also titled "Prologue To Satires," explains his satirical aims.

- Alexander Pope's satirical brilliance

Jonathan Swift is the greatest prose satirist of the 18th century. *The Battle of the Books*, *The Tale of a Tub*, and *Gulliver's Travels* are notable satires of Swift. In *The Battle of the Books*, the moderns are lashed vigorously, and it is considered the best prose satire in the English language. *The Tale of a Tub* is a brilliant satirical narrative on the excesses of Catholics and Puritans as seen from the middle position of the Anglican church. *Gulliver's Travels* is the story of the experiences of Gulliver during his journey and it has four books. The books narrate Gulliver's voyages to Lilliput, Laputa, Brobdingnag and to the country of Houyhnhnm land. The voyages to Lilliput and Brobdingnag satirised the politics and manners of England and Europe, and the voyage to Laputa mocked the philosophers and the country of Houyhnhnm, a land that lacerated and defiled the whole body of humanity.

- Jonathan Swift's satirical prose including *Gulliver's Travels*

Alexander Pope

Pope was born in London in 1688. He was educated privately by priests and he also read widely for himself. He had an illness from the age of twelve which left him

deformed. He composed verses from a very early age onwards. He wrote the collection of poems *Pastorals* in 1709 when he was sixteen. It was written in the style of Virgil. These pastoral poems are four in number and each was written on the themes of summer, winter, spring and autumn. In 1711, he published the poem "Essay on Criticism." In 1713, the poem "Windsor Forest" appeared and it contained various images of nature. "The Rape of the Lock" is a mock-epic poem satirising the follies and foibles of the age. Another noticeable work was Pope's translation of the *Iliad* and *Odyssey*. The "Essay on Man" is a poem which is divided into four epistles - in the first part, Pope narrated man with respect to the universe, in the second, man with respect to himself and in the third, man with respect to happiness. The collection of poems *The Imitations of Horace,* "Epistles to Dr Arbuthnot" and "A Dialogue" are the most autobiographical works of Pope.

- Alexander Pope's pastoral and autobiographical poems

1.2.3.2 Heroic Couplet in Poetry

The Heroic couplet was the most popular metre used during the neoclassical age. The heroic couplet consists of two iambic pentameters rhyming together. It is called the 'heroic' because it was the usual form used for epic verses in English celebrating the heroic endeavours of people. It was first introduced into English literature by Chaucer and it had also been used for narrative, satiric and descriptive verses. In the 17th century, the heroic couplet was dexterously used by Edmund Waller and Dryden and it attained perfection in the hands of Pope. The apogee of the heroic couplet was attained in the Augustan Age of English Literature and Pope was unrivalled in the use of the heroic couplet. His epigrammatic couplets acquired incomparable effectiveness. After Pope, the heroic couplet was sparingly used by the Romantics and the Victorians.

- Wide use of heroic couplets in neo-classical age

1.2.3.3 Mock-epic

The mock epic is a poetic form which uses the epic structure but on a miniature scale and contains a subject that is mean or trivial. The purpose of a mock-heroic or mock-epic poem is satirical. The writer makes the subject look ridiculous by placing it in a framework entirely inappropriate to its context and importance. The target of attack may be a person, an institution or the whole of society. The treatment of the trivial subject in a heroic or epic manner naturally arouses laughter. Pope's "The Rape

- Heroic treatment of trivial subjects in mock-epic poems

of the Lock" is the finest example of a mock-epic poem in English Literature.

1.2.3.4 The Age of Transition

The period of transition appears disturbed and confused as the age showed different literary tastes and tendencies. Two movements can be clearly noticed in the period between 1745 and 1798. The first movement was still in the direction of classicism. Some writers including Dr Johnson expressed their allegiance to the old order of classicism. Simultaneously, there was a reaction by romantic writers against classical tastes and perspectives. There arose a new order of Romanticism in the 1730s with the publication of Thomson's "Seasons". However, by the last stage of the period, there was a sweep towards Romanticism which characterises the following features:

a) Return to Nature

b) Interest in man's position in the natural world

c) Sympathy for the poor and the oppressed

Humanitarian sympathy can be seen in the works of Cowper, Burns, Crabbe, Gray and Blake

d) Revolt against conventional literary techniques

e) Love for the supernatural, legends, and the middle age

f) Emotional appeal and return to country life

▶ Literary tastes of both Classicism and Romanticism in the Age of Transition

The New Learning: The middle and the later stages of the 18th century showed a minor Renaissance that touched nearly all parts of Europe. The publication of Bishop Percy's *Reliques of Ancient English Poetry* (1765) contained some of the oldest and most beautiful specimens of ballad literature. It is a landmark in the history of the Romantic movement. The New Philosophy and the spirit of new thinking, which received its consummate expression in the works of Voltaire was marked by keen scepticism and the zest for eager enquiry.

▶ New learnings, new philosophy and new thoughts

William Cowper

Willian Cowper was a great poet, though not one of the greatest. His realistic portrayal of life, the poetry of the home and the peaceful green countryside are noteworthy. The themes are commonplace but they represent the

- William Cowper's poems and elementary stage of Romanticism

elementary truths of the heart. His love of nature narrated in poems displays a blend of both old and new styles of poetry. His poems were the precursors of romantic revival. His best-known poems are "I am a Monarch of all I Survey," "The Task," and "On the Receipt of My Mother's Picture."

Thomas Gray

- Thomas Gray's dramatic and thoughtful poems

Thomas Gray has been much read though he wrote comparatively less. He left behind a dozen memorable poems in both light and serious verses which contain reflective and dramatic themes such as "The Ode on the Spring," "Hymn to Adversity," "The Eton College Ode" and "The Elegy Written in a Country Churchyard." The Elegy is the supreme expression of his poetic genius.

- Sentimental, artistic and pictorial features of Gray's poems

Gray's "The Progress of Poesy," a poem on the history of poetry and "The Bard," which is closely associated with Celtic mythology, are two Pindaric odes. The poems convey a perspective that the sentimental feelings are intellectual and they possess the love of humanity and a note of melancholy. They are noted for pictorial power, musicality and stateliness of verse, artistic finish, universality and historical sense.

William Collins

- William Collins' love for simplicity and romantic expressions in his poems

William Collins was the precursor of the Romantic movement and he is considered more romantic than Gray. A note of melancholy pervades his works. He was the poet of simplicity and imagination. His poems show a love for nature, supernaturalism and lyricism. "The Personal Ecologues," "Ode to Simplicity," and "Ode to Evening" are his notable poems.

Robert Burns

- Robert Burns as a precursor of Romanticism

Robert Burns was probably the greatest of the predecessors of the Romantic revival. Lyricism and subjectivity, humour and pathos reigned the poems of this national poet of Scotland. "My Love is like a Red Red Rose," and "Holy Willie's Prayer" are among his major works.

William Blake

He was the most mystical and metaphysical poet of the Romantic Revival. "Poetical Sketches" is an excellent example of his lyrical genius. His poetic collection *Songs of Innocence and Experience* embodied some of the best

- Blake's writings on human freedom and equality

lyrics in the English language. With his love of liberty and freedom and enthusiasm for the liberty and equality of man, Blake anticipated Shelley. He was in rebellion against the religious conventions of the day, attacked the priest with his poems and blamed the conventions of the contemporary church. He attacked all forms of tyranny and oppression. Blake was a mystic and a visionary idealist.

- Mystic and symbolic elements in Blake's poems

His poetic world was shaped by spiritualistic, infinite, inimitable and everlasting ideas. Both naturalism and mysticism of the Romantic Revival find expression in his works. He used visible symbols for invisible realities that he observed through his strange vision. To him, ordinary language would fail to represent reality. His symbols are enigmatic and they lead to the obscurity in his poems. His symbolic expressions kindle the imagination of readers. In his treatment of childhood, Blake anticipates Wordsworth.

Summarised Overview

The flourishing of literary works of various genres was witnessed in the 17th and 18th centuries. The period includes four key stages of poetry: the Caroline Age, the Commonwealth Period, the Neoclassical Age and the Age of Pope. Milton's wide knowledge and poetic skills offered a new face for the poetry of the 17th century. His grand style, as in *The Paradise Lost*, placed him as one of the greatest poets. The Neoclassical perspectives, satire the features of the transitional age, etc., all placed the 17th and 18th centuries as a glorious period of English poetry.

Assignments

1. Discuss the key features and poets of the Age of Transition.
2. Write a short note on heroic couplets in poetry.
3. Analyse the contribution of Jonathan Swift, Alexander Pope and John Dryden to satiric poetry.
4. What are the characteristics of the Neoclassical Age?
5. Explain the poetic career and style of John Milton.

Suggested Reading

1. Bullard, Paddy. *The Oxford Handbook of Eighteenth-century Satire*, OUP, 2019.
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3. Jain, Nalini. and John Richardson. *Eighteenth Century English Poetry.* Taylor, 2016.
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3. Ford, Boris. *The Pelican Guide to English Literature: From Dryden to Johnson*. Vol. 4. Pelican, 1957.
4. Rumrich, John. *Seventeenth-century British Poetry, 1603-1660; Authoritative Texts, Criticism*. W.W. Norton, 2006.

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1.

SGOU

Unit 3

Drama

Learning Outcomes

Upon the completion of this unit, the learner will be able to:

- know Milton's drama career and his gradual withdrawal from the genre
- explore the features of the Restoration Comedy of Manners
- understand the components of Sentimental and Anti-sentimental comedy
- comprehend the key figures of the 17th and 18th-century

Background

The history of British drama in the 17th and 18th centuries is one of dizzying growth: in types of entertainment, audience counts, theatre numbers, and theatre size. When the century began, the theatre was primarily an urban and aristocratic activity; by the conclusion, it had become a prevalent form of entertainment. The 18th-century theatres provided much more than what audiences saw on stage: they were places to socialise and catch up on the latest news and gossip, and they were places to see and be seen, regardless of social class. The tragedy is a major theme in the plays of the period.

Keywords

Drama, Dramatist, Heroic, Restoration, Comedy, Sentimental

Discussion

1.3.1 The Drama of Milton

In his poems "On Shakespeare" and "L'Allegro," Milton, who was well-versed in classical plays, expresses his

appreciation for modern drama. He was never a playwright, though. Milton created *Arcades* and the masque, presently known as *Comus*, in his early twenties. Although they were intended for performance, they are not dramatic in the sense that a Shakespeare play might be. Entertainments were given in aristocratic houses or at the royal court to a private audience. They were very extravagant in terms of costumes, sets, music, and dancing, but the performance was more of a social order symbol by presenting moral values than a theatrical exploration of a plot or character.

▶ Milton's dramatic taste

Comus is more discursive and philosophical in style than many masques, and it also has a more developed plot (which, like Milton's epic, is focused on temptation). *Samson Agonistes*, a Greek-style tragedy that Milton wrote in the years following the release of *Paradise Lost*, was never intended for the stage, as he stated in his introduction.

▶ *Comus* and *Samson Agonistes*

Milton had created a thorough sketch for his tragedy *Adam Unparadised* by 1642. The outline, which shares many similarities with *Paradise Lost*, is seen as a development in Milton's ideas about the great epic. However, Milton had given up on the concept of the story being told as a play when he began to write *Paradise Lost* in the late 1650s. There are several explanations as to why this could have happened. The portrayal of religious themes in the theatre was subject to stringent regulations throughout the Renaissance. The performers were not allowed to use the word "God" or portray him physically on stage, nor could they act out passages from the Bible.

▶ Milton giving up drama

The theatres were also shut down in 1642 as a result of strong Puritan opposition to their licentiousness; they were not reopened until the monarchy was restored in 1660. In *Adam Unparadised*, the emphasis was considerably more on the human story and far less on the celestial or demonic, as can be seen by comparing the play's framework with the epic. It is also possible that Milton expanded his subject after deciding against writing a play, but he might also have given up on drama when he realised he could not fit these longer episodes into a play.

▶ Shutting down of theatres

1.3.2 Dryden and Heroic Drama

Heroic drama/ Heroic Play or Heroic tragedy was a type of play prevalent in Restoration England during the 1660s and 1670s. The plays were modelled upon the French

Neo-classical tragedy. The heroic dramas were written in rhyming pentameter couplets. The characters are of superhuman nature and their predominant themes were the exalted ideals of love, honour and courage. The heroic play was based on the traditional epic and romance. The most popular writer of heroic plays was John Dryden. His *Conquest of Granada* is the finest example of heroic drama with poetry, battle, courage, death and murder. His other Heroic Dramas include *The Indian Emperor*, *Aurangazeb* and *All for Love*.

▶ Features of Heroic Drama

The Restoration period is remarkably noted for Comedy of Manners and Heroic Drama. The puritan Age saw the decline of drama and the closing of theatres. The restoration or the return of Charles II to the throne led to the revival of the theatres. Charles II granted two patents to Thomas Killigrew and Sir William Davenant to establish the theatres. Restoration drama was of two types-comedy and tragedy.

▶ Return of Charles II and the Restoration drama

1.3.3 Restoration Comedy of Manners

The Restoration Comedy of Manners was a form of drama that satirised the manners and affectations of contemporary society. The plot of the comedy may be an illicit love affair or a similar scandalous matter with trenchant dialogues. The writers made fun of pious and holy characters. Middle-class morality was ridiculed. Satire, ridicule and pun dominated this comedy.

▶ Restoration dramas and their plots.

The English diplomat Sir George Etherege invented the Restoration-era Comedy of Manners. *The Comical Revenge; or, Love in a Tub*, Etherege's first comedy, had its world premiere at Lincoln's Inn Fields Theatre in 1664. Etherege's second comedy, *She Wou'd, If She Cou'd*, was a failure due to weak performance. It was the first comedy in this catagory to achieve tone unification by eliminating the awkward love poem component. Etherege, one of the "big five" of Restoration comedy, holds a special place in English literature since he created the Comedy of Manners and paved the way for Congreve and Sheridan to succeed. The best of their sort can be found in Etherege's portraits of fops and beaux.

▶ Etherege's great contribution to the Comedy of Manners

Dramatist George Farquhar (1677–1707) was from Ireland. His plays *The Constant Couple* (1699), *The Recruiting Officer* (1706), and *The Beaux' Stratagem* are

- Farquhar's plays in the Comedy of Manners

notable for their contributions to late Restoration comedy. *The Recruiting Officer* and *The Beaux' Stratagem* are examples of how the Restoration placed a strong emphasis on the sexually adventurous rakes who sought fame and money.

- Gay's *The Beggar's Opera*

The plays of the Comedy of Manners concentrate on a realistic portrayal of human foibles and failings through humour and satire. Unlike pre-restoration drama, Comedy of Manners performances included realistic and movable scenery, music, spectacle and female actors. In this sense, John Gay's *The Beggar's Opera* is one of the most well-known dramas to employ the Comedy of Manners. Stage entertainment for the play include songs, skits, and dances that are typically boisterous. The aim of John Gay is also to mock the corrupt politics of the time and the absurdities of polite society. The drama has global appeal because of his portrayal of crime and immorality in every social stratum and his witty, entertaining characters.

- Key figures in Restoration drama

Restoration dramas owe much to the French Moliere. Excellent examples of Comedy of Manners are William Congreve's *The Way of the World*, and William Wycherley's *The Country Wife*. In the later part of the century, Oliver Goldsmith and Richard Sheridan revived the wit and gaiety of the Restoration stage deleting its indecency. The Comedy of Manners received much criticism and it was severely attacked by Jeremy Collier in *A Short View of the Profaneness and Immorality of the English Stage.*

1.3.4 Sentimental Comedy

- Sentimental comedies and their plots.

Sentimental Comedy was a reaction against the Comedy of Manners. In this comedy laughter and humour were completely driven out and in place of comedy, pathos and pathetic situations were introduced. The writers presented totally virtuous characters without any grain of vice in them. The drama aimed to teach moral lessons. The sentimental comedies were really moral comedies and a sense of morality and virtue governed them from the beginning to the end. The comedies of Collier have all the characteristics of the Comedy of Sentiment. His comedies end on a note of morality and are intended for moral teaching as in the comedies named *Love's Last Shift and Provoked Husband*. Richard Steele was perhaps the greatest figure among the writers of the Sentimental Comedy. He wrote three comedies, namely, *Lying Lover, Tender Husband* and *The*

Conscious Lovers. The tone of morality, kindness and pathos permeates all these plays.

- Comedy of Humours as a reaction to sentimental comedy

Just as Sentimental comedy was a reaction against the Comedy of Manners, the Comedy of Humour developed by Goldsmith and Sheridan was a reaction against the sentimental comedy of Cibber and Steele. The first reaction to sentimental comedy was made by Goldsmith in his *Essay on the Theatre or A Companion between Laughing and Sentimental Comedy*. His plays, *The Good Natured Man* and *She Stoops to Conquer* introduced the reign of humour in comedy. She Stoops to Conquer succeeded in introducing humour of the finest type. The entire play with its fun and humour, its intrigues and sparkling dialogue, its mischievous tricks and roguish attempts by Tony Lumpkin is a direct blow to the Sentimental comedy.

- Sheridan's major satirical plays

Sheridan's plays were written with a satirical observation of life. His major plays are *The Rivals, St. Patrick's Day* and *The School for Scandal*. *The School for Scandal* is a perfect example of artificial comedy. Both *The Rivals* and *The School for Scandal* are remarkably skilful pieces of work with wit and humour but devoid of the coarseness of the Comedy of Manners.

- Fall of drama and rise of novels

During 18th-century, drama steadily declined. The two dramatists, Goldsmith and Sheridan were prominent figures who continued to enrich dramatic literature. The rise of novels in the 18th century and the lack of support from the court led to the fall of drama in the 18th century.

Summarised Overview

Heroic dramas of Dryden and Restoration Comedy of Manners, which included satire, ridicule and pun, were notable works of 17th-century literature. Sir George Etherege, George Farquhar, and John Gay were the figures of the Restoration Comedy. Jeremy Collier severely attacked the Comedy of Manners in *A Short View of the Profaneness and Immorality of the English Stage.* Sentimental Comedy was a reaction against the Comedy of Manners as laughter and humour were driven out and pathos and pathetic situations were introduced in the former. The Comedy of Humours developed by Goldsmith and Sheridan was a reaction against the sentimental comedy of Cibber and Steele.

Assignments

1. What were the reasons that prevented Milton from writing more dramas? Discuss.
2. Write a note on Dryden's heroic drama.
3. Explain the development of the Comedy of Manners by discussing its key figures.
4. Expand the concept that the Sentimental Comedy as a reaction against the Comedy of Manners.

Suggested Reading

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1. Bremer, Francis J. Lay. *Empowerment and the Development of Puritanism,* Palgrave Macmillan, 2015.
2. Cox, James E. *The Rise of Sentimental Comedy (Classic Reprint)*. 1kg Limited, 2017.
3. Fletcher, Katharine. "Milton And Performance." *darknefs vifible*, Christ's College, Cambridge University, 2008. https://darknessvisible.christs.cam.ac.uk/performance. html
4. Hirst, David L. *Comedy of Manners.* Taylor & Francis, 2017.
5. Kirsch, Arthur C. *Dryden's Heroic Drama*. Princeton UP, 1965.

Space for Learner Engagement for Objective Questions

Learners are encouraged to develop objective questions based on the content in the paragraph as a sign of their comprehension of the content. The Learners may reflect on the recap bullets and relate their understanding with the narrative in order to frame objective questions from the given text. The University expects that 1 - 2 questions are developed for each paragraph. The space given below can be used for listing the questions.

1.

SGOU

Unit 4

Prose

Learning Outcomes

Upon the completion of the unit, the learner will be able to:

- know the different stages in the development of prose writing in English.
- analyse the contributions of various prose writers to the English literature of the 17th and 18th centuries.
- explain the important critics of the period and their works.
- get an overview of the rise of English novels in 18th-century England.
- become familier familiarise with major women novelists.

Background

The seventeenth century was a time of prose. The language of the era was characterised by an interest in scientific details and unhurried observation. Clarity, directness, and economy of words were stressed in this new kind of writing. It initially appeared in the *Essays* of Bacon sometime before 1600.

At the same time, the optimism of the 18th century was its most noticeable trait. It was a moment when the superiority of the human mind was honoured. All of creation was thought to be subject to examination. Even the period's descriptive historical titles of the period convey a mood of advancement and betterment. Many individuals at the time believed that they were living in a golden age like that of Augustus, the Roman emperor. This is why the early 18th century was referred to as "Augustan." During the period, traders and merchants attained tremendous economic power. Discoveries in science were promoted. An industrial society was ushered in by numerous significant discoveries, including the spinning jenny, the power loom, and the steam engine. Cities expanded in size, and London started to take on its current role as a major industrial and commercial hub. The middle class desired a respectable and moralistic art that was governed by commonsense in addition to a pleasant living. They objected in outrage to the immorality of the aristocracy prevalent in much of the Restoration literature.

Keywords

Essay, Novel, Periodicals, Diarists, Critics, Women's writing

Discussion

1.4.1 Milton's Prose

- Period of Milton's prose

The period from 1639 to 1660 in the career of John Milton was the period of Pamphlets and prose works. His treatise upon the government of the church, *Of Reformation in England* appeared in 1641. The finest of his prose works, *Areopagitica,* is a plea for free expression of opinion and the freedom of the press was published in 1644.

1.4.2 John Bunyan (1628-1688)

- John Bunyan's prose and his plots

John Bunyan was the greatest prose writer during the age of Milton. He was born in the village of Bedfordshire and was the son of a poor tinker. He had gained only a basic school education but he became the most popular writer and preacher in England. He wrote numerous works and preached gospels to the poor. The most notable works of Bunyan were *Grace Abounding*, a kind of spiritual autobiography, *The Holy war*, a prose allegory and *The Life and Death of Mr Badman*, a character study which was the forerunner of the English novel. Bunyan is best known for his work, *The Pilgrim's Progress*. This is an allegory which tells the story of Christian who goes in search of the Celestial City.

1.4.3 Diarists of the Seventeenth Century

- Diary writing of the seventeenth century

We can learn about daily living during the Restoration era from diaries kept during that time. These diaries were not intended to be read by anybody else when they were written. The authors did not want to stake any kind of literary claim. These accounts of what actually transpired are open and truthful. One of the most striking divisions of prose from the seventeenth century came from diarists and memoirists.

The relationship between Samuel Pepys and John Evelyn is the most well-known friendship between diarists of this era. The most well-known diarist of the time, Samuel Pepys (1620–1706), appears to have started his journal because

he was aware of the national crisis gripping the country at the beginning of 1660. Pepys was capable, conscientious, and patriotic. In 1660, this accomplished diarist began keeping a diary. He kept a journal for nine years. He served in the naval service for a while, and he and his clerk stayed at Greenwich during the epidemic. His numerous hobbies may have contributed to his excellent sense of observation of his environment.

- Pepys' life and diary writing

John Evelyn is a significant diary writer (1633 – 1703) who lived in Pepys' period. It is significant to remember that John Evelyn was one of the founding members of the famed "Royal Society," a group of men engaged in research and the advancement of natural knowledge through experimentation. Evelyn was a well-bred gentleman who visited France, Italy, and England in addition to other countries and later held a number of important positions. Evelyn's principal interests remained travel, architecture, the fine arts, and inventions that made life easier or more interesting. His diary writing begans in 1641, when he was twenty-one years old, with a look back at his family history, place of birth, and boyhood. Up until his demise, he kept a diary. The events up to almost a month before his death are documented in his diary.

- Evelyn's topics in diaries

Although Pepys enjoyed intellectual curiosity, his more self-conscious diary entries demonstrate that he also had a great deal of common human flaws, including vanity, desire, and ambition. While Evelyn's diary is a confident, often excessively stated account of what he did, thought, and saw; it is not in the least bit a private confession. Although Pepys' journal is hardly literature, it provides intriguing details about a man and his age.

- Comparison between Pepys and Evelyn

Another prose writer of the period was John Locke and his philosophy has had a long-lasting and significant impact. He founded traditional British empiricism, and his ideas are frequently cited as exemplifying tolerance, moderation, and common sense. The two most well-known works by John Locke are "An Essay Concerning Human Understanding" (1689), in which he elaborated on his theory of ideas and gave an account of how human knowledge emerged from experience, and *Two Treatises of Government* (1690; first edition, but largely written before 1683), in which he defended a theory of political authority based on inherent individual rights and freedoms and the consent of the governed.

- Locke's political treatise

1.4.4 Periodical Essay

- Periodic essays as a literary form

Essay as a literary form in English started with Francis Bacon. The periodical essay as a piece of journalism was invented towards the very end of the seventeenth century. It reached its acme of achievement in the works of Joseph Addison and Richard Steele.

- Reasons for the wide acceptance of periodicals.

The Cambridge Bibliography of English Literature lists 90 periodicals composed between 1709 and 1720. There are numerous reasons that accounted for the rise of periodicals including the rise of the middle class and the brevity of the periodical essay which added to its popularity. The periodicals were a faithful reflection of 18th-century society and they contained the moral temper of the age. They were written humorously and met the tastes of all classes of readers. The language was employed with decency and right sense by including wit, humour and satire. They appealed to women and were noted for their avoidance of religious and political controversies. Written in a simple, clear and conversational style, the periodicals attracted the readers.

- Steel's contributions

The most notable figures of periodical essay were Joseph Addison and Richard Steele. Richard Steele was a typical figure of the time and represented the transition from the Restoration period to the Augustan Age. He was gifted with wit and gallantry which characterised restoration writers. Steele was born in Dublin in 1672. During his early years, he chose a military career, then he turned to write. He wrote sentimental plays and then turned to periodicals. He founded *The Tatler* in collaboration with Joseph Addison. He also wrote numerous political pamphlets and launched several periodicals which include *The Guardian, The Englishman* and *The Lover.*

- Steel's prose style

Steele started *The Tatler* in April 1709. It appeared three times a week and consisted of several letters produced from the different coffee houses in London. The aim of the essays was didactic and Steele desired to bring a reformation to the manners of contemporary society. He advocated womanly virtues and gentlemanly courtesy in his essays. His essays on children are charming.

He was born as a son of a parson and studied at Oxford. He was a reader of classics and wrote Latin verse. He occupied several prominent posts like Member of Parliament and

- Joseph Addison's biography

later turned to writing essays. He collaborated with "*The Tatler*" and then with "*The Spectator*". *The Spectator* was a moral monitor of the age. He aimed "to enliven morality with wit and to temper wit with morality." The prose style of Addison is familiar and excels in vigour and energy.

- Steele's essays in *The Tatler*

Anglo-Irish writer and politician Sir Richard Steele (1672–1729) is best known for co-founding *The Spectator* journal with his friend Joseph Addison. Steele's first publication, *The Tatler*, debuted on April 12th, 1709, and was published three times every week on Tuesdays, Thursdays, and Saturdays. Under the pseudonym Isaac Bickerstaff, Steele published this periodical and gave Bickerstaff a whole, well-rounded personality. Although he and Addison collaborated, Steele wrote the majority of the essays in *The Tatler*; of the 271 total, Steele wrote about 188 and Addison 42, with 36 of those being the pair's joint efforts. *The Tatler* was co-written by Addison, but Steele is generally recognised as the author.

- Addison and Steele's contribution to the English prose

The most well-known of the creations of Addison and Steele are their articles that appeared in *The Spectator* and described Sir Roger de Coverley, a typical country gentleman who is over thirty. The Coverley papers offer the characterisation of Sir Roger. With their style and form, both Richard Steele and Joseph Addison are recognised as the creators of modern English prose as well as modern English essay.

1.4.5 Daniel Defoe and Jonathan Swift as Prose Writers

Daniel Defoe's (1660-1731) innovative views caught the attention of intellectuals and political leaders, who occasionally sought his advice. In his more than three hundred novels, pamphlets, and diaries, Defoe covered a wide range of subjects, including politics, crime, religion, marriage, psychology and the paranormal. In addition, he was a pioneer in economic and business journalism. Like the majority of other authors of his era, Defoe produced a large number of political tracts and pamphlets. Many of them were published in his own publication, *The Review*, which debuted in 1704 and served as a precursor to *The Tatler* and *The Spectator* in a number of respects. His "The Shortest Way with the Dissenters" (1702) aroused official wrath, resulting in fines, imprisonment, and public

- Defoe's dealings of subjects in his essays

humiliation. Some of his political writings were written in rough rhyme, and they are notable more for their vigour than elegance. "The True-born Englishman" (1701) is the most well-known representative of this class. Defoe is energetic and sharp in all of his propaganda, and he has a decent command of irony and sarcasm.

- Satirical tone in Swift's essays

One of the greatest prose satirists in the annals of English literature, Jonathan Swift (1667-1745) was an Anglo-Irish writer. He published novels, poetry, essays and pamphlets. He is renowned for his use of ironically made characters and published frequently and anonymously or under pseudonyms, such as Isaac Bickerstaff. He assisted Sir William Temple in writing and publishing his essay and memoirs while he was a resident at Moor Park. Laughter is evoked by "A Letter of Advice to a Young Poet" and it is one of Swift's best ironic essays. We continue to smile long after reading the text because of the way he encourages a young poet to pursue his career as a poet. Swift explains "the tricks by which scribblers invoking the aid of the Muses" in this essay. His other works, such as "A Meditation Upon a Broomstick" and "A Letter to the Whole People of Ireland," are sardonic in nature. His humour serves to expose the foolishness of people and society, not to display his wit. The ultimate goal, of course, is to change society's errors.

1.4.6 Dr Johnson and his Circle

- Dr. Johnson's circle of prominent historians.

James Boswell, Sir Joshua Reynolds, Edward Gibbon, Oliver Goldsmith and Edmund Burke were the prominent members of the circle of Dr Johnson. Boswell wrote the biography of Johnson. Boswell met Johnson in 1763 and he was an admirer of the latter. Boswell produced Johnson's biography titled *Life of Samuel Johnson* in 1791. The work was immediately a critical and commercial success and marks a turning point in the evolution of the contemporary biography genre. Hume and Gibbon were historians who made remarkable contributions to history. Hume was the great historian and philosopher of England during the 18th century. He wrote *The History of England* in six volumes which appeared between the years 1754 and 1761. His narration was clear and possessed a brilliant style. Edward Gibbon was a great historian of England. He wrote *The Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire* in 1777 and it is a masterpiece in the narrative of history.

1.4.6.1 Edmund Burke's Prose Works

- Burke's prose writing style

Edmund Burke (1729-1797) wrote in a dignified, not an elegant, manner. Rhythm, alliteration, assonance, consonance, repetition, meticulous organisation, and part-to-whole balance are all oratorical methods that he used throughout his discourse. His political writings are concerned with three main subjects: The American Revolution, Warren Hastings and The French Revolution. Burke's significant body of work can be conveniently separated into two categories: his solely philosophical publications and his political pamphlets and speeches.

- Burke's philosophical narratives

Burke's philosophical publications, which make up a smaller fraction of his output, were written at the beginning of his professional life. Even though "A Vindication of Natural Society" (1756) is a clever parody of Bolingbroke's language and ideas, it is not very significant as an original work. His most significant philosophical endeavour is *A Philosophical Inquiry into the Origin of our Ideas of the Sublime and Beautiful* (1756). The book's philosophical value is mediocre because its theory and many of its examples are dubious, but it is lavishly dressed in Burke's language and style.

- Burke's Political writings

Burke's political writings are by far his biggest source of renown. They are unparalleled in the language in terms of variety, scope and enlightening potency. They can be roughly divided into two categories: speeches and pamphlets. Burke's artistry and strength are at their peak in the first. The best of these, his speeches on "American Taxation" (1774) and "Conciliation with the Colonies" (1775), are fervent in their pleading and conviction, rich in rhetorical effect, smart in their organisation of information, and statesman like in the wisdom that underlie their arguments.

1.4.6.2 Contributions of Dryden, Pope and Johnson

John Dryden was a writer who tried his hand at all genres of literature- drama, poetry, prose and criticism. Dr Johnson called him "the Father of English Criticism." The notable critical work of Dryden is "An Essay of Dramatic Poesy," which discussed all aspects of literature, epic, tragedy, comedy, and tragi-comedy, and described the nature and functions of poetry. "An Essay of Dramatic Poesy" handled five critical questions: a) the relative merits of ancient and

modern poets, b) the superiority of the French school of drama, c) the superiority of the Elizabethan writers, d) the adherence to ancient dramatic rules, e) substitution of rhyme for blank verse. It is presented as a discussion and is a pioneer in the field of historical criticism. He was a champion of liberal classicism and justified the violation of unities in drama in his defence of the English tragic-comedies. In short, Dryden took English literary criticism to new destinations and paved the way for the development of literary critical studies in English.

- Dryden's contributions to literary critical studies in English.

1.4.6.3 Dr Johnson

Johnson's literary criticism chiefly rests upon his works namely *Preface to Shakespeare, Lives of the Most Eminent English Poets*, *The Essays* and articles contributed to the periodical *Rambler*. The *Lives of Poets* is a landmark in the history of English Criticism. In its three volumes, Johnson gives the biographical and critical studies of fifty-two poets. In this book, he establishes his view on poetry as he wanted poetry to be closely connected to life and give instruction rather than amusement. He also explains the reason for his dislike of blank verse and advocacy of the use of rhymed couplets. In his "Life of Milton," compiled in *Lives of the Most Eminent English Poets,* Johnson defines poetry as the art of uniting pleasure with truth, by calling imagination to the help of reason. In *Preface to Shakespeare*, he accounts for the merits of Shakespeare as his characters being representations of general human nature, and adds that Shakespeare has no heroes but only human beings. He defended the mixing of tragedy and comedy. In fact, he was an independent English critic free from the bondage of traditionally followed rules.

- Johnson's contributions to literary criticism

1.4.7 Rise of English Novel

The most striking feature of the 18th century was the growth of novels. There was a decline in drama and the period also saw the growth of periodicals. Periodicals like *The Spectator* laid the foundation for the characters of novels. Since the periodicals were widely read, they created a new taste in the reading nature of people.

- Growth of novels and decline of dramas

The materials and circumstances for the growth of novels were ready. The beginning of novels can be seen in the works of Daniel Defoe, John Bunyan, Aphra Behn and Jonathan Swift as their works merged realism, romance,

adventure and morality. The wider scope of treatment and the space needed for the same are available in a novel, along with its facilitating of depicting the external and internal life of characters. The rise of the reading public as a result of the democratic movement in England also helped the growth of the novel.

▶ Factors for the growth of novels

Among the forebears of English novels is Daniel Defoe's *Robinson Crusoe* which is the story of an English sailor named Alexander Selkirk who was marooned on a lonely Island. The story has been read throughout the world. Bunyan's *The Life and Death of Mr Badman* is an excellent example of characterisation which is also a forerunner of English novels. Swift's *Gulliver's Travels* also set the stage for the development of the novel.

▶ Forerunners of English novels

The 18th-century novel developed with the contributions of four writers: Samuel Richardson, Henry Fielding, Tobias Smollett and Laurence Sterne.

▶ Key figures of the 18th century English novels

Samuel Richardson

Richardson, the originator of modern novels, started writing when he was at the age of 50. His first novel *Pamela* appeared in 1740 and it was a novel written in the form of letters.

Pamela is the story of a servant girl who defended her chastity against the attacks of her master. In 1748, Richardson published his second novel, *Clarissa*. His third novel was *Charles Grandison*. All these novels adopted the epistolary method. He emphasised moral virtues and introduced pathos in his novels. His novels are noted for their sensibility and sentiments. Humour and comic scenes were eschewed from his novels. He introduced sentimentality in English fiction and popularised it among other writers.

▶ Form and plot of Richardson's novels

1.4.7.1 Henry Fielding

Henry Fielding is the greatest among the new group of novel writers. Fielding wrote four novels: *Joseph Andrews, Tom Jones, Jonathan Wilde* and *Amelia*. *Joseph Andrews* was a parody of Richardson's *Pamela*. *Tom Jones* is an outstanding achievement of Fielding and the novel is noted for its characterisation. The novel employed natural dialogue and his writings include realistic plot development. Realism is the keynote feature of Fielding's works as he depicted

▶ Realism in Fielding's novels

the everyday life of ordinary people and presented the weaknesses and follies of human beings. Fielding, thus, made a deep influence on the novelists of the subsequent generation.

1.4.7.2 Tobias Smollett

Smollett was born in 1721 in Scotland. He received a good education and was an apprentice to a surgeon. However, his interest lay in writing as he produced some famous works which included *The Adventures of Roderick Random*, *The Adventures of Peregrine Pickle* and *The Expedition of Humphry Clinker*. *Roderick Random* was published in 1748 as a nautical fiction novel embodying the author's characteristic vision of life. The novel belonged to the older picaresque tradition and contained the story of an unprincipled hero, told with vigour and vividness in a series of episodes. *Peregrine Pickle*, which appeared in four volumes in 1751, is Smollet's another novel, which contains the story of a presumptuous man who faces prosperity and misfortunes accompanied by the narration about the life and culture of 18th-century European society. Smollett's last work is *Humphry Clinker*, which has a light and mellow plot and is considered an early epistolary novel.

- Plots of Smollett's novels

Smollett's novels are merely strings of adventures and personal histories, and his characters are humorous men and women. Smollett's influence is clearly perceptible in the works of latter picaresque novelists.

- Features of Smollett's novels

1.4.7.3 Laurence Sterne

Laurence Sterne occupies an important place among the novelists of the 18th century. His novel *The Life and Opinions of Tristram Shandy, Gentleman* was published in 1767 in 9 volumes and was inspired by *Don Quixote*. However, *Tristram Shandy* is not a novel in the proper sense of the term, though its publishing was a great sensation in London. The book is made of Sterne's peculiar blend of humour and pathos. Pathos sometimes becomes sentimental and the humour is subtle and intellectual. Sterne travelled through France and Italy as far south as Naples, and after returning decided to narrate his journey from a sentimental point of view. This led to the birth of Sterne's *A Sentimental Journey Through France and Italy* in 1765. Sterne's novel is noted for its characterisation and treatment of humour. Sterne is noted for his sentimentality to fiction and he is admired for

- Laurence's sentimental and impressionist tones

his sensibility. Sterne had taken the route of impressionistic techniques, later adopted by Virginia Woolf and James Joyce. Thus, Sterne's novels can be considered the earlier version of modern impressionists.

▶ The Senti-mentalists

Richardson, Sterne and Goldsmith are the novelists who contributed to the growth of sentimental novels. Goldsmith's *The Vicar of Wakefield* has several pathetic touches and the novel is marked for its extreme pathos.

1.4.7.4 Women Writers

▶ Key women writers of the period

There were a number of women writers who made notable contributions to the development of English fiction during the 18th century. The period had been considerably enriched by Fanny Burney and Eliza Heywood. The most significant writer before Jane Austen was Fanny Burney as the former's fame rests in the novel *Evelina*. It is an epistolary novel about a woman's life, and it records naturally the development of the heroine's mentality. The presentation of the protagonist Evelina in the novel exposes an admirable picture of the manners of the period from a woman's point of view.

▶ Haywood's stand for women's rights

Eliza Haywood was a popular figure and an important female author. She is prolific in her endeavours as an author, poet, playwright, periodical writer, editor and publisher. She wrote the satirical novel *Anti-Pamela* and achieved success with *The Female Spectator*, the first periodical to be published by a woman. Today, Haywood is primarily regarded as one of the pioneers of the English novel in the 18th century. Haywood, Delarivier Manley, and Aphra Behn were regarded as "the fair triumvirate of wit" and significant authors of amorous fiction. In the early 1720s, Haywood's prolific writings shifted from titillating romance books to amorous fiction, and in the late 1720s and early 1730s, she began to write more about "women's rights and position." Women would be imprisoned, tortured, and besieged by overbearing males in her middle works, but in the later novels, set in the 1740s and 1750s, marriage changed for the better for both men and women.

▶ Heywood's key fictional works

The themes of marriage and education are addressed in Haywood's first book, *Love in Excess; Or, The Fatal Enquiry* (1719-1720). This book, which is sometimes categorised as amatory fiction, is significant for how it handles the fallen woman. *Idalia, or The Unfortunate Mistress* (1723),

Fantomina, or Love in a Maze (1724), *The Mercenary Lover, or The Unfortunate Heiresses* (1726), *The Distress'd Orphan, or Love in a Madhouse* (1726), and *The Adventures of Eovaii: A Pre-Adamitical History* (1736) are some of her notable works of fiction.

- Aphra Behn's fictional career

Aphra Behn (1640-1689), one of the first English women to make a career from writing, broke down social barriers and set a literary example for following generations of female writers. Behn's writings are still unknown almost three centuries after her passing. She produced a wide range of fiction and translations, including *Oroonoko: or, The Royal Slave* (1688), which some consider being the first English novel published one year before her death. *La Montre: or, the Lover's Watch* (1686), *The Fair Jilt* (1688), *The History of the Nun* (1689), and *The Lucky Mistake* (1690) are among Ben's other well-known compositions. In *A Room of One's Own* (1929), Virginia Woolf praised Aphra Behn for having "earned [women] the right to speak their minds."

Summarised Overview

John Milton's key prose work *Areopagitica,* a plea for the free expression of opinion and the freedom of the press, was published in 1644. John Bunyan's key works are *Grace Abounding*, *The Holy war*, *The Pilgrim's Progress,* and *The Life and Death of Mr Badman*. The rise and proliferation of periodicals caused the start of wide reading practices among the public. Dr Samual Johnson brought a new trend in prose writing. Boswell, Reynolds, Gibbon, Goldsmith and Burke were the members of Dr Johnson's circle. Dr Johnson's literary criticism primarily lies upon his works namely, *Preface to Shakespeare*, *Lives of Poets*, Essays and articles contributed to the periodical, *Rambler*. John Dryden's well-known critical work, *The Essay on Dramatic Poesy*, addressed many critical queries. The 18th-century novel materialised chiefly with the works of four writers - Samuel Richardson, Henry Fielding, Tobias Smollett and Laurence Sterne. Richardson, Sterne and Goldsmith are the novelists who contributed to the maturing of Sentimental novels. Women writers also, like Aphra Behn, contributed to the evolution of novels in the eighteenth century.

Assignments

1. Do you agree that the diaries of Pepys and Evelyn gave prose writing a new life? Explain.
2. Write an essay on the rise of periodicals in the 18th century.
3. Discuss the emergence and proliferation of novels in the 18th century.
4. The critical writings of the 18th century include the contributions made by Dr Samual Johnson and his circle. Elaborate.
5. Write a short note on the influence of women writers in 18th-century novel writing.

Suggested Reading

1. Botein, Stephen, et al. "The Periodical Press in Eighteenth-Century English and French Society: A Cross-Cultural Approach." *Comparative Studies in Society and History*, vol. 23, no. 3, 1981, pp. 464–90. *JSTOR*, http://www.jstor.org/stable/178485.
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3. Miller, Stephen. "Why Read Samuel Johnson?" *The Sewanee Review*, vol. 107, no. 1, 1999, pp. 44–60. *JSTOR*, http://www.jstor.org/stable/27548637.
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5. Boulukos, George. "The Secret History of the Rise of the Novel: The Novel and the Middle Class in English Studies." *The Eighteenth Century*, vol. 52, no. 3/4, 2011, pp. 361–82. *JSTOR*, http://www.jstor.org/stable/41468153.

Reference

1. McMurran, Mary Helen. *The Spread of Novels: Translation and Prose Fiction in the Eighteenth Century*, Princeton UP, 2009.
2. Nøding, Aina, Ellen Krefting and Mona Ringvej. *Eighteenth-Century Periodicals as Agents of Change: Perspectives on Northern Enlightenment,* Brill, 2015.
3. Pandey, Radhe Shyam. *Dr Samuel Johnson as Critic,* Uma Publications, 1987.
4. Pooley, Roger. *English Prose of the Seventeenth Century 1590-1700*, Taylor & Francis, 2014.
5. Richetti, John. *The Cambridge Companion to the Eighteenth-Century Novel,* Paperback, 1996.
6. Watt, Ian. *The Rise of the Novel: Studies of Defoe, Richardson, and Fielding,* Pimlico, 2000.

Space for Learner Engagement for Objective Questions

Learners are encouraged to develop objective questions based on the content in the paragraph as a sign of their comprehension of the content. The Learners may reflect on the recap bullets and relate their understanding with the narrative in order to frame objective questions from the given text. The University expects that 1 - 2 questions are developed for each paragraph. The space given below can be used for listing the questions.

1.

1.

SGOU

Poetry and Drama

BLOCK-02

Block Content

Unit 1 Poetry
Unit 2 Drama
Unit 3 Poetry (Non-Detailed)
Unit 4 Drama (Non-Detailed)

Unit 1

Poetry

(Detailed)

Learning Outcomes

Upon completion of the unit, the learners will be able to:

- critically evaluate Milton's *Paradise Lost*
- understand the basic historical, intellectual and literary context to appreciate Milton's poetry and thought
- bring to light some of the key insights that give *Paradise Lost* such a lasting importance and continuing capacity to inspire

1. Paradise Lost - Book 1

John Milton

Background

The Puritan Age, or the Age of Milton (1600-1660), is further divided into the Jacobean and Caroline periods, named after the rulers James I and Charles I and the Restoration Period, or the Age of Dryden (1660-1700). After the rise of the Puritan movement in England in the 17th century, the Puritan age was named so. The Puritans were a group of English-speaking Protestants who were dissatisfied with the religious reformation movement that took place during Elizabeth's reign. They advocated the complete purification of the Church of England and pure Christianity (thus, the name Puritan). During the English Civil War (1642-1651), when the people were divided into two factions, one loyal to the King and the other opposed to him, the Puritans emerged as a powerful political force. The crisis began when James I, who had inherited the right to rule as a result of an Act of Parliament, placed an excessive emphasis on the Divine Right and began to ignore the Parliament that had created him. The movement for constitutional reforms was heralded by the Puritans, who had become a powerful force in the social life of the time. The English Civil War was a series of battles between Charles I and his supporters, known as the Cavaliers, and the Parliamentarians, also known as the Roundheads. He was asked by Parliament to sign a petition of rights, but he refused, demonstrating open contempt for Parliament and the people. He also had failed foreign expeditions to France and other places. Following the

Civil War in 1642, there was a split between the Cavaliers or Royalists (clergy, nobility, etc.) and the Roundheads or Parliamentarians (middle class who were in favor of the Parliament).

Keywords

Puritanism, Jacobean, Caroline period, Civil war, Epic

Discussion

Fig.2.1.1 John Milton

The decline of the Renaissance spirit marked the seventeenth century, and writers either imitated the great masters of the Elizabethan period or took new paths. In general, the Puritan literary movement can be thought of as the second and greater Renaissance, marked by the rebirth of man's moral nature following Europe's intellectual awakening in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries. There is a marked change in temperament that can be defined as the spirit of observation and preoccupation with details, as well as systematic analysis of facts, feelings, and ideas. The scientific spirit popularized by great men like Newton, Bacon, and Descartes manifested itself in the field of literature in the form of criticism. For the first time, writers began to use the English language to store and convey information. The popularization of the art of biography, which was unknown during the sixteenth century, was a very important and significant feature of this new spirit of observation. The depiction of the foibles of fashionable contemporary society was a major theme in drama. Actual men from opposing political and religious groups were mocked in satire, rather than the common flaws of the people. As a result, the age was driven by two goals: personal righteousness and civil and religious liberty.

- Rebirth of man's moral nature

2.1.1 Literary Characteristics of the Age of Milton

This literature of the period is devoid of concreteness and vitality. The poetry of this time was characterized by a sense of melancholy and contemplation. The spiritual gloom is caused by the breakdown of accepted religious and government standards. The drama was brought to a halt by civil unrest and the Puritans' vehement opposition. Theatre was considered 'immoral and depraved' by Puritans. The closing of the theatres in 1642 gave the development of drama a final jolt. As there were no set literary standards, imitations of older poets and exaggeration of 'metaphysical' poets supplanted the Elizabethan writers' original, dignified, and highly imaginative compositions. The period produced a few minor poems of exquisite craftsmanship, as well as one great master of verse whose work would glorify any age or people - John Milton, in whom the indomitable Puritan spirit finds its noblest expression. The Puritan poetry can be divided into three parts –(i) Poetry of the School of Spenser; (ii) Poetry of the Metaphysical School; (iii) Poetry of the Cavalier Poets.

- Drama was brought to a halt when theatres were closed

I. **The Poetry of the School of Spenser:** Those poets who admired and followed the spirit of Spenser in their writings.

II. **The Poets of the Metaphysical School:** John Donne, Herrick, Thomas Carew, Richard Crashaw, Henry Vaughan, and George Herbert were among the metaphysical poets. The metaphysical poets are so named because their poetry is full of conceits, exaggerations, quibbling about the meanings of words, displays of learning, and far-fetched similes and metaphors, not because they are highly philosophical. Dr. Johnson coined the term "metaphysical" in his essay on Abraham Cowley in his *Lives of the Poets*. The metaphysical poets were original thinkers who were honest with themselves. They attempted to analyse their feelings and experiences, including love. They were also conscious of life and concerned about death, burial, and descent into hell, among other things. Despite their desire for immortality, they were obsessed with the awareness of mortality. The Puritans' spiritual and moral fervor, as well as the Elizabethans' frank amorous tendency, are reflected in

- Metaphysical poetry: full of conceits, exaggerations, quibbling

the Metaphysical poets. They sing of making the most of life while it lasts—"Gather ye Rosebuds while ye may"—at times, and at other times, they seek more permanent comfort in the delight of spiritual experience.

III. **The Cavalier Poets**: Ben Jonson was followed by the Cavalier poets. Jonson's poetry and drama both followed the classical method. He wrote satires, elegies, epistles, and complimentary verses in the style of Horace. All the followers of Ben Jonson's followers were not royalists. Furthermore, the Cavalier and Metaphysical poets have little in common. Donne influenced a number of Cavalier poets, including Carew, Suckling, and Lovelace. Even in commonplace poems, Donne and Ben Jonson are strikingly similar. As a result, these are not two distinct schools, but two groups of poets who followed two different masters—Donne and Ben Jonson. Of course, the poets from both schools shied away from the Spenserians' long, antiquated works. The Cavalier poets tended to write on frivolous topics, whereas the Metaphysical poets tended to write on serious topics.

▶ Cavalier poets followed Ben Jonson

2.1.2 Puritan Age: Themes

Religious and political idealism were common themes, as there were emphases on practicality and pragmatism in everyday life. Fate and the inevitability of sin, as well as a strong sense of guilt and shame, were the prominent themes in religious discourse. Symbolism was used extensively, particularly in religious scripture. The Bible had a strong influence during this time. The idea of a struggle between the world and spirituality was also looked into. The Puritan writing style was primarily plain, with simple sentences and language. Excessive ornamentations or dramatic appeals were discouraged, as there were metaphorical constructions. It was decided not to use Greek mythology or classical literature in any way. Use of fictional elements was limited to the extent of blasphemy. Puritans were adamant that literature should not be used for amusement. It has to be used in the context of religious debate.

▶ Literature should not be used for amusement.

2.1.3 John Milton (1608-1674)

Milton was the greatest Puritan poet of his time. He was a Renaissance child and a great humanist. Wordsworth wrote the famous line: "His soul was like a star and

dwelt apart," as a fitting tribute to Milton's dominating personality." He combined the spirits of the Renaissance and the Reformation in himself because he was a deeply religious man with a high degree of artistic merit. Milton was an expert on both classical and Hebrew literature. Milton's poetry in his early years is lyrical. *The Hymn on the Nativity* (1629)*; L'Allegro, Il Penseroso* (1632); *Lycidas* (1637)*;* and *Comus* (1638) are all important early poems. *L'Allegro* and *Il Penseroso*, the complementary poems, are full of lovely descriptions of rural scenes and recreations in the spring and autumn. *L'Allegro* depicts the poet in a happy and jovial mood, and it depicts a romanticized version of rural life from dawn to dusk. *Il Penseroso* is written in a solemn and contemplative tone. In it, the poet extols the passive pleasures of a contemplative life. *Lycidas* is a pastoral elegy written to commemorate the death of Milton's friend Edward King, but it also contains a sharp criticism of contemporary religion and politics. Milton's mind evolves from a purely pastoral and idyllic state to a more serious and purposeful state in Comus. Milton's early poetry had a lyrical tone, while his later poetry had a deeply moral and didactic tone.

- Milton - humanist and a child of Renaissance

When the Civil War broke out in 1642, Milton threw himself into the fight against King Charles I and devoted the best years of his life to this national movement, when his poetical powers were at their peak. He became Cromwell's Secretary after he was deemed unfit to fight as a soldier. He continued this work until 1649, when Charles I was defeated and the Commonwealth of England was established under Cromwell. Milton, on the other hand, found himself completely blind when he returned to poetry in order to realize the ideal he had in mind. Furthermore, after Cromwell's death and the accession of Charles II to the throne, Milton lost all of his friends. When Milton was blind and suffering, he wrote some of his best poetry. During this time, he wrote his noblest and finest works, such as *Paradise Lost, Paradise Regained,* and *Samson Agonistes.*

- Milton - against Charles I

The casting out of the fallen angels from Heaven, their plotting for vengeance in Hell, Satan's flight, Man's temptation and fall from grace, and the promise of redemption are all part of the plot of *Paradise Lost.* Milton projects his philosophy of the purposes of human existence against this vast backdrop, attempting to justify

God's ways to men. *Paradise Lost* is known as the last great Elizabethan poem because of its imagery, descriptions of strange lands and seas, and use of strange geographical names. The most prominent figure in Milton's *Paradise Lost* is Satan, who possesses Milton's qualities and represents the Puritans' unwavering heroism against Charles I. It is written in blank verse. *Paradise Regained* is not as sublime as *Paradise Lost*, but it has a more tranquil atmosphere. Christ is the central figure, and he exhibits Puritanic austerity and stoicism rather than the tenderness that is commonly associated with him. The ancient Hebrew legend of Samson, the mighty champion of Israel, blind and scorned, working as a slave among the Philistines, is the subject of Milton's *Samson Agonistes.* This blank-verse tragedy was influenced by Greek tragedy. Milton's colossal personality is reflected in the blind giant Samson, surrounded by enemies.

- *Paradise Lost* - to justify the ways of God to men

The majority of Milton's prose was written during his middle years, the period from 1640 to 1660, when he was preoccupied with public affairs. His prose works are either about his personal life or about public issues. There are a total of twenty-five pamphlets, twenty-one of which are in English and four of which are in Latin. In 1644, he published a mediocre tract on education. His divorce tracts were inspired by his wife's abandonment. The great and passionate treatise on press freedom, *Areopagitica*, was first published in 1644. It was in response to a law passed by the Parliament that established book censorship.

- Twenty- five pamphlets

2.4.4 Characteristics of Milton's Poetry

John Milton was the greatest English poet after Shakespeare. W. H. Hudson writes, "In him, we have a wonderful union of intellectual power and creative power, both at their highest. Thus, in his poetry, the following characteristics stand out:

The Poet's Vocation: Milton had a high opinion of a poet's life. According to Milton, a poet's life should be "a true poem"- that is it should be pure and chaste. Poetry was a sacred vocation for him, and he lived a life dedicated to the highest and noblest ideals. Poetry was more than just an intellectual diversion. Poetry can only come from divine inspiration, which Milton claims can only be obtained through earnest prayer to God.

- Poet's life – pure and chaste

- Poems are sublime and grand

Sublimity: Milton's poetry is majestic and sublime. It is the manifestation of a pure and noble mind, one that has been enriched by knowledge and disciplined by art. His poetry bears the unmistakable stamp of his character's nobility, as he lived a life of purity and austerity. Whatever he has written has its own dignity and stateliness. His poetry has an uplifting effect on the reader's mind, which is influenced not only by its lofty thought, but also by the grandeur of its style.

- Admired beauty in all its forms

Love of Beauty: Milton had a strong sense of aesthetics. He admired beauty in all of its forms. The external beauty of nature drew his attention. His love of nature is evident in *L'Allegro and Il Penseroso.* Milton's religious temperament was always drawn to the beauty of virtue, and it found artistic expression in *Comus*.

- Milton's poetry contains strong Puritanism.

Puritanism: Apart from this love of beauty, Milton's poetry contains a strong Puritanism. *Comus* is a hymn to chastity and purity that teaches us to control our desires and resist all temptations. The violent outburst against the established Church in *Lycidas* reveals Milton's Puritanism. His condemnation of the Anglican Church is worthy of a true Puritan. The Puritan voice takes on a more strident tone in later poetry. Towards the end of his life, Milton becomes a stern Puritan, and his religious zeal nearly kills his humanism. The choice of subjects in the later poems reveals a religious bent, as they are all taken from the Bible. The stated goal of *Paradise Lost* is to justify God's ways to men. Milton intended his epic to be a Christian epic. Its biblical theme can be traced back to Milton's Puritan influences. The topic of *Paradise Regained* is similar to *Comus.* It depicts Christ's defiance of Satan's temptations and triumph over him. It has an intense moral fervor. The theme of *Samson Agonistes* is also biblical and is embedded with moral earnestness.

Classicism: Milton's nature has a strong tendency towards the pagan and the sensual classicism, which is closely related to his puritanism. He drank deeply from the springs of classical learning as an avid student of ancient classics. He wrote Latin prose too. His love of Classicism can be seen in his epics *(Paradise Lost and Paradise Regained);* Greek tragedy *(Samson Agonistes)*; pastoral elegy *(Lycidas)*; and the Ode *(Ode on the Nativity of Christ);* and (ii) his elaborate descriptions and epic

similes in *Paradise Lost* and *Paradise Regained.* His diction is overwhelmingly classical.

Milton's Style and Versification: It stands out for its compactness, force, and reserve, as well as the unity of emotional impression, all of which are hallmarks of true classical style. Milton was a conscientious artist who carefully considered the meaning, weight, and sound of each word he used. His poetry has a distinct musical quality to it. In *Ode on Nativity*, he uses the stanza form, in *L'Allegro* and *Il Penseroso*, he uses the octo-syllabic couplet, and in *Paradise Lost*, he makes use of the rhymed blank verse.

- Versification- stanza form, octo-syllabic couplet, blank verse.

Introduction

Paradise Lost is a twleve book blank verse epic poem that tells the biblical story of the Fall of Mankind – the moment when Satan tempts Adam and Eve to eat the forbidden fruit from the Tree of Knowledge, and God banishing them from the Garden of Eden for all time. John Milton's story is based on the account of the Fall in *Genesis*, the first book of the Old Testament, and he promises to "justify the ways of God to men" early in the poem (Book I, l. 26). However, he adds to the story by narrating the creation of the universe from cosmic chaos, the rebellion of Satan and the other fallen angels in Heaven, and the formation of the universe from cosmic chaos, the creation of the Earth and of mankind. While Milton was writing during and after the English Civil Wars, which saw King Charles I executed and the country temporarily controlled by a republican government led by Oliver Cromwell until Charles II returned to the throne, *Paradise Lost* deals in a complex way with both republicanism and monarchy. Some critics have long viewed Satan as a republican hero, eloquent and determined, far more charming and persuasive than God's 'tyrannical' and humorless character in the poem. But, especially after the Restoration, Royalist readers chose to see Satan as Cromwell through anti-republican eyes: someone who only pretended to believe in equality but really wanted power for himself and his family.

- Cromwell as Satan – political context

Summary of Books

Book 1: Satan and his fellow rebels awaken in Hell, construct the Pandemonium Palace, and convene a council.

Book 2: The fallen angels debate whether they should punish or appease God. Satan sets sail for the newly created earth in search of vengeance. He meets Sin and Death at the gates of Hell.

Book 3: From Heaven, Satan's journey is observed. The Son offers to give his life in order to save humanity from the sin that Satan will lead it into.

Book 4: Satan enters the Garden and devises a plan to tempt Adam and Eve into sin by persuading them to eat from the Tree of Knowledge. The angel Gabriel apprehends him on his first attempt to seduce Eve while she is sleeping.

Book 5: Raphael invites Adam and Eve to dinner and tells them about Satan's rebellion in Heaven.

Book 6: Raphael describes the war in Heaven and the Son of God's expulsion of Satan and the rebel angels.

Book 7: Raphael describes the six-day creation of the world.

Book 8: Adam describes his own creation and meeting with Eve to Raphael.

Book 9: In the form of a serpent, Satan appears to Eve and tempts her to eat the forbidden fruit. Adam agrees to eat after learning what she has done. Lust, shame, and mutual recrimination are the result.

Book 10: Satan triumphantly returns to Hell, but he and his demons have been transformed into snakes. Adam and Eve lament their state.

Book 11: Adam and Eve are told by the angel Michael that they must leave Paradise. First, he tells Adam about humanity's future. Michael continues his revelation in Book 12.

Book 12: It includes the coming of Christ. Adam and Eve leave Paradise hand in hand.

Paradise Lost includes poetic treatments of some of the most important scientific, philosophical, and astronomical advances of Milton's time, in addition to its political resonances. The poem delves into the animal kingdom, speculates on whether Ptolemy or Copernicus was correct in their theories about the sun revolving around the earth or vice versa, and poses big, potentially divisive questions about the nature of God and religious worship.

Summary: Lines 1–26

The Prologue and Invocation

Milton opens *Paradise Lost* by formally declaring the subjects of his poem: mankind's first act of disobedience towards God, and the consequences that followed. The act is the eating of the forbidden fruit of the Tree of Knowledge by Adam and Eve, as told in Genesis, the first book of the *Bible*. In the first line, Milton refers to the consequence of sin that Adam and Eve have committed, by eating the "fruit" of the forbidden tree. Milton asserts that this original sin brought death to human beings for the first time, causing them to lose their home in paradise until Christ comes to restore humankind to its former position of purity. Milton's speaker invokes the muse, a mystical source of poetic inspiration, to sing about these subjects through him, but he makes it clear that he refers to a different muse from the muses who traditionally inspired classical poets by specifying that his muse inspired Moses to receive the Ten Commandments and write Genesis. Milton's muse is the Holy Spirit, which inspired the Christian Bible, not one of the nine classical muses who reside on Mount Helicon or the "Aonian mount". This muse also inhabits the brook of Siloa, which flows by the temple at Jerusalem. He says that his poem, like his muse, will fly above those of the Classical poets and accomplish things never attempted before, because his source of inspiration is greater than theirs. Then he invokes the Holy Spirit, asking it to fill him with knowledge of the beginning of the world, because the Holy Spirit was the active force in creating the universe. Milton's speaker announces that he wants to be inspired with this sacred knowledge because he wants to show his fellow men that the fall of humankind into sin and death was part of God's greater plan, and that God's plan is justified.

Analysis

The beginning of *Paradise Lost* is similar in intensity and seriousness to the book from which Milton takes much of his story: the "Book of Genesis", the first book of the *Bible*. The *Bible* begins with the story of the world's creation, and Milton's epic begins in a similar vein, alluding to the creation of the world by the Holy Spirit. The first twenty-six lines of *Paradise Lost* are extremely

- Invocation to the muse

compressed, containing a great deal of information about Milton's reasons for writing his epic, his subject matter, and his attitude toward his subject. By invoking a muse, Milton manages to tell us quite a lot about how he sees his project. In the first place, an invocation of the muse at the beginning of an epic is conventional, and Milton is acknowledging his awareness of Homer, Virgil, and later poets, and signalling that he has mastered their format and wants to be part of their tradition. But by identifying his muse as the divine spirit that inspired the Bible and created the world, he shows that his ambitions go far beyond the great writers Homer and Virgil. Milton's epic will surpass theirs, drawing on a more fundamental source of truth and dealing with matters of more fundamental importance to human beings. At the same time, however, Milton's invocation is extremely humble, expressing his utter dependence on God's grace in speaking through him. Milton also displays his world's superiority while reducing those classical epics to the level of old, nearly forgotten stories. For example, the nine muses of classical epics still exist on Mount Helicon in the world of *Paradise Lost*, but Milton's muse haunts other areas and has the ability to fly above those other, less-powerful classical Muses.

In Milton's view, the story he will tell is the most original story known to man, as it is the first story of the world and of the first human beings. While Homer and Virgil chronicled the journey of heroic men alone, like Achilles or Aeneas, Milton chronicles the tragic journey of all men—the result of humankind's disobedience. Milton goes so far as to say that he hopes to "justify," or explain, God's mysterious plan for humankind. Homer and Virgil describe great wars between men, but Milton tells the story of the most epic battle possible: the battle between God and Satan, the good and the evil.

- His aim is to go beyond the expertise of Homer, Virgil.

Lines 27-83 Summary

Milton begins his story by asking the reason for the fall of Adam and Eve from divine grace. What made Adam and Eve so privileged by Heaven, to become estranged from their Creator, and go against his will was one forbidden thing- The Hellish Serpent; it was he whose terrible cleverness aroused envy and thoughts of revenge, deceived Eve, after his arrogance had caused him to be thrown out of Heaven, with his followers of rebel

- Battle between God, Satan and evil.

angels, with whose help he wanted to set himself above his fellows, and hoped to equal God himself; and with this ambitious goal against God's authority he agitated an unholy war in Heaven and fought vainly. God threw him flaming from the divine Heaven to the miserable ruins to Hell, there to exist in chains of extreme hardness and punishing fire to suffer from everlasting punishment. Satan was completely bewildered by his fall and now lay outstretched upon a fiery lake. On recovering from his stupor he felt tormented by the thought of the happiness that he had lost and of the endless pain that he would have to endure. His misery was mingled with a stubborn pride and a firm hatred. Then he explains the horrors of the place. Hell is a place where both fire and flame exist without light and where darkness itself is visible, where peace and rest can never survive and hope never comes to anyone. In this condition the fellow angels lie three times far from the light of heaven. Satan thus began speaking to his closest associate Beelzebub.

Analysis

Milton asks what could cause mankind's parents to sin, as they only had one thing forbidden to them; besides that, they were the lords of the earth. According to the Bible, Satan beguiled them to sin, much like he incited a third of the angels to revolt against God's authority. The poet tells the story of Lucifer's fall because he dared to think himself equal to God and tried to take Heaven's throne from Him by force. God, being God, tossed him into Hell for his presumption. Hell is described as a flaming pit, a lake of fire without light. The battle in this story is that of the ultimate struggle of good against evil, God against Satan. Milton refers to Hell as both a state of being, a "bottomless perdition" and an actual place which has a fiery lake of fire. Lucifer fell in "hideous ruin" to Hell and became Satan.

- Satan deceived Eve to eat the forbidden fruit

Nine times the extent of distance that measures day and night to humans he and his rebel followers lay beaten, falling in Hell confused even though they were immortal: but his doom made him more angry; now the memory of lost happiness and eternal pain tortured him; he rolls his hateful eyes around with obstinate pride and everlasting hate. All at once as far as angels can see he views the disheartening situation of a horrible prison,

- Lucifer's fall to hell

surrounded on all sides by fire, but there was no light from those flames, but instead a visible darkness which only made possible the sights of suffering, places of sorrow, sad shadows, where serenity and rest can't exist, hope which is in everyone is not here; but only an everlasting torment that continually provokes, and a fiery flood, fed with eternally burning sulphur that doesn't go out.

Lines 84-124 Summary

Satan tells Beelzebub that he seems to be different after his fall from heaven. How changed he has become now from being dwelling in the happy and radiant regions of heaven! Satan asserts that he is not repentant of a rebellion against the heaven's ruler God. His disdain for the heavenly ruler is because of his injured merit. He claims that a battle not the war has been lost. He still has the pursuit of revenge and an undying hate which makes him propose an eternal war with the omnipotent. Milton quietly reminds us that Satan's revenge is racked with deep despair. Satan recalls his past glory in the paradise of Heaven as Lucifer, in contrast to the horrible state he is in now. The importance of obedience to God is stressed as a primary theme; first Satan as one of God's first creations disobeyed Him, then he caused God's next creation, Man, to disobey Him as well. Hierarchy and a proper order of things must be recognized and followed: God must be first in greatness and purity, then angels, then man, and then lastly, demons headed by Satan. Satan's power does not prevent him from being perplexed at this abrupt, horrible change in situation. The ever-burning sulphur unconsumed is like the evil in Satan; he lives to cause evil and revels in the results, but can never be satisfied because God will always have the upper hand. All this leads up to the story to where it begins, *in medias res*, or in the middle of things, like other epic poetry. So far, the reader has been introduced to three places in the Universe: wonderful Heaven, horrible Hell, and a bewildering Chaos. The reader can guess that the next battlefield will be earth, with the souls of man as the prize. The cosmology of Milton's *Paradise Lost* is not necessarily dependent on contemporary science, but rather is only a part of the religious message he wishes to convey. There his rebel comrades lay, overcome with floods and whirlwinds of tumultuous fire. Satan soon

▶ Satan and his fellow angels lay defeated

found his comrade rolling in the waves by his side, one close to him in power and in transgression, known for a long time in Palestine, called Beelzebub. To him, Satan with daring words broke the terrible silence and thus began.

Lines 125-155 Summary

- Stan still in pursuit of revenge with God after his defeat.

Satan spoke aloud boastfully but he was tormented by deep despair. Beelzebub in his reply deplores the tragic overthrow and defeat of Satan and his Comrades. He expresses the apprehension that the defeated Angels will now have to lead a life of everlasting servitude to the almighty. Their glory and happiness are consumed and extinct. But Satan speaks promptly to dispel Beelzebub's apprehension.

Lines 156-191 Summary

- Satan speaks to Beelzebub

Satan speaks promptly to dispel Beelzebub's apprehension. To be weak is to be miserable. But for them to do anything good should now be permanently out of the question. Always to do evil will be their only possible delight simply on the ground that evil will nullify the will of God. Their aim must now be to subvert all the good into evil. Satan then drops Beelzebub's attention to the divine artillery of cosmic Hill. The opportunity must not be missed. They must mobilize their forces once again and form plans how best to attack the omnipotent. They must discuss how to overcome calamity what support they can derive from hope or what strength of determination they can draw from despair. Satan now knows God has withdrawn his obedient angels. They are now back at the gates of the heaven. The fiery wave has been stilled and the thunder winged with red lightning has exhausted its arrows and has now stopped roaring. Satan decides to reassemble his forces; not to miss the opportunity because God's wrath has been fully satisfied. He then asks his followers to go towards the plane to take rest if possible. He wanted to reassemble the defeated forces and discuss how to strike at their enemy effectively and how to overcome this disastrous misfortune.

Lines-192 - 241 Summary

- Satan plans to mobilize the fallen angels to fight against god.

Milton then describes the gigantic dimensions of Satan comparing him to the Titan. Satan is also compared to the sea beast Leviathan. God has left Satan free to follow his dark designs so that he might heap damnations upon himself by doing evil to others. Satan's rising from the burning lake is accompanied by earthquakes and volcanic eruptions. But in moving from the lake to the land, Satan only exchanges liquid fire for a solid fire. Beelzebub follows Satan. Satan had spoken with his head uplifted above the fire wave, his eyes shining with wrath. The other parts of his body lay prostrate on the fiery flood. His limbs were huge, in dimensions of monstrous size. He could be compared to Leviathan who is the largest of all the beings but still being trapped in his own evil thoughts. Satan then flies to dry land. It was a region which always burned with solid fire. Both Satan and Beelzebub were able to escape by their own strength because they are gods and God has not shown any special considerations for them.

Lines 242-300 Summary

- Satan and Beelzebub fly to the dry land

Satan now made one of his most famous speeches. The change from heaven to hell transforms him but he accepts the change with fortitude. The further away from God the better. Finding himself in a state of total misery he declares that the mind is its own place, and in itself can make a heaven of hell, a hell of heaven. The mind has the power to derive happiness from the worst of conditions and it has a capacity to feel miserable in the best of conditions. Satan talks of being still the same. He says that this place of utter desolation will not be taken away from them. Satan and his companions may dwell here. Better to reign in hell than serve in heaven. He then suggests that everyone should be raised from their stupor. They should be now ready to welcome the horrors of hell with the new ruler who comes here with a mind that cannot change with the change of place or time. Satan hardly feels inferior to God and believes that in hell they will be independent. Here they will rule securely and emerge supreme beings instead of living as subordinates in heaven. Satan then calls his comrades who lie stunned in this unhappy abode to mobilize their strength and to regain whatever they lost in heaven.

Beelzebub supported Satan saying that he is the leader of the bright armies and his speech may give a steering promise of hope for them during this dangerous battle with God. They will soon get new courage even though they now lie humbled on that lake of fire. Satan now begins to move towards the shore of the fiery Lake. He describes Satan's shield which is like the Moon and his spear like a tall Norwegian Pine walking stick. He walked carrying the spear to support his unstable steps over the burning soil. His steps were no longer easy because the flames of Fire struck him painfully.

Lines 300-391 Summary

The fallen angels are in pain and they appear lost. Satan addresses them as the flowers of the Heaven. The fallen angels have lost all their dignity, power and authority but Satan addresses them as if they were still holding their old positions in heaven. Satan then gives a warning to them. He says that God's angels may become fully aware of the advantage and God may send out his troops to go down to the bottom of the lake as Thunderbolt. Satan raises the spear to give them a powerful signal and to guide the course of their flight. The angels are numberless and are like the savage invaders. The leaders of the various regiments now step forward and their shapes and forms are still god-like for they once occupied the throne in Heaven. Milton had to make sure that the readers do not underestimate the devils. That is why he reminds us episode by episode of the diverse grandeur of these angels. Satan endured all the pain and he reached the shore of the fiery lake and called out his countless soldiers who lay like the autumn leaves. They are compared compared to the scattered masses of Seaweed floating on the ocean. Satan now addresses the fallen angels as princes, rulers, warriors and the finest among the angels of Heaven. Satan wants the fellow angels not to be weak as the pursuers from the gates of Heaven might take this as an advantage and trample them even to a drooping condition. He asked them to wake up and rise or they will remain overthrown. The fallen angels felt ashamed and obeyed their commander's voice. Now the bad angels are compared to locusts that once enveloped the kingdom of Egypt and darkened the whole country. Satan then raised his spear to give them a signal and to guide their course.

- Satan's speech - Better to reign in hell than serve in heaven.

The angels descended on the firm sulphureous soil. The heads and leaders hurriedly moved towards their leader and they had angel shapes which were greatly superior to human figures. They were heavenly princes who had once occupied dignified positions and divine powers in heaven but now they have been deleted and erased from the books of life because they revolted against the Almighty. They received new names only when permitted by God's divine mercy to roam over the Earth for the trial of mankind. But now they employ false names and corrupt a large majority of human beings to give up the worship of their creator. The poet now invokes his muse to mention the names of the bad angels who look for victims among human beings. They were searching for a place to fix their abodes to be worshiped by human beings close to the place where God was also worshiped. They use un-Holy means to pollute the sacred ceremonies and they confront God's divine light with their darkness.

▶ The fallen angels have got new false names.

Lines 392-521

A catalogue of the leaders of the Fallen Angels is then provided. The first to be mentioned is Moloch, the destructive Sun God worshipped with the sacrifice of children by means of Fire. He is smeared with blood of human sacrifice and tears of parents whose children had been killed to satisfy him. The cries of those children remained unheard because of the loud noise of drums as part of the ceremony. The Ammonites worshipped Moloch in the city of Rubiah, the city of waters. But Moloch was not satisfied with their worship and used fraud in order to prevail upon the wisest man, Solomon, to build a temple directly opposite to the temple of God in Mount Olives which later came to be known as the emblem of the image of hell. Hatred is represented by Moloch.

Next came Chemos worshipped from the town of Aroer by the wild tribes of the southernmost mountain range. The other name of Chemos was Peor. He was known by this name when he used his tricks to win over the Israelites to worship him with obscene ceremonies. Lust is represented by Chemos. Both Chemos and Moloch were driven out of the place, sent back to hell by Josiah. Next came Baalim and Ashtaroth. These spirits can assume the male sex and female sex at the

▶ Leaders of the Fallen Angels

same time depending upon their own will because their liquid texture is very soft and is unmixed with any other substance. They are not tied or fettered with joints or limbs. They do not depend upon the hard strength of bones, therefore they can assume the shape they like by expanding or compressing themselves. They look bright or dark and can accomplish their purposes through the medium of air and spread hate or love. Milton says that the people of Israel worshipped the idols of devils instead of their true God. As a punishment for this they were attacked by their enemies who made them bend their heads low.

- Win over the Israelites to worship him

Ashtoreth or Astarte was one of the Moon goddesses and was represented by having Crescent shaped horns. The unmarried girls used to offer their prayers and their devotional songs to her every night in the light of Moon. A temple has been dedicated to her on the hill of olives by King Solomon who was dominated by his wives. Thus, he was also forced to worship idols of foul Gods under the influence of his wives.

Thammuz, a beautiful youth who was killed by a boar was mourned by young Syrian girls every year by singing love songs throughout a summer's day. The love story of Thammuz and Ashtoreth infected the girls of the city of Seon with a frenzy of passion. Next came the devil who was genuinely in a state of mourning who was a monster of the sea and was named as Dagon. He had the body of a human being above the waist and that of a fish below. Dagon was followed by Rimmon whose temple was situated in the fair city of Damascus between the two rivers Abbana and Pharphar. He was worshipped by the foolish King Ahaz. Next comes the category of the animal Gods of Egyptians. They are known by names Osiris, Isis and Orus and their followers having monstrous shapes and magic practices who misled the Egyptians and their priests by disguising in the shape of animals rather than human beings. As a result, Jehovah, the true God as a punishment, killed their first-born children and first-born cattle. Last of all came Belial who was more lustful and obscene in whose name there was no temple built

- Unmarried girls offer their prayers

nor was any altar. But he was present in temples where the priests began to disbelieve in the true God, he held his way up on kings and queens and the people of lustful cities. The wicked followers of this God flushed with wine and arrogance from the streets and abused women. Then comes the Greek gods, there was Titan the eldest son of Uranus with monstrous and numerous offspring. His right to rule was taken away by Saturn. Saturn received a similar treatment from the more powerful Jove. They fixed their abode on Mount Parnassus.

Lines 522- 589 Summary

Satan goes on to describe the condition of the Fallen Angels. They are downcast and damp. But there is also a dark happiness in them. The first is that they have found their leader and they have found themselves not lost. They're surprised that they themselves still exist with an awareness of what has happened. A new plan of action has to be talked out and it is not an easy task. Satan realizes this but he recovers his habitual pride and was able to raise the spirits of the Fallen Angels. Satan orders the raising of the flag. All these gods found happiness in seeing Satan, their new leader had not given up on them. He then ordered that his flag should be raised. It was done by the tall cherub Azzel. The flag unrolled and shone like a comet and waved in the breeze covered with gems and bright gold accompanied by music. Under the influence of this music the Fallen Angels experience some stability and unity of mind. The army of the Fallen Angels is highly impressive. They are stronger and more powerful than the whole gathering of notable historical armies. Yet they were ready to obey their dreadful commander.

- Satan with his unflinching pride advises the fallen angels

Lines 590- 649 Summary

The Fallen Angel is more awful than a ruined man. Once the Fallen Angels' faces were shining with light but now it can only be compared with darkness and disaster. Satan's glory has been dimmed by his fall. The space is thunder scarred. It is hot, there are Revenge and Pride who wait for an opportunity. Millions of Fallen Angels were thrown out because of Satan's fault or revolt. But the Fallen Angels are faithful before him. They listen to him and they stand mute. Three times, Satan tried to speak but was frustrated by his own tears. Satan stood

there firm and strong like a tower though he did not look worse than a ruined archangel. He could be compared to the newly arrived sun eclipsed behind the moon. Satan was stamped with unflinching courage and his pride waited for revenge. He feels pity and deep feelings for his partners in crime. Millions of these angels had been expelled from heaven because of his fault against God. Yet they were faithful to Satan. Satan, now choked by tears, gets ready to speak. Seeing this, the angels formed a semicircle around him. They stood tongue tied. He addressed the immortal spirits and powerful angels that cannot be matched except by God. He says the battle with God did not degrade them though its outcome was disastrous. Satan advised them not to create a new war but to achieve their goal by secret intrigue, fraud, or deceit.

Lines 650-731 Summary

There was a widespread rumour in heaven that God had created another world so Satan asked the fellow angels to have their first expedition to investigate that world. They shall never be held in slavery or chaos or in the darkness. He asked the angels to give up peace and not to submit before their enemy. They should declare war and declare it openly or keep it a secret among themselves. As a way to support his words millions of mighty cherubins drew their swords from their thighs. The dazzling light of the swords illuminated hell and loudly they stormed against the supreme God. Some angels rushed towards a nearby hill where its interior was buried with metallic ore. They hurried with spades and pick-axes to dig trenches in some battlefield or to build a fort. The soil of hell was rich in the coveted evil, the gold. These angels were guided by Mammon, the last spirit who fell from heaven. He was more drawn to the gold pavements in heaven. It was he who taught human beings to pillage and plunder the mother earth in order to obtain treasures which should preferably have remained buried. He made the angels open the hill and dig out large pieces of gold.

- Rumour that God had created another world

Large groups of Angels began melting the massive ore separating each metal and skimmed the impurities of molten gold. Another group of Angels begin setting up models of various kinds and shapes within the

ground with the metal gold. Soon out of the Earth, a huge structure arose which resembled a temple. It had pillows and round shaped columns overlaid with golden beams. The roof was carved with gold. The building could no longer be compared with Babylon or great Cairo's Glory or even God's temples or Kings palaces. The completed building looked impressive in its full height. Star like lamps and bright fire baskets hung inside the building and here Milton reminds the reader about the smaller significance of human beings compared with eternal and cosmic affairs. Angel power and Angelic field of activity are compared with the absurdity of human pretensions. The new building they constructed is Pandemonium, the capital of Hell. It emerges out of the Earth and Milton describes the dignity and amplitude of the building. The multitude of angels enter this building hastily. Some of them praised the work and some praised the architect.

- Creation of Pandemonium – capital of Hell

Lines 732- 798

Milton now talks about the architect Mulciber. The multitude of Angels entered the building hastily admiring the building and its architect - Mulciber. His skill was known in Heaven by a large number of buildings and towers. Though he had erected buildings in heaven he could not escape from the present fate in spite of all his achievements. Meanwhile Satan announces a council meeting to be immediately held in pandemonium, the capital of Satan and his Comrades. The angels in multitudes began to shrink their size to fit their bodies inside the pandemonium hall. They now look like the race of pygmies or the elfish creatures. Thousands of them sat on golden seats and after a brief silence the meeting began. According to Milton Pandemonium is not a commendable activity and he says Satan and his industrious crew can now build only in Hell. The worthiest angels are now summoned. The Pandemonium cannot of course accommodate the whole crowd of angels. The spacious Hall and the gates and the porches are now overcrowded. It is compared to a pouring out of bees in Spring. But the devils can exercise their power to assume what shape they please and bring it to minute sizes. In this way the multitude is accommodated in the hall. But Satan and the great seraphic Lords are not reduced in size. They hold their secret meeting in an inner chamber in order to discuss their new strategy.

- Architect of Pandemonium is Mulciber

Renaissance Humanism in *Paradise Lost, Book I*

- Milton blends Puritanism and Humanism

Milton's *Paradise Lost* is often described as a poem where two traditions converge: the Puritan religious spirit of seventeenth-century England and the Renaissance celebration of classical learning and humanist ideals. *Book I*, in particular, provides a vivid demonstration of Milton's Renaissance humanism, even while subordinating it to the authority of Christian theology.

- Classical learning enriched Milton's verse

The Renaissance was marked by a revival of classical learning, the rediscovery of Greco-Roman texts, and a confidence in the power of human reason, art, and eloquence. Milton, educated at St Paul's School and Christ's College, Cambridge, was steeped in Latin, Greek, Hebrew, and Italian literature. This humanist background is reflected throughout *Paradise Lost*, where myth, history, and science flow into the texture of the verse. In *Book I*, Satan is compared to Briareos, Typhon, and the Leviathan , figures drawn from Greek mythology and biblical tradition alike. These epic similes not only elevate Satan's stature but also demonstrate Milton's mastery of mythic and classical material. By employing such references, Milton signals his continuity with Homer and Virgil while adapting their resources to a Christian context.

- Fallen angels catalogue shows erudition

The catalogue of the fallen angels is perhaps the most striking humanist moment in *Book I*. Modelled on the Homeric catalogue of ships and Virgil's list of Italian warriors, Milton enumerates the rebel angels who later became the gods of pagan antiquity: Moloch, Chemosh, Astarte, Thammuz, Dagon, Osiris, Isis, and even the Olympians Saturn and Jove. To compile such a list, Milton drew upon a vast range of sources, biblical texts, classical mythology, patristic writings, and Renaissance scholarship. The Renaissance humanist ideal of encyclopaedic knowledge is on full display here. Milton gathers together the intellectual inheritance of antiquity, but rather than glorifying it, he reinterprets it through a Christian lens, casting the gods as fallen angels who led nations into idolatry. In this way, humanist learning is absorbed and subordinated to the theological purpose of the poem.

Milton's stylistic choices also reveal his Renaissance

heritage. His blank verse imitates the syntactic freedom of Latin poetry, allowing him to create long, rolling sentences filled with inversions and appositions. This is the "grand style" that Renaissance critics aspired to, modelled on Virgil's periodic syntax. His epic similes, often extended for many lines, recall Homer's digressive comparisons but are enriched with Renaissance breadth: the autumn leaves in Vallombrosa, the locusts darkening the land of Egypt, the barbarian floods overwhelming the Roman Empire. These images reveal Milton's humanist breadth, linking the biblical story of the Fall to natural, historical, and mythological universes.

Even Milton's references to contemporary science reflect the Renaissance spirit. When Satan's shield is described as vast as the moon viewed through Galileo's telescope, Milton is bringing modern scientific discovery into the framework of epic poetry. This fusion of ancient myth, biblical truth, and modern science is quintessentially Renaissance: the poem becomes a repository of all human knowledge, harmonised within a Christian vision.

- Scientific imagery enhances epic scope

At the heart of Renaissance humanism lay a confidence in human reason and dignity. Milton himself shared this confidence but insisted that human faculties were to be perfected through divine illumination. His invocation of the "Heav'nly Muse" shows that he does not abandon classical ideals of inspiration but redefines them: true poetry must be illuminated not by pagan muses but by the Spirit of God. Thus, the Renaissance exaltation of human capacity is fused with Puritan humility before divine sovereignty.

- Human reason fused with divine aid

In conclusion, *Book I* of *Paradise Lost* demonstrates Milton's Renaissance humanism in its classical allusions, encyclopaedic catalogue, stylistic grandeur, and incorporation of contemporary knowledge. Yet Milton does not indulge in humanist erudition for its own sake: he reshapes it to serve his larger theological aim of justifying God's ways. The Renaissance breadth of learning is present, but it is placed under the sovereignty of Puritan faith. In this way, Milton embodies the ideal of the Christian humanist, bringing together the richness of antiquity and the authority of Scripture in a single poetic vision.

- Humanism reshaped for Christian purpose

Paradise Lost as an Epic

Milton's *Paradise Lost* is universally recognised as the supreme English epic, and *Book I* exemplifies the features that make it so. While its subject matter differs from Homer's *Iliad* or Virgil's *Aeneid*, it is still firmly rooted in the epic tradition through its form, conventions, scale, and style. *Book I*, in particular, demonstrates why Milton's poem deserves to stand alongside the great classical epics.

First, *Paradise Lost* conforms to the traditional structure of epic poetry. Like Homer and Virgil, Milton begins his narrative in medias res, plunging the reader directly into the aftermath of Satan's rebellion and the defeat of the fallen angels. This narrative technique, characteristic of epic form, creates immediacy and allows the poet to weave in earlier events through recollection and speeches. Similarly, Milton opens his poem with an invocation to a muse, a convention inherited from antiquity. Although he addresses the "Heav'nly Muse," the structural gesture itself situates the poem within the epic genre.

▶ Paradise Lost rooted in epic form

Second, Milton employs the central stylistic devices of epic poetry. His use of the epic simile, expanded and elaborate, is one of the hallmarks of his verse. Satan's massive form is compared to mythic giants like Briareos and Typhon, or to the Leviathan mistaken for an island by mariners. The devils rising from the burning lake are likened to autumn leaves, locust swarms, or barbarian floods. These extended similes are more than decorative: they broaden the scope of the poem, connecting its events to myth, history, and nature in ways typical of Homer and Virgil. The elevated diction, Latinate syntax, and rolling blank verse of Milton's style further reinforce the "grand style" expected of epic poetry.

▶ Epic similes broaden poem's scope

Third, the catalogue of the fallen angels situates *Paradise Lost* within epic tradition. Classical epics often pause to enumerate warriors, ships, or nations, giving the poem a sense of breadth and universality. Milton adapts this device by listing the rebel angels who became the false gods of pagan antiquity. The catalogue not only provides scope and variety but also aligns the poem with the epic convention of gathering vast multitudes into one narrative frame.

▶ Catalogue links to classical models

Fourth, the poem features the epic convention of councils and speeches. In *Book I*, Satan addresses Beelzebub and later the assembled host, rallying them with words of courage and defiance. The devils gather in Pandemonium to debate their next move, echoing the assemblies of warriors in Homer or the councils of gods in Virgil. These set-piece speeches are integral to the epic form, combining rhetorical brilliance with dramatic tension.

- Councils and speeches enhance drama

The scale of *Paradise Lost* also confirms its epic character. Epics are defined by their vastness of time, space, and theme. Milton's setting encompasses Heaven, Hell, and the newly created Earth. His characters are not ordinary men but angels, demons, and cosmic powers. The conflict at the heart of the poem, the rebellion of Satan and the fall of humankind, affects not just one nation but the whole of creation. The sheer scope of the narrative is consistent with the epic tradition, which always seeks to depict events of universal significance.

- Cosmic scale affirms epic stature

Finally, the poem embodies the heroic focus central to epic. While Milton's subject differs from the martial exploits of Achilles or Aeneas, his treatment of Satan in *Book I* shows that the poem possesses a central figure of extraordinary stature. Satan's speeches, his immense form, and his ability to command his legions mark him as a hero in the epic sense, even if a flawed and fallen one. The presence of such a towering protagonist, around whom the action revolves, is itself a defining feature of epic poetry.

- Satan embodies flawed epic hero

In conclusion, *Paradise Lost* is considered an epic because it fulfils the essential conventions of the genre: in medias res opening, invocation of a muse, elaborate epic similes, catalogues, councils, elevated style, and heroic focus. Its vast scale of time, space, and action further situates it in the tradition of Homer and Virgil. Milton consciously adopted the epic form, determined to prove that English poetry could rival and surpass the great epics of antiquity. *Book I* demonstrates his success: it possesses the grandeur, scope, and stylistic magnificence that have defined the epic tradition for millennia.

- Milton fulfils epic conventions fully

Milton closes the first book of *Paradise Lost*, having set the stage for one of the most ambitious narratives in

English literature. The reader has been introduced not to Adam and Eve, nor even to the Garden of Eden, but to the aftermath of a celestial rebellion in which Satan and his followers lie defeated in Hell. By beginning here, Milton places the emphasis not on innocence but on its opposite, on loss, defiance, and the conditions from which temptation will arise. The choice to foreground Satan ensures that the poem's drama begins with tension and conflict, and it compels the reader to grapple with the paradox of his tragic yet corrupted grandeur.

- Milton begins with loss and defiance

The construction of Pandemonium at the end of the book encapsulates the themes already established. In the glittering palace that rises "like an exhalation," Milton dramatises the ability of evil to imitate glory without possessing it. The devils' gathering for council appears orderly and majestic, yet it is a hollow parody of heavenly assembly. This sets a pattern for the entire poem: false splendour will continually be exposed as fragile imitation, while true greatness lies in obedience and humility.

- Pandemonium shows false splendour

Equally important is the way Milton trains his audience through Book I. The grandeur of Satan's speeches, his indomitable courage, and his vast presence are compelling, but readers must learn to resist being seduced by style and eloquence. Milton creates this tension deliberately, asking us to discern between the beauty of language and the truth of its content. In this sense, reading Book I is already a moral exercise, preparing the reader for the temptations and ambiguities that will dominate later books.

- Readers trained to resist eloquence

Book I also demonstrates the scope of Milton's synthesis of traditions. Its moral seriousness and scriptural grounding echo the Puritan spirit of obedience and vigilance, while its learned allusions to mythology, history, and science reveal Milton's Renaissance humanism. The epic form, borrowed from Homer and Virgil, is reshaped into a vehicle for Christian theodicy. Milton thus establishes from the beginning that his poem will not simply repeat classical conventions but transform them into instruments of theological reflection.

- Fusion of Puritan and humanist traditions

As the council in Pandemonium begins, the book leaves us at a threshold moment: Hell appears to organise itself, Satan seems triumphant, and the forces of rebellion look poised for new strategies. Yet Milton's readers, guided by the opening invocation to the "Heav'nly Muse,"

- Victory masks inevitable defeat

know already that this defiance is doomed to serve God's purposes. Book I, therefore, concludes in apparent victory for the fallen angels, but in reality, it has already dramatised the futility of their enterprise. For students of literature, the first Book Is crucial because it reveals Milton's narrative strategy, his ability to fuse learning with faith, and his skill in using poetic grandeur to sharpen, rather than soften, the moral weight of his epic.

Summarised Overview

Milton explains the aim of *Paradise Lost* in the prologue to Book 1: To defend the ways of God to people and to narrate the tragedy of their fall. Milton calls on a heavenly muse in the epic tradition to assist him in telling the story. He asserts that the inspiration he invokes is the same one who moved Moses to pen a portion of the Bible. Milton introduces the figure of Satan, a former great angel in Heaven known as Lucifer, and uses the gift of the muse to explain what caused man to fall. Satan joined forces with other rebellious angels to start a civil war in an effort to destroy God's authority. God vanquished them and expelled them from heaven. When Satan and the other rebellious angels awaken in the beginning, they discover that they have been changed into devils and are floating on a lake of fire in Hell. Satan collects the descended angels in a fit of rage. They hold a council to discuss engaging in further hostilities against God while also constructing Pandemonium, their capital city in Hell. Satan and the other angels do not seem to understand that they could only be freed from the bonds that shackled them upon their arrival in Hell with God's approval.

Assignments

1. Bring out the heroic qualities of Milton's Satan from book 1.
2. Explain how Milton's poetry weds the puritan spirit with that of the renaissance.
3. Describe Milton's Hell
4. Consider *Paradise Lost* as an epic.

Suggested Reading

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4. Fish, Stanley. *Surprised by Sin: The Reader in Paradise Lost.* Harvard UP, 1967.
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6. Lewalski, Barbara. *The Life of John Milton: A Critical Biography.* Blackwell Publishing, 2003.

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1. Evans, J. Martin. *Milton's Imperial Epic: Paradise Lost and the Discourse of Colonialism.* Cornell UP, 1996.
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5. Lewis, C.S. *A Preface to Paradise Lost*, Oxford U.P., 1942.

Space for Learner Engagement for Objective Questions

Learners are encouraged to develop objective questions based on the content in the paragraph as a sign of their comprehension of the content. The Learners may reflect on the recap bullets and relate their understanding with the narrative in order to frame objective questions from the given text. The University expects that 1 - 2 questions are developed for each paragraph. The space given below can be used for listing the questions.

1.

SGOU

2. Mac Flecknoe

John Dryden

Background

Mac Flecknoe by John Dryden provides a thorough analysis of his interaction with the satirical subgenre. The mock epic poem must be placed in the broader context of literary and political changes in 17th-century England in order to see how Dryden influenced satire. The assessment of Dryden's satirical skill and influence on satire are partly influenced by his own understanding of satire, which is mostly reflected in his *Discourse*. The governmental changes of the Restoration period had a significant impact on literature, although they do not overwhelm the significance of literary trends like neo-classicism and the prefiguring of Augustanism. The necessity to use the arts to critique society was a reactionary gesture to the events of the 17th century. The emphasis on order and harmony in the 17th century combined with the translation of classics helped to standardise the essential elements of satire. In his *Discourse*, Dryden describes the format of satire, including the topics the poet should address and the themes that should be used to organise his argument. He obtains an understanding of satire from the three "Ancients," identifying their strengths and flaws in a strong Neo-Classical vein. He also emphasises his position as a modernist by detailing the structure of a modern satire, despite the fact that the Classical poets serve as the basis of his discourse.

Keywords

Mock-Epic, Satire, Heroic Couplet

Discussion

Fig 2.1.2 John Dryden

2.1.5 John Dryden

John Dryden was the first great modern critic. He was a civil servant in the Government of Oliver Cromwell. His first published poem, *Heroic Stanzas Consecrated to the Memory of His Highness* (1558) saluted the military exploits of his Lord Protector. *Astrea*

▶ Dryden as a satirist and critic

Redux was composed shortly after, which celebrated the Restoration of Charles II in 1600 followed by a Panegyric on his coronation. Though he was labelled "Dryden the poet" by his contemporaries, he was adept at writing prose and drama. Elegiac, panegyrics, satires, argumentative and narrative verses and lyrics exist in large numbers. The notable ones among these are *To the Memory of Mr. Oldham, The Medall, Absalom and Achitophel, On St. Cecelia's Day*. We study him mainly as a satirist in *Mac Flecknoe*. Among his significant plays we have *Aurangzeb, The Conquest of Granada and All for Love*. *Essay of Dramatic Poesy* is a work of literary criticism written in the form of a dialogue. It positions him as an arbiter of taste based on intelligence and sound reason.

▶ Mock-heroic satire

Mac Flecknoe - A Satyr upon the True-Blue-Protestant Poet, T.S. is a verse mock-heroic satire written by John Dryden. *Mac Flecknoe*, written around 1678, is the result of a series of disagreements between Thomas Shadwell and Dryden. Their quarrel arose from the following differences: "1) their differing assessments of Ben Jonson's genius, 2) Dryden's preference for wit and repartee comedy, and Shadwell's humor." 3) A bitter disagreement over the true purpose of comedy, 4) a disagreement over the value of rhymed plays, and 5) Political differences, as Shadwell was a Whig and Dryden was a staunch supporter of the Stuart monarchy. Shadwell is depicted in the poem as the heir to a kingdom of poetic tedium, as evidenced by his association with Richard Flecknoe, an earlier poet who had already been satirized by Andrew Marvell and despised by Dryden.

The poem starts off in an epic tone, describing Shadwell's defining quality as dullness. By giving Shadwell negative characteristics as his only virtue, Dryden subverts the theme of the defining characteristics. Dryden uses the mock-heroic to treat trivial subjects like poorly written and largely dismissible poetry by employing the heightened language of the epic. The Restoration period is heavily influenced by its political context. Much of its literature focuses on the upheavals caused by the political events of the previous decade, particularly the conflicts between Catholic supporters of a traditional royal government and Protestant supporters of more democratic parliamentary government. A Protestant Parliament ruled England from 1651 to 1660

- Restoration period as an age of satire

after the Protestants defeated the Catholics in the English Civil War, which lasted from 1642 to 1651. The violence of the period came to an end when Charles II claimed the throne, and it is this restoration of a traditional king that gives it the name 'Restoration.' Many Restoration authors believed that the previous decades' violence was caused by a strict adherence to extreme political and religious ideologies. This helps to explain why Restoration-era poetry and drama were marked by witty and often relentless satire mocking orthodox positions and those who held them.

- Shadwell is depicted by Dryden as a poetaster.

Thomas Shadwell is the target of Dryden's satire and mockery in *Mac Flecknoe*. Shadwell was an English poet laureate and playwright best known for his broad comedies of manners and, more importantly, for being a frequent target of John Dryden's satire. In *Mac Flecknoe*, Dryden portrays him as the heir to the fictional "Kingdom of Nonsense." Shadwell is a big, proud man who loves the pomp and circumstance of his coronation. Shadwell is depicted by Dryden as a drab poetaster, a corpulent man, and a plagiarist. In 1682, Dryden decided to avenge himself on Shadwell by publishing *Mac Flecknoe.* Shadwell has been portrayed as a foe of wit and common sense, and he swore at his coronation that he would keep his dullness until death. The poem's effect is amplified by the heroic verse employed in the poem. Mock-epic is a short narrative poem in which the machinery and conventions of epic are used to treat trivial subjects, resulting in a parody or burlesque of the epic. Jonathan Swift's *Tale of a Tub and Battle of the Books*, and Alexander Pope's *Dunciad and The Rape of the Lock*, *Mac Flecknoe* by John Dryden are the finest examples of the Mock-epic.

Essential Characteristics:

1. In a mock epic of a trivial theme, all elements of the epic are used.
2. The majority of mock epics start with an invocation of Muses (a poetic tradition that dates back to Homer) that includes supernatural interference in the plot, lengthy battle sequences, lengthy speeches, and formal or highly verbose diction.
3. The use of the phrases "deus ex machina" .
4. The mock epic's main purpose is to mock nobility's

tendency to take trivial matters seriously by writing about people and events in flowery, overhyped language that becomes humorous when simplified.

5. One distinct feature of the mock-epic is the widespread use of bathos, or anticlimax.

2.1.6 Summary of the Poem

Lines 1-28

Dryden establishes his satiric voice in these first lines. He is describing the king of the realm of Nonsense in a grand language and tone. The poem's first line gives the impression that it is an epic poem about a historical figure. In the grand style of epic poems, Dryden begins with a mock-heroic statement about the death of all things, including kings. As everything in the human world wears out and dies, rulers must relinquish their power at the call of Fate. Flecknoe, the ruler of the empire of nonsense, chose Shadwell, the dullest of his sons, as the heir to the throne because nature supports the belief that only he should rule those who most closely resemble Shadwell. Shadwell is the only one who has never deviated to the path of logic. From his early years, he was mature in his dullness and confirmed in his stupidity. He is completely engulfed in darkness, through which no light can pass. He also has a chubby body, indicating that he is incapable of thinking. The other Flecknoe's sons had some common sense, but Shadwell never said or wrote anything sensible, even if it was by chance.

- Shadwell, the dullest of his sons, as the heir to the throne

Lines 29- 63

Dryden then quotes John Heywood and James Shirley, two earlier English poets and playwrights. Neither of these authors received much acclaim in their time. Dryden accuses these poets of poor, illogical writing, particularly Shadwell. Shadwell entertained the English Monarch with the music of his orchestra while sailing on a boat on the Thames, just as Flecknoe had entertained the King of Portugal with flute music. His river sailing could be compared to the ancient musician Aron, whose music had attracted dolphins. Shadwell, on the other hand, attracted only small fish.

- Dryden accuses John Heywood and James Shirley

Lines 64-93

The term "Augusta" here refers to London. The so-called "Popish Plot," an alleged conspiracy alleging that the Jesuits planned to assassinate King Charles II, frightened London at the time. The plot turned out to be entirely false. The Barbican was a London-based defensive fortification. Its former glory is gone, however, as it has been turned into a brothel for "polluted pleasures." The only people who ruled the place were old whores who were disturbed by the night watchmen. A theater house near this location was training boys and girls to play the roles of Heroes and Queens on stage. The tragic plays of John Fletcher, wherever they are performed on stage, and not Ben Johnson's brilliant comedies. This was a theater where the audience applauded the performances of poor dramatists because their minds were blank. Because Thomas Dekker once predicted that a mighty Prince would rule this heap of ruins who would be the enemy of wit and intelligence, Flecknoe, who has written a number of failed plays such as *The Miser, The Hypocrite,* and *The Virtuso,* planned *Shadwell's* throne here.

- Flecknoe's failed plays

Lines 94-128

The news of Shadwell's coronation spread quickly throughout the city, causing great excitement. Empress Fame disseminated the information. Shadwell's path was lined with fragments of pages from books written by interior poets like Heywood, Shirley, and Oglebay, rather than Persian carpets. However, pages from Shadwell's useless writings were piled up in such a way as to obstruct the passage. Publishers who had been ruined by unsuccessful works by inferior authors performed the duties of bodyguards, and Shadwell's own publisher served as the captain of the Guards. Flecknoe, the elderly monarch, sat on a Throne he had built himself, complete with a stack of his own books. Young Shadwell sat to his right, his face etched with dullness and perplexity. Shadwell then made a vow to keep the rule of dullness in his Kingdom until his death. Shadwell held a large mug of powerful ale in his left hand, symbolizing dullness, and his father's book "Love's Kingdom", which served as a scepter, in his right hand. Finally, because he was an opium addict, his temples were covered in poppies.

- Shadwell's coronation became well-known

Lines 129-164

A dozen old owls were seen flying on Shadwell's left at the time. This auspicious omen, which promised Shadwell an empire of dullness, was applauded by the adoring crowd. Flecknoe then spoke his prophecy, predicting that his son Shadwell would rule over a vast swath of land stretching from Ireland to the Atlantic Ocean. May his son write even more nonsense than his father did with Love's Kingdom. Then, speaking to Shadwell, he told him that his son should continue to advance in the direction of new ignorance by following his lead, and allow his bumbling characters to demonstrate that he has a barren mind. Allow the fools in his plays to be modelled after Shadwell so that future generations will understand that they are not imitators of other people, but only of their playwright. Not only that, but he should allow his intelligent characters to be foolish as well.

- Flecknoe then spoke his prophecy on Shadwell's ruling

Lines 165- 188

He goes on to say that Shadwell does not have to work hard to create dullness because he can do so naturally by expressing whatever comes to mind. He should not be led astray by his false friends into believing that his son should look up to and be inspired by his father. He should try to emulate the work of lesser poets. Ben Johnson, according to Flecknoe, never used his wit to denigrate or mock learning in any of his writings. And, unlike Shadwell, he never plagiarized scenes from his contemporary Fletcher's plays. What Shadwell has taken is easily identifiable because it floats above the surface like oil on water.

- Shadwell copies from other poets

Lines 188-210

Shadwell's mind is skewed in the direction of mediocrity. He continues to mock Shadwell's appearance. He could not compare himself to Ben Jonson because of his enormous belly, which resembles a massive vessel with no intelligence. His tragic fate, comic scenes are both amusing, pathetic, and so dull that they put you to sleep. He writes harmless anagrams rather than satires due to his dull mental caliber. He might be the king of acrostics when it comes to writing shape poems. He might sing his own songs or use the same word in different ways.

- Mocking Shadwell's appearance

Lines 211-217

- Poet Flecknoe was trapped by his own play's characters

However, Flecknoe's final words were muffled because the two characters in this play, The Virtuoso, Bruce, and Longville, had set up a trapdoor for the poet Flecknoe to fall through. His woolen robe, which had been carried by the wind, was left behind. Now this Robe was placed on the younger poet Shadwell, causing him to be twice as dull as his father, Flecknoe.

2.1.7 Dryden's Satirical Genius as Seen in Mac Flecknoe

- Dryden's Satirical Genius

John Dryden's *Mac Flecknoe* (1682) is one of the sharpest and most enduring satires in English literature. Written against his rival Thomas Shadwell, the poem embodies Dryden's genius for transforming personal quarrel into timeless art. The poem is described as a mock-heroic satire, not content with casual sarcasm, Dryden invents an entire scene in which the victim appears as a principal actor. In this scene, Shadwell is enthroned as monarch of nonsense, a position mortifying to literary vanity. The satire combines the devices of the mock-epic with comic invention and exaggeration, creating a work that anticipates Pope's *Dunciad* yet retains its own gaiety and sparkle.

Shadwell as Heir to Dulness

- Shadwell as Heir to Dulness

Dryden depicts Shadwell as the natural heir to Flecknoe, himself a minor poet renowned for mediocrity. The irony lies in the elevation of dullness to a hereditary crown. Shadwell is praised mock-seriously as "mature in dullness from his tender years" and one who "never deviates into sense." Where others may occasionally stumble upon meaning, Shadwell is consistent in stupidity. Flecknoe commends him for being perfectly reliable in this one quality and assures that he will "wage immortal war with wit." Thus, Dryden ironically grants him epic stature, but only as the hero of nonsense.

Bulk and Barrenness: The Satirical Portrait

- Bulk and Barrenness: The Satirical Portrait

A central feature of the portrait is the fusion of Shadwell's physical corpulence with his intellectual emptiness. Dryden describes his "goodly fabric" that seems built for "thoughtless majesty," likening him to a vast oak tree that spreads wide but has no inner life. The satire culminates

in the cutting couplet: "A tun of man in thy large bulk is writ, / But sure thou'rt but a kilderkin of wit." His "mountain belly" becomes a sign of his incapacity for thought. Dryden returns repeatedly to this theme, ensuring that body and mind are both subsumed into the same image of pompous emptiness.

Burlesque of Myth and History

- Burlesque of Myth and History

Dryden enriches his satire with parodic comparisons to mythic and historical figures. Shadwell is likened to Arion, the legendary musician, but while Arion's song drew a dolphin that saved him, Shadwell's music attracts only "little fishes." He is also compared to Hannibal, who swore eternal enmity to Rome as a child; Shadwell likewise vows "never to have peace with wit, nor truce with sense." These allusions retain epic solemnity in tone but expose absurdity in content, revealing Shadwell as the anti-hero of stupidity.

The Coronation Scene

- The Coronation Scene

The coronation is the poem's climax, a perfect parody of epic ritual. Instead of Persian carpets, pages from inferior authors, Heywood, Shirley, Ogleby, form the pathway, with the greatest piles drawn from Shadwell's own works. Bankrupt publishers line the route, led by Herringman, Shadwell's own publisher. On his throne, he sits with "thick fogs, instead of glories, grace, / And lambent dulness played around his face." In his left hand he holds a mug of potent ale instead of the regal orb; in his right, Flecknoe's play Love's Kingdom, mockingly offered as his sceptre. He wears a crown of poppies, signifying perpetual sleep, while twelve aged owls hover as signs of eternal dullness. The inversion is complete: all the trappings of majesty are present, but each is deflated into farce.

Flecknoe's Prophecy

- Flecknoe's Prophecy

Flecknoe's prophetic speech mocks Shadwell's career with withering irony. He exhorts him: "Success let others teach, learn thou from me / Pangs without birth, and fruitless industry." Where true poets struggle in creative labour, Shadwell's fruitless pains produce only emptiness. Dryden ridicules his slowness, recalling that he took five years to complete The Virtuoso. He lampoons Shadwell's characters as naturally foolish, not by design but because the author himself lacks sense. His style is compared

to Sir Formal Trifle, a pompous figure in The Virtuoso. Claims to be heir to Jonson are dismissed: Jonson never plagiarised, while Shadwell "steals whole scenes." His boast of inventing new "humours" is ridiculed, since his only true humour is dullness.

Failure as Satirist and Dramatist

- Shadwell's Failure as Satirist and Dramatist

Dryden further mocks Shadwell's inefficacy as a writer. Though "plenty of poison" lies in his heart, it never reaches his pen. His tragedies provoke laughter and his comedies induce sleep: "Thy Tragic Muse gives smiles, thy Comic sleep." His satires do not bite, and his witless verse is confined to trivialities such as anagrams and acrostics. Dryden sneers that Shadwell can "torture one poor word ten thousand ways," epitomising sterile ingenuity. The attack is merciless yet couched in comic exaggeration, ensuring that Shadwell becomes the archetype of literary futility.

Tone and Style

- Tone and Style

What distinguishes *Mac Flecknoe* from mere invective is its tone of raillery rather than rancour. There is no angry abuse or moral denunciation; instead, Dryden's wit sparkles in couplets that combine elegance with ridicule. Almost every line is an arrow that finds its mark. The laughter is Olympian, not bitter: Dryden laughs at Shadwell's incapacity and invites the reader to laugh with him. In this detachment lies the poem's strength. It is satire that wounds not by wrath but by wit, and in so doing becomes irresistible.

- Conclusion

Mac Flecknoe stands as Dryden's gayest and sharpest satire. By weaving Shadwell into a mock-epic narrative of succession and prophecy, Dryden immortalises him as the monarch of nonsense. The coronation with fog, mug of ale, Love's Kingdom, poppies, and owls turns mediocrity into comic grandeur. The poem exaggerates, parodies, and ridicules with zest, yet without resentment. For all its cruelty, it is full of fun, invention, and lively energy. Though Shadwell's plays have long been forgotten, his name survives because Dryden fashioned him into an enduring emblem of stupidity. The poem illustrates the height of Restoration wit: satire that converts a personal quarrel into a masterpiece of comic art, where laughter rules "all the realms of nonsense absolute."

Summarised Overview

Shadwell and Dryden had a number of arguments that led to the creation of *Mac Flecknoe*. Shadwell's affiliation with Richard Flecknoe, a previous poet already lampooned by Andrew Marvell and despised by Dryden provides the context for the poem. The satire makes several references to old Greek and Roman literatures as well as works of literature from the 17th century, demonstrating Dryden's nuanced viewpoint and his command of the mock-heroic form. Shadwell's defining quality is presented in the poem's opening lines as dullness. Dryden thus plays with the idea of the distinguishing quality by making Shadwell's lone positive trait a negative one. Through the heightened vocabulary of the epic, Dryden employs the mock-heroic to address unimportant topics like poorly written and generally disregarded poetry.

Assignments

1. Discuss "Mac Flecknoe" as a mock heroic poem.
2. Consider Dryden as a satirist.
3. Description of Shadwell's crowning ceremony in "Mac Flecknoe."
4. Genre of "Mac Flecknoe."
5. How does the poem "Mac Flecknoe" begin?
6. Advice of Flecknoe to Shadwell after crowning him.

Suggested Reading

1. Cox, Michael, editor, *The Concise Oxford Chronology of English Literature*, Oxford U P, 2004.
2. Hammond, Paul. *John Dryden: A Literary Life*. London, 1991.
3. Hopkins, David, *John Dryden*. Cambridge, 1986.

Reference

1. King, Bruce. *Dryden's Mind and Art.* Edinburgh, 1969.
2. Kinley, Helen. *Dryden: The Critical Heritage*.London, 1971.
3. Sanders, Andrew, *The Short Oxford History of English Literature*. Oxford U P, 2004.

Space for Learner Engagement for Objective Questions

Learners are encouraged to develop objective questions based on the content in the paragraph as a sign of their comprehension of the content. The Learners may reflect on the recap bullets and relate their understanding with the narrative in order to frame objective questions from the given text. The University expects that 1 - 2 questions are developed for each paragraph. The space given below can be used for listing the questions.

1.

Unit 2

Poetry

(Detailed)

Learning Outcomes

Upon completion of the unit, the learner will be able to:

- understand the background information about Sheridan and his times
- know the features of the sentimental comedy
- get acquainted with thematic and stylistic features of Richard Sheridan

The School for Scandal
Richard Brinsley Sheridan

Background

The Restoration era, also known as the Age of Dryden, spans the years 1660 to 1700. The writer of this era who best exemplified this was Dryden. A new era in English life and literature began in 1660, the year of the restoration of King Charles II. During the Restoration, theatres that had been shuttered in 1642 were reopened. They developed into a raucous hangout for the affluent. This explains why the heroic tragedy emerged and how the Comedy of Manners evolved. The Heroic Tragedy is another name for the Restoration tragedy. The heroic play was the first significant outcome of French romance and the influence of the drama. After Restoration, tragic emotions are manufactured, so tragedy appears artificial. The main conflict it addresses is that between love and honor. The Heroic Tragedy was primarily written by John Dryden. *Tyrannic Love, Conquest of Granada,* and *All for Love* are a few of his well-known tragedies. In Dryden's heroic plays, we find a hero with superhuman abilities and superhuman ideals, a heroine of unparalleled beauty and constancy, an internal conflict between love and honor in the minds of several characters, and a struggle story of fighting and martial fervor that is filled with intense dramatic interest.

Keywords

Restoration Age, Sentimental Comedy, Age of Dryden, Heroic Plays

Discussion

Comedy of Manners is another name for the Restoration comedy. These comedies served as an expression of opposition to Puritanism and the sexual repression it sought to impose. Adultery, sex, marriage, and fashionable intrigues were all treated with cynicism, wit, and a sense of the absurdity of life. Without a doubt, the courtiers, the wits, the men about town, as well as the ladies of fashion, the citizens, the wives, and the country girls, had a significant influence on the characters in the plays. Both native and French influences had an impact on the Restoration comedy. It took its cues from the native tradition that had been thriving before theaters were shut down in 1642. It was a close reflection of the decadent court life of the time. The tone of the Comedy of Manners is particularly sophisticated and intellectual. It lacks romantic feelings and passions. The plays display a satirical observation of life and behavior.

- Comedy of Manners lack romantic feelings

The Comedy of Manners brings Ben Jonson's writings to mind. This comedy attempts to display the manners of upper class society. They are presented objectively and honestly. It portrays an elegant, aristocratic society in vogue. It does reveal flaws, but these flaws belong to well-bred gentlemen rather than people with poor morals. Public parks, chic clubs, taverns, and aristocratic drawing rooms provide the setting for it. The relationship between men and women is its main topic. The people of this time viewed marriage as a social act, and love as purely personal. The complications of these relationships were examined by the authors of Comedy of Manners. The characters and situations that the Restoration dramatists created were based on people and events they observed. Instead of focusing on the flow and development of events, the Restoration dramatists were more interested in wit and the portrayal of manners. The Restoration Comedy places a lot of emphasis on conflict and intrigue.

- Emphasis on conflict and intrigue

The sentimental comedy is a dramatic subgenre that emerged in the 18th century in response to the themes of immorality in English Restoration plays. In sentimental comedies, the protagonists from the middle class successfully navigate a number of moral dilemmas. These plays sought to evoke tears rather than laughter and reflected modern philosophical ideas that people are good by nature but can be corrupted by bad examples. A man could be reformed and put back on the path of virtue by appealing to his noble feelings. In sentimental comedies, characters are either wholly good or wholly bad. While villains are utterly evil or morally reprehensible, heroes have no flaws or bad habits. The authors' goal was to demonstrate to the audience the inherent goodness of people and the power of morality to transform lives.

▶ Sentimental comedy

Romantic love scenes were common, and the plot typically focused on the domestic struggles of middle-class couples. Their emotional turmoil is displayed publicly in order to elicit sympathy from the audience and build suspense before the happy conclusion. In many cases, socio-economic differences between lovers are shown to separate them at first, but they are ultimately reconciled when the identity of the lover from the lower class is revealed. Plots often included a mystery that needed to be solved. The playwrights of this genre worked hard to evoke the emotions of the audience so that they could take something away from the play, relate what they saw on stage to their own lives, and as a result, live more morally.

▶ Emotional turmoil is displayed

2.2.1 Introduction

Fig. 2.2.1 Richard B Sheridan

Richard Brinsley Sheridan's *The School for Scandal* is a late-eighteenth-century comedy of manners that refines Restoration wit with a distinctly Georgian moral sensibility. Premiered at Drury Lane, it dissects the fashionable culture of slander and the tyranny of reputation through a brisk plot, glittering dialogue and two showpiece scenes, the Portrait Auction and the Screen Scene. The play is structured around the tension between

▶ Comedy of manners with a sentimental edge

appearance and reality: Joseph Surface advertises himself as a paragon of "sentiment," while privately pursuing mercenary and adulterous designs; Charles Surface, censured as a prodigal, proves loyal, affectionate, and generous; Lady Teazle, a country girl turned metropolitan "fine lady," is tempted by fashion but ultimately returns to sincerity; Sir Peter Teazle, her elderly husband, is at once censorious and genuinely devoted. Surrounding them is the titular "school" of scandal, Lady Sneerwell, Sir Benjamin Backbite, Crabtree, and Mrs. Candour, whose hobby is character assassination elevated to salon entertainment. In Sir Oliver Surface, returned from the East to test his nephews in disguise, Sheridan supplies a paternal "moral examiner" whose experiments unmask hypocrisy and reward integrity. The play keeps the comic energy of Restoration forebears (Congreve, Wycherley) but, true to its 1770s milieu, seeks poetic justice and reform rather than cynical stalemate. The play opens with a Verse Prologue written by David Garrick, an actor and manager of Drury Lane Theatre deliberating the difficulty of stopping people from spreading scandals.

2.2.2 Character Sketch

- Lady Sneerwell

Lady Sneerwell is a wealthy widow and the leader of the "School for Scandal." Her drawing room is the headquarters for gossip, intrigue, and character assassination. She secretly loves Charles Surface, and because Maria prefers Charles, Lady Sneerwell conspires with Joseph Surface to slander Charles and ruin his prospects. She embodies envy and malice, demonstrating how slander can spring from frustrated desire. Lady Sneerwell is not simply a comic caricature; she represents the power of reputation in fashionable society. Critically, she is a continuation of the Restoration stage "wit heroines" but stripped of charm, showing vice in its raw form.

- Lady Sneerwell: Malicious leader of gossip

- Mr. Snake

Snake is Lady Sneerwell's hireling, a mercenary who spreads false stories for payment. He is cowardly, unscrupulous, and opportunistic, but in the end, he betrays his mistress and Joseph by confessing the truth. His name is symbolic of treachery and deceit. Snake illustrates Sheridan's point that professional scandalmongers

- Mr. Snake: Treacherous informer without loyalty

have no loyalty, and that in a society where reputation is currency, there will always be informers willing to sell it. Ironically, he becomes the instrument of exposure, showing how dishonesty sometimes collapses under its own weight.

- Joseph Surface

Joseph is outwardly a paragon of morality and sentiment. He cultivates the image of a virtuous, refined gentleman admired by Sir Peter and society at large. In reality, he is duplicitous, selfish, and hypocritical. He pursues Maria for her fortune while simultaneously attempting to seduce Lady Teazle. He allies with Lady Sneerwell to defame his own brother Charles, and lies brazenly to Sir Oliver about receiving financial aid. He is exposed in the famous Screen Scene, his "sentimental" mask ripped away. Joseph embodies Sheridan's satire on false virtue and hypocritical sensibility: the danger of using morality as a mere performance. Critics often see Joseph as Sheridan's warning against the hollow fashion of "sentimental comedy" popular in the 18th century.

- Joseph Surface: Hypocrite posing as virtuous

- Charles Surface

Charles is Joseph's younger brother, known as a spendthrift and libertine. He is heavily in debt, careless with money, and irreverent toward his ancestors. Yet beneath this frivolous exterior, he is warm-hearted, generous, and loyal. In the Portrait Auction, he sells all his ancestors' portraits but refuses to part with Sir Oliver's, declaring affection for his uncle. He later sends part of his windfall to aid a poor relation. His honesty and openness contrast with Joseph's hypocrisy. Charles represents the Sheridan ideal: genuine feeling and natural generosity outweigh polished manners and false morality. He undergoes partial reform by the end, promising to mend his extravagance when rewarded with Maria's hand.

- Charles Surface: Generous despite extravagance

- Maria

Maria is Sir Peter's young ward and the heiress whom both brothers pursue. She is gentle, virtuous, and constant in her love for Charles. Maria detests gossip and refuses to participate in slander, making her a moral counterpoint to Lady Sneerwell's circle. Although she is somewhat passive compared to other characters, her integrity shapes the play's resolution: she rejects Joseph despite pressure and remains loyal to Charles. Critically, Maria exemplifies

- Maria: Virtuous, loyal, and steadfast

Sheridan's notion of true virtue: quiet, steadfast, and free from the ostentation of "sentiment."

▶ Sir Peter Teazle

Sir Peter is a wealthy, elderly bachelor who has married the much younger Lady Teazle. Their marriage is marked by quarrels: she embraces fashion and extravagance, while he complains of her ingratitude and contradictions. Yet beneath the squabbles lies genuine affection. Sir Peter is also Maria's guardian and favours Joseph as her suitor, deceived by Joseph's false virtue. In the Screen Scene, he learns the truth about both his wife and Joseph. His reconciliation with Lady Teazle represents the play's domestic resolution. Dramatically, Sir Peter embodies the "comic elderly husband" type but is given depth: he is peevish but sincere, misguided but not malicious. Sheridan uses him to satirise mismatched marriages and male vanity while allowing a warm reconciliation.

▶ Sir Peter Teazle: Quarrelsome yet affectionate husband

▶ Lady Teazle

Lady Teazle is Sir Peter's young wife, once a country girl who has transformed into a fashionable lady. She squanders her husband's wealth and aspires to independence through society's libertine code. Joseph tempts her into a near-affair, but she is redeemed in the Screen Scene when she overhears her husband's genuine affection. Ashamed of her folly, she reforms and reconciles with Sir Peter. Lady Teazle is among Sheridan's most memorable characters: witty, spirited, and humanly flawed. She represents the allure and danger of fashionable vanity but is saved by her underlying good sense. Critics often note that her arc, from rustic innocence to fashionable flirtation to wifely reconciliation, mirrors Sheridan's moral message: temptation may be strong, but sincerity can reform.

▶ Lady Teazle: Flirtatious yet redeemable wife

▶ Sir Oliver Surface

Sir Oliver is the wealthy uncle of Joseph and Charles, who returned from the East after many years. He is determined to judge the true character of his nephews without prejudice. Disguised as the moneylender Mr. Premium, he tests Charles; disguised as the poor relative Mr. Stanley, he tests Joseph. His discoveries invert public reputation: Charles, condemned as a prodigal, proves generous; Joseph, praised as virtuous, proves heartless. Sir Oliver is both a character and a moral mechanism,

▶ Sir Oliver Surface: Rational judge of character

functioning as the arbiter of truth. He represents Enlightenment rationality: judgment should rest on direct observation, not hearsay. His authority resolves the play, pronouncing Joseph a hypocrite and rewarding Charles's honesty.

- Rowley

Rowley is the old steward of the Surface family and a loyal retainer. He acts as mediator and moral guide, informing Sir Oliver of events and aiding the tests of the nephews. Rowley consistently defends Charles's character and embodies honesty and loyalty. His presence connects the old Surface family's virtue with Charles's latent goodness. Rowley plays the role of the trustworthy "old servant" common in comedy, but also provides a moral voice, reminding the audience that truth endures beneath slander.

- Rowley: Loyal steward and moral guide

- Mrs. Candour

Mrs. Candour is a member of Lady Sneerwell's circle, notorious for gossip. Her name is ironic, since she pretends to frankness while spreading every rumour. She justifies slander as "harmless chatter" and illustrates Sheridan's satire of the social disease of gossip.

- Mrs. Candour: Gossip masked as candour

- Sir Benjamin Backbite and Crabtree

Sir Benjamin, with his uncle Crabtree, belongs to the scandalmongers. Sir Benjamin is vain and pompous, often reciting doggerel verses to embellish his gossip. Crabtree is cynical and inventive, forever supplying lurid details. Together, they caricature the ridiculousness of fashionable scandal and how idle tongues can invent entire false narratives.

- Sir Benjamin & Crabtree: scandalmongers

- Moses

Moses is a Jewish moneylender who accompanies Sir Oliver in disguise. Unlike the stereotype of the usurious Jew common in 18th-century drama, Moses is humane, honest, and charitable. He tries to assist Charles by arranging loans with as little hardship as possible, and he helps Sir Oliver test the brothers. Sheridan's portrayal of Moses is unusually sympathetic for the period, giving the play a moral depth by contrasting genuine kindness with fashionable hypocrisy.

- Moses: Humane moneylender with integrity

- Trip: Servant echoing master

▶ Trip

Trip is Charles's servant. Insolent, cheeky, and self-indulgent, he mirrors his master's extravagance in comic miniature. His saucy manner with Sir Oliver (as Mr. Premium) adds humour but also underscores the disorder of Charles's household.

- Careless: Comic friend fuelling excess

▶ Careless

Careless is Charles's friend and drinking companion, a representative of the idle, dissipated young men who encourage Charles's extravagance. He provides comic banter during the Portrait Auction scene.

Conclusion on Characters

- Characters - Scandal vs. sincerity

Sheridan's characters fall into two broad camps: the Scandal School (Lady Sneerwell, Snake, Sir Benjamin, Crabtree, Mrs. Candour, Joseph) and the School of Sincerity (Charles, Maria, Sir Oliver, Rowley, eventually Lady Teazle and Sir Peter). The contrast is sharp but not simplistic: Sheridan allows for reform (Lady Teazle, Charles) as well as unredeemable exposure (Joseph, Lady Sneerwell). Each character functions both dramatically (advancing intrigue, generating comedy) and symbolically (embodying moral types). This duality makes *The School for Scandal* a perfect comedy of manners: it delights in eccentricities while satirising social vice, and it affirms sincerity as the only stable basis for love, marriage, and reputation.

2.2.3 Act-wise Summary and Critical Analysis

Act I

Scene I

In Lady Sneerwell's drawing room, she and her helper, Mr. Snake, are busy spreading scandal. They enjoy pulling down the reputations of others and plotting intrigues. From their talk, we learn that Joseph Surface and Charles Surface, two brothers, are rivals for Maria, a wealthy heiress who lives under the care of Sir Peter Teazle. Maria loves Charles, but Sir Peter wants her to marry Joseph.

Lady Sneerwell secretly loves Charles herself, so she joins Joseph in a plan to spoil Charles's chances. Joseph arrives and tells Lady Sneerwell that their lies about

- Gossip and intrigue begin

Charles's debts and wild living are working- Maria is beginning to avoid him. Soon, Maria herself enters, followed by Mrs. Candour, Sir Benjamin Backbite, and Crabtree. All of them, except Maria, gossip cruelly about others. When the talk turns against Charles, Maria refuses to listen and leaves quietly. This shows her good judgment and honesty, unlike the others who delight in scandal.

Scene II

At his house, Sir Peter complains about his unhappy marriage. Six months ago, the old bachelor married young Lady Teazle, but instead of peace, he finds constant quarrels. She spends freely and contradicts him at every turn. Sir Peter is also upset that Maria refuses Joseph, whom he thinks is sensible and good, and instead prefers Charles, who seems wasteful.

- Sir Peter's troubles revealed

Rowley, the faithful old steward of the Surface family, arrives with happy news. Sir Oliver Surface, the uncle of Joseph and Charles, has come back to England after sixteen years in the East. Sir Peter is delighted at the return of his old friend.

Critical Analysis of Act I

- Reputation versus truth established

The first act sets up the main conflicts of the play. Sheridan introduces Charles and Joseph not by showing them directly, but through the words of others. This highlights the central theme of the drama: reputation shaped by gossip rather than truth. Lady Sneerwell's drawing room becomes the "school for scandal," where slander is treated as amusement.

- Maria as moral centre

Maria's rejection of this cruel pastime marks her as the moral centre of the play. On the other hand, Joseph appears outwardly "sentimental" and virtuous, but Lady Sneerwell already hints that he is really a "sentimental knave." Sheridan is mocking the fashionable show of sensibility without true kindness behind it.

- Act I blends satire and morals

The subplot of Sir Peter and Lady Teazle adds comedy and domestic tension. Their quarrels show the problems of marrying for youth or money rather than mutual understanding. Overall, Act I cleverly blends gossip, hypocrisy, and family strife to prepare the ground for both comedy and moral lessons.

Act II

Scene I

At Sir Peter's house, another quarrel breaks out between Sir Peter and Lady Teazle. Lady Teazle insists on enjoying the freedoms of high society. She wants to spend money on clothes, luxury, and pleasures like other fashionable ladies. Sir Peter, on the other hand, reminds her that she came from the countryside with simple habits, and now she has forgotten her background. He complains that her spending is ruining him. Their quarrel is comical, but it also shows the strain of a marriage between an old husband and a young, fashionable wife.

▶ Marital quarrel over fashion

Scene II

At Lady Sneerwell's drawing room, the "school for scandal" is again in full swing. Lady Sneerwell, Mrs. Candour, Sir Benjamin Backbite, Crabtree, and Joseph continue their cruel gossip, attacking the reputations of friends and acquaintances as if it were a game. They treat slander as amusement, delighting in exaggeration.

▶ Gossip continues, Joseph exposed

Sir Peter arrives in the middle of this talk, but he quickly grows uncomfortable. He cannot stand their malicious chatter and leaves in disgust. Meanwhile, Maria enters, and Joseph tries to speak to her alone. He again declares his love, but Maria firmly rejects him. She clearly shows her dislike for Joseph and her loyalty to Charles.

At this moment, Lady Teazle overhears Joseph speaking in an earnest tone to Maria. Since Joseph has also been giving Lady Teazle gallant attention, she feels angry and betrayed. This scene begins to expose Joseph's hypocrisy; he is playing with both women at the same time.

Scene III

Rowley, the faithful steward, meets Sir Oliver Surface, the uncle of Charles and Joseph, who has returned to England after sixteen years abroad. Rowley explains the situation of the two brothers: Charles is careless and extravagant, but good-hearted; Joseph appears virtuous and wise, but is not truly sincere.

▶ Sir Oliver plans disguises

Sir Peter, however, has the opposite opinion. He believes Joseph is the model of prudence and condemns

Charles as a reckless spendthrift. Sir Oliver wisely refuses to judge based on what others say. Instead, he decides to test both nephews with his own eyes. He plans to visit Charles disguised as a moneylender named Mr. Premium and Joseph disguised as a poor relation called Mr. Stanley.

Critical Analysis of Act II

- Marital conflict adds humour, depth

This act strengthens the main themes of gossip, deception, and mistaken judgment. The quarrel between Sir Peter and Lady Teazle gives humour, but it also reflects the problems of a marriage built on differences of age, taste, and money. Lady Teazle is eager for a fashionable life, while Sir Peter longs for peace and moderation. Their conflict adds a lively domestic subplot to the play.

- Gossip satirises society's addiction

The gossip scene at Lady Sneerwell's house shows how scandal spreads. The characters treat defaming others as entertainment, proving Sheridan's satirical view that high society is addicted to slander. The irony of Mrs. Candour, who is anything but candid, adds to the comedy.

- Joseph's duplicity further revealed

Most important is Joseph's double role. He pretends to be honourable and sentimental, yet he deceives both Maria and Lady Teazle. His hypocrisy is gradually being exposed, while Maria's firmness shows her integrity.

Finally, Sir Oliver's plan marks a turning point. By disguising himself and testing his nephews, he represents true judgment based on personal experience, not on idle talk. The audience now anticipates the results of these trials, which will reveal the brothers' real characters.

Act III

Scene I

Sir Peter grows restless and unhappy. The gossip he has heard makes him suspect that Lady Teazle may have feelings for Charles. His jealousy rises, though he has no proof. At the same time, Maria once again refuses to accept his advice that she should marry Joseph. She firmly declares her preference for Charles.

Soon, Lady Teazle enters, and another quarrel takes place between husband and wife. Sir Peter bitterly regrets marrying "a rural coquette" who has turned into a fashionable lady, while Lady Teazle retorts that she was

foolish to marry "an old bachelor" like him. Their quarrels, though comic, show the genuine unhappiness of both.

Scene II

Sir Oliver, now disguised as the moneylender Mr. Premium, goes with Moses, a good-hearted broker, to visit Charles. Before entering, they meet Trip, Charles's servant. Trip behaves in a bold and cheeky manner, showing little respect for the supposed moneylender. His comic behaviour reflects the disorder in Charles's household and gives Sir Oliver an unfavourable first impression of his nephew.

▶ Trip's behaviour exposes disorder at Charles' house

Scene III

Inside Charles's house, a noisy party is going on. Charles and his friends, including Careless, are enjoying wine, cards, and jokes. To Sir Oliver, this looks like pure waste and dissipation. He begins to believe the rumours that Charles is a reckless spendthrift.

When "Mr. Premium" demands security for a loan, Charles has no property to offer. Instead, he cheerfully suggests selling his family portraits to raise money. One by one, he puts up the pictures of his ancestors for auction. He mocks them with witty comments, showing little reverence for his lineage, and quickly sells them off. This scene is both comic and shocking; he is literally selling his family history for cash.

Sir Oliver ends Act III promising himself and the audience that he will never forgive his nephew for selling the family's portraits.

Critical Analysis of Act III

▶ Stage set for the Portrait Auction

This act is one of the most famous in Sheridan's play, especially the Portrait Auction scene, which combines comedy, satire, and emotion. The portrait scene is spread across multiple scenes which begins here. Sir Oliver's perception of Charles changes at the end of the auction revealing appearances can be deceiving. At first, Charles seems careless and wasteful, mocking the very ancestors whose pictures he sells. But when he refuses to sell his uncle's portrait, the audience sees his true character: generous, loyal, and affectionate, even if he is extravagant.

The contrast between appearance and reality becomes clear: society sees Charles as a spendthrift, but in truth, he has warmth and sincerity. Joseph, on the other hand, appears virtuous but is inwardly selfish. Sheridan here argues that real worth lies not in outward prudence but in kindness and loyalty.

The comic roles of Trip and Careless add humour and texture, while Moses stands as a rare figure of honesty and compassion in a play full of deceit. Dramatic irony also heightens the scene: the audience knows that "Mr. Premium" is Sir Oliver, so Charles's refusal to sell the portrait has double meaning; it is both loyalty to his uncle and an unintentional act of devotion in front of the man himself.

Act IV

Scenes I–II

Fig 2.2.2.Act- IV Scene I Auction Scene

Scenes I–

The continuation of the last scene, turning point of the scene is when "Mr. Premium" asks to buy the portrait of Sir Oliver himself, Charles refuses firmly. He says that though he is willing to sell the rest, he cannot part with the picture of the uncle who has always supported him. This sudden moment of loyalty and affection deeply touches Sir Oliver, who sees that Charles, for all his faults, has a good heart.

- Portrait Auction reveals Charles's heart

After the auction, Charles instructs Rowley to send £100 from the proceeds to help a poor relative, Mr. Stanley, without knowing that Stanley is none other than Sir Oliver in disguise. Sir Oliver leaves, moved by his nephew's generosity and honesty of feeling.

Scene II

Sir Oliver, after the portrait auction, is softened in his view of Charles. With Moses and Rowley, he discusses what he has seen. Moses says Charles is careless and extravagant, but Sir Oliver replies that generosity and affection weigh more than thrift. When he learns that Charles has already sent £100 to help the poor relative Stanley, Sir Oliver is delighted. He now turns to the second part of his plan: to test Joseph's true nature in disguise as the needy Mr. Stanley.

- Sir Oliver praises Charles

Scene III – The Screen Scene

At Joseph's house, Joseph waits impatiently for Lady Teazle, with whom he is secretly planning an affair, though he also continues to pursue Maria for her fortune. This double-dealing shows his greed and hypocrisy.

Lady Teazle arrives, nervous but willing to listen. Joseph presses his advantage, suggesting that since her husband doubts her fidelity, she might as well enjoy the freedoms of high society and take him as a lover. Lady Teazle is troubled but tempted. At that moment, a servant announces that Sir Peter has come to the house. Alarmed, Lady Teazle hides quickly behind a large screen, while Joseph pretends innocence.

Sir Peter enters, full of jealousy, and confides his worries to Joseph. He admits he fears that Lady Teazle is in love with Charles. He also reveals, tenderly, that he plans to settle money on her so she may be independent

and comfortable.Lady Teazle, hearing all this behind the screen, is moved and ashamed of her flirtation with Joseph.

Fig.2.2.3 Act IV Scene III-The Screen Scene

- Joseph's hypocrisy exposed

Charles now arrives, and Joseph tries to trap him into admitting an affair with Lady Teazle. Charles indignantly denies it. When Sir Peter, who has hidden himself in a closet, is dragged out by Charles, he realises his suspicions about Charles were false. Relieved, he embraces Charles.

- Portrait Auction blends humour and pathos

Then comes the comic climax. Sir Peter jokes that Joseph must have some woman hidden in the room. Charles, ever mischievous, pulls down the screen, and out steps Lady Teazle! Both Sir Peter and Charles are astonished. Joseph's excuses fail, and Lady Teazle, deeply embarrassed, admits the truth. She realises Joseph never loved her but

only wanted to use her. At the same time, she recognises her husband's genuine affection and decides to reform.

Critical Analysis of Act IV

The auction scene that extends from act III reveals Charales's true character. At first, Charles seems careless and wasteful, mocking the very ancestors whose pictures he sells. But when he refuses to sell his uncle's portrait, the audience sees his true character: generous, loyal, and affectionate, even if he is extravagant.

The contrast between appearance and reality becomes clear: society sees Charles as a spendthrift, but in truth, he has warmth and sincerity. Joseph, on the other hand, appears virtuous but is inwardly selfish. Sheridan here argues that real worth lies not in outward prudence but in kindness and loyalty. The comic roles of Trip and Careless add humour and texture, while Moses stands as a rare figure of honesty and compassion in a play full of deceit. Dramatic irony also heightens the scene: the audience knows that "Mr. Premium" is Sir Oliver, so Charles's refusal to sell the portrait has double meaning; it is both loyalty to his uncle and an unintentional act of devotion in front of the man himself.

▶ Joseph contrasted as false and selfish

The Screen Scene is the turning point of the play and one of the most brilliant pieces of stagecraft in English comedy. Sheridan uses physical concealments, the screen and the closet, as symbols of moral concealment. When the screen falls, hypocrisy is literally and figuratively exposed.

▶ Screen Scene exposes hidden hypocrisy

Joseph's downfall is complete: his smooth words and show of sentiment collapse before undeniable evidence. Charles, on the other hand, is publicly cleared of suspicion. Lady Teazle's repentance is believable because it arises not from a sermon but from overhearing her husband's generosity. Sheridan thus shows that true reform comes from kindness and affection, not harsh judgment.

▶ Lady Teazle reformed by affection

This act also unites the two plots: the testing of the nephews and the Teazles' marital quarrel. Both are resolved through exposure and truth. Dramatic irony heightens the comedy, since the audience knows what each character hides while they themselves do not.

▶ Two plots converge through revelation

Act V

Scene I

Sir Oliver, now disguised as the poor relative Mr. Stanley, visits Joseph. He pleads for a little financial help, reminding Joseph of family ties. Joseph, who always boasts of his benevolence and virtue, refuses. He claims he is too poor himself and cannot spare a penny. When "Stanley" presses him, Joseph even denies ever having received gifts from his uncle abroad. This denial is shocking, for Sir Oliver has, in fact, sent him twelve thousand pounds. Sir Oliver now sees Joseph's real nature, selfish, ungrateful, and hypocritical.

▶ Joseph fails Sir Oliver's test

Scene II

At Lady Sneerwell's house, the gossips are already busy with the story of the Screen Scene. Mrs. Candour, Sir Benjamin, and Crabtree pass around exaggerated and twisted versions of what happened. They add duels, secret meetings, and wild inventions, proving that scandal always grows larger than truth. Sheridan here shows how gossip never rests, even when the truth is already plain.

▶ Gossip distorts the truth

Scene III – Final Exposures and Reconciliations

Lady Sneerwell, bitter at her failure and still jealous of Maria, scolds Joseph for letting their plan collapse. They attempt one last intrigue: they produce forged letters and plan to use Mr. Snake as a witness to prove that Charles had once promised to marry Lady Sneerwell.

But the scheme fails. When Snake is called, he unexpectedly tells the truth. He admits that the letters were forged and that Lady Sneerwell and Joseph plotted together to defame Charles and prevent his marriage to Maria. This revelation ruins them both. Lady Sneerwell withdraws in shame, and Joseph's hypocrisy is exposed beyond repair.

At the same time, Lady Teazle openly repents and reconciles with Sir Peter, who gladly forgives her. Sir Oliver reveals his identity, praises Charles for his generosity, and condemns Joseph for his deceit. Charles, humbled, promises to reform his reckless habits. Maria, loyal from the beginning, is happily united with Charles, while Rowley, the honest steward, enjoys the role of messenger

▶ Plots collapse, truth prevails

of good news. The play ends with marriages restored, scandals exposed, and society corrected with laughter.

Critical Analysis of Act V

- False virtue and gossip collapse

The final act ties together Sheridan's themes of scandal, hypocrisy, and sincerity. The downfall of Joseph and Lady Sneerwell shows that false virtue and malicious gossip cannot survive exposure. Snake, ironically, becomes the agent of truth, reminding us that in a world of scandal, even professional informers may turn honest when it suits them.

- Scandal shown as endless disease

Sheridan also makes a point about gossip itself: in Scene II, the scandal-mongers continue their chatter, proving that slander is a permanent disease of society. The play does not silence gossip; it only shows that integrity and affection can outlast it.

- Sincerity rewarded despite flaws

The characters who are rewarded, Charles and Lady Teazle, are not perfect, but they are sincere. Charles is extravagant but kind; Lady Teazle is vain but capable of repentance. Joseph, who always pretended to be virtuous, is punished because his morality was only a mask. Sir Oliver's disguises complete the Enlightenment idea of testing truth by direct evidence, not by hearsay.

- Comic ending restores harmony

In classical comic tradition, the play closes with reconciliations and a marriage, symbolising the restoration of harmony. But beneath the laughter lies Sheridan's serious message: gossip may entertain society, but true worth lies in honesty, kindness, and forgiveness.

2.2.4 Satire in Sheridan's *The School for Scandal*

- Play satirises gossip and vanity

Richard Brinsley Sheridan's *The School for Scandal* (1777) is widely regarded as the pinnacle of eighteenth-century English comedy. It inherits the sparkle of Restoration comedies of manners but tempers them with the moral seriousness of the age of sensibility. At its heart, the play is both a theatrical entertainment and a social critique: it ridicules the follies of fashionable society, gossip, hypocrisy, vanity, and the obsession with appearances, while affirming sincerity, generosity, and truth. Sheridan's genius lies in using wit, farce, and spectacle not merely to provoke laughter but to instruct his audience about the dangers of scandal as a cultural habit.

The play's satire is most visible in the construction of Lady Sneerwell's circle, the so-called "School for Scandal." This salon of fashionable idlers, Lady Sneerwell, Sir Benjamin Backbite, Crabtree, Mrs. Candour, and their satellite Snake, devotes itself to ruining reputations for sport. Their conversations parody polite discourse by turning it into assassination: compliments are veiled insults, and invention is valued above truth. Sheridan shows how eighteenth-century high society was addicted to gossip as a form of social capital, a way of exercising power over others in the absence of real action or intellect. In their mouths, rumour is currency, and Sheridan's satire exposes how malicious tongues can destroy the fabric of relationships and reputations. The irony of names, Mrs. Candour, who is the least candid; Sir Benjamin Backbite, who flatters and slanders simultaneously, sharpens the critique of a world where language has become divorced from truth.

- Scandal School embodies malicious tongues

Beyond the scandalmongers, Sheridan extends his social critique to the domestic sphere. Sir Peter Teazle's quarrels with his young wife Lady Teazle, satirise the mismatch of May–December marriages, a common feature of eighteenth-century polite society. Sir Peter, the elderly guardian of Maria, is pompous and jealous; Lady Teazle, once a modest country girl, has been seduced by metropolitan fashion into extravagance and flirtation. Their constant bickering is comic, but it is also Sheridan's way of interrogating the cultural pressures of gender and class: the temptations of fashion, the constraints of patriarchal marriage, and the comic consequences when wealth marries youth without mutual understanding. Yet Sheridan does not simply ridicule them; through Lady Teazle's repentance and Sir Peter's rediscovered affection, he demonstrates that reconciliation and sincerity can triumph over vanity.

- Sir Peter and Lady Teazle satirised marriage

At the centre of the play's moral vision is the contrast between the Surface brothers. Joseph Surface epitomises the hypocrisy of a society that prizes appearances. Outwardly, he is the picture of "sentiment" and morality; inwardly, he is selfish, scheming, and licentious. Charles Surface, by contrast, is condemned by society as a reckless spendthrift, but Sheridan reveals his generosity, loyalty, and warmth. The Portrait Auction scene and the Screen Scene dramatise this contrast with theatrical brilliance. In

- Surface brothers contrast hypocrisy and sincerity

the first, Charles irreverently sells his ancestors' portraits but refuses to part with Sir Oliver's, proving that affection matters more than lineage. In the second, Joseph's carefully crafted mask collapses when Lady Teazle is revealed behind the screen. Both scenes function as public tests in which the falsity of reputation is exposed by the immediacy of action. Sheridan ridicules the superficial values of high society, where Joseph's sanctimony is praised and Charles's openness condemned, and insists that sincerity, however imperfect, is the only true virtue.

- Satire unmasks truth through comedy

The dramatic purpose of Sheridan's satire is not merely to amuse but to instruct through laughter. By creating situations of concealment and revelation, Sheridan literalises his central theme: truth is hidden by appearances until comedy tears down the screen. The audience, armed with dramatic irony, delights in watching hypocrisy exposed and sincerity vindicated. The exposure of Joseph, the repentance of Lady Teazle, and the reward of Charles and Maria enact what classical comedy demands: a society purged of vice and reconciled to virtue. Yet Sheridan's play remains more than a moral allegory. It is also a keen social document, showing how gossip, vanity, and false virtue threaten to corrode the values of generosity, loyalty, and affection.

- Sheridan critiques society while entertaining

In conclusion, The School for Scandal is Sheridan's satirical critique of eighteenth-century high society, a society obsessed with appearances, quick to slander, and easily deceived by false virtue. Through his sharp wit, ironic names, and masterful stagecraft, Sheridan ridicules gossip, hypocrisy, and vanity, while simultaneously affirming sincerity, loyalty, and truth. The play's dramatic purpose lies in this double achievement: it entertains with laughter but also admonishes its audience, showing that scandal is not merely a joke but a corrosive force in social life. In its mixture of satire and sentiment, Sheridan's comedy reflects the contradictions of its age and continues to resonate as a timeless critique of human folly.

Summarised Overview

The School for Scandal is one of the best comedies belonging to the school of Comedy of Manners ever written in English, with its spirited satire of affectation and pretentiousness. Charles Surface is a young man with a lot of wealth and good intentions. His apparently more respectable and deserving brother Joseph is revealed to be a cunning schemer who pursues Lady Teazle, the young wife of a rich old nobleman. Their uncle, Sir Oliver Surface, assumes a different identity to find out which of his nephews will inherit his fortune. Charles wins both money and genuine love, but Joseph is exposed as the hypocrite.

Assignments

1. Discuss the view of human nature pictured in Richard Brinsley Sheridan's *The School for Scandal*.
2. One of the central themes in Richard Brinsley Sheridan's *The School for Scandal* is gossip. Why is gossip so harmful?
3. Evaluate the play as a work of social criticism.
4. How does the play begin?
5. How does Lady Sneerwell plan to make Maria not love Charles?

Suggested Reading

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SGOU

Space for Learner Engagement for Objective Questions

Learners are encouraged to develop objective questions based on the content in the paragraph as a sign of their comprehension of the content. The Learners may reflect on the recap bullets and relate their understanding with the narrative in order to frame objective questions from the given text. The University expects that 1 - 2 questions are developed for each paragraph. The space given below can be used for listing the questions.

1.

SGOU

Unit 3

Poetry

(Non-Detailed)

Learning Outcomes

Upon completion of the unit, the learner will be able to:

- familiarise themselves with different genres of poetry and drama emerged during Milton's Age to Pre-romantic period
- understand the shallowness and superficiality of upper-class English society
- understand the mock-epic as a Heroi-comical poem

1. The Rape of the Lock

Alexander Pope

Background

A mock-epic is a short narrative poem that uses the devices and conventions of the epic to treat unimportant subjects, turning it into a parody or burlesque of the epic. The use of the grandiloquent epic-style and epic-conventions for a theme that is essentially trivial and insignificant results in a mocking, ridiculous effect. The ancient Mock-epic *The Battle of the Frog and Mice*, a parody of Homer's *Iliad*, Jonathan Swift's *Tale of a Tub* and *Battle of the Books*, and Alexander Pope's *Dunciad* and *The Rape of the Lock*, *Mac Flecknoe* by John Dryden are the finest examples of the mock-epic.

Keywords

Mock Epic, Satire, Parody, Burlesque

Discussion

Fig 2.3.1 Alexander Pope

Jonathan Swift's *Battle of the Books* (1704) is a mock-heroic prose narrative. A literary debate about the relative merits and shortcomings of ancient and modern learning has successfully presented in an exalted epic manner and style. A form of satire known as a mock-epic or mock-heroic applies the elevated heroic style of a traditional epic poem to a trivial subject. The tradition, which dates back to the classical era and the anonymous Homeric burlesque known as the *Batrachomyomachia* or *Battle of the Frogs and the Mice*, was refined to a high art during the Neoclassical era in the late 17th and early 18th centuries. The mock-epic, a two-edged satirical tool, was occasionally employed by the period's "moderns" to make fun of modern-day "ancients" (classicists). By giving flimsily disguised contemporary events a heroic spin, "ancients" more frequently used it to highlight the unheroic nature of the modern age.

- *The Battle of the Books* the greatest of the mock-epic

The majority of mock-epics start with an invocation to the muse and employ the traditional elements of epic literature, such as set speeches, supernatural interventions, and descents into the underworld, in addition to incredibly detailed descriptions of the protagonist's actions. Pope's *The Rape of the Lock* provides essential elements of a mock-epic. The theme of the mock epic is the gallant Lord Peter, the lady Belinda's lover, chopping off her hair. The young lady is unhappy, the two families argue, and Pope is asked to write something to make the young lady laugh off her displeasure. For his essentially unimportant theme, Pope employs the epic's machinery, conventions, and grandiloquent epic style. A mocking, ridiculous effect is produced by exaggerating and glorifying the trivial. Instead of the mighty epic-hero, we have a tiny lock of a girl's hair as the main subject-matter, and the digressions and episodes centre on a game of cards and a battle between the lord and the ladies over the severed lock of hair rather than the

military exploits of some enormous epic hero. Instead of using swords and spears, the attackers used a bodkin, a pinch of snuff, and their victims' deadly eyes. Small sylphs, perched atop bodkins or candlesticks, who are acting as witnesses to the conflict between the parties, are also present. Throughout the work, various stylistic devices of the epic exaggeration, Latinism, personification, and circumlocution have been used, and because the subject is irrelevant, the outcome is laughably absurd. In this way, the epic values are flipped, giving us the mock-epic, a parody of the real epic.

- snipping of the locks of a lady Belinda

Alexander Pope wrote *The Rape of the Lock,* which was first published in 1712 and later revised and republished in 1714. Pope makes fun of two of his acquaintances, Arabella Fermor and Lord Petre, in *The Rape of the Lock* by using Belinda and the Baron. It is in response to a request made by John Caryll, a well-known Roman Catholic at the time, who was also his friend. Arabella Fermor's hair was cut off, according to Caryll's explanation, by his friend Lord Petre. The families had been at odds ever since the incident. Pope wrote *The Rape of the Lock* to make light of the situation. Even though the two families had previously enjoyed a long-standing friendship, the theft of Miss Belle Fermor's hair was treated too seriously and led to a rift between them. The poem is a mock-epic that parodies the aristocracy in 18th-century London. Only two cantos made up the original version. The current version was finally written by Pope in 1717 as he was getting ready to publish a collection of his writing. This version, which has five cantos, also includes Clarissa's speech, which helps to explain the poem's moral message.

- Pope uses Belinda and the Baron to mock two of his acquaintances

2.3.1 Summary and Analysis

Canto I: Belinda's Dream and the Ritual of Beauty

The poem begins with a mock-epic invocation, in which Pope announces that he will sing of "dire offense" arising from the theft of a lock of hair. The narrator humorously elevates this minor social incident into the realm of heroic poetry. Pope invokes his friend John Caryll (appearing as "C,"), the mediator who inspired the poem.

- Mock-epic elevates trivial incident

Belinda, the heroine, is introduced while still asleep. Her guardian sylph, Ariel, watches over her and sends

her a dream. In this dream, Ariel explains the order of the supernatural world: sylphs are airy spirits who protect maidens, especially those distinguished by beauty and chastity. Their duty is to guard young women from mischief, although their concerns, such as a torn gown, a broken fan, or the death of a lapdog, are as trivial as their mistresses'. Ariel warns Belinda of a looming but unspecified disaster and tells her to "beware of man."

- Belinda introduced through dream vision

When Belinda awakens, she finds a love letter, which makes her forget the warning. Then begins the elaborate "toilette" scene, one of the most celebrated passages in English literature. Here Pope describes Belinda's dressing table as though it were a sacred altar, with cosmetics, jewellery, and perfumes as holy offerings. Her maid, Betty, assists her, but unseen sylphs also help to arrange her hair and garments. Belinda, armed with "awful beauty," is prepared for the social battles of the day. This mock-heroic ritual parodies the epic convention of the warrior arming for combat.

- Toilette scene parodies epic arming

Analysis- Canto I

In this opening canto, Pope sets the stage with a mock-epic invocation, parodying the solemn beginnings of Homer and Virgil. The dream vision of Ariel introduces the supernatural machinery of sylphs, modelled after epic gods but diminished to airy guardians of fashion. Their concerns, fans, jewellery, dresses, and pets, are deliberately trivial. Ariel's warning to "beware of man" echoes the epic convention of fate foreshadowing tragedy, yet here it foreshadows only the loss of a lock of hair.

- Mock-epic parody of classical invocations

The celebrated toilette scene is central to Pope's satire. Belinda's dressing table is described as an altar, with cosmetics and ornaments as sacred offerings. Her beauty is presented as a kind of religion, where powder, puffs, and patches substitute for priestly ritual. This imagery exposes the aristocratic obsession with appearance, suggesting that society confuses outward beauty with inward virtue.

- Society's obsession with appearances mocked

Pope mocks fashionable society by inflating its rituals into epic grandeur. The canto also introduces a key theme: the misalignment between form and content, between epic seriousness and trivial subject matter.

Canto II: The Voyage and the Baron's Design

Belinda now sets out upon the Thames in a splendid barge, accompanied by fashionable society. Her beauty eclipses all others present, and Pope ironically compares her brilliance to the sun. Around her neck she wears a shining cross, but Pope slyly hints that this emblem of devotion has become merely another ornament.

Attention then shifts to the Baron, Belinda's admirer, who has resolved to gain possession of one of her two shining curls. Earlier that morning, he had built an altar to the god of Love, upon which he burned past love letters, garters, and other tokens of gallantry. He prayed to the powers of love for success, and half his prayers were granted.

▶ Baron plots to seize curl

Meanwhile, Ariel senses danger. He summons an assembly of sylphs, described in terms that parody the mustering of troops in Homer and Virgil. Each sylph is given a post: Zephyretta guards Belinda's fan, Brillante her earrings, Momentilla her watch, and Crispissa her precious hair. Ariel warns them that an ominous fate hangs over their charge. The parody here lies in the disproportion between the grandeur of epic preparation and the petty matters under protection, locks, fans, trinkets, and petticoats.

Analysis- Canto II

Here Pope develops the plot and heightens the mock-heroic tone. Belinda is presented as a solar deity, dazzling onlookers as she sails the Thames. Her cross, instead of symbolising devotion, functions as an ornament, subtly critiquing the secularisation of religion in fashionable circles.

The Baron's ritual of sacrifice parodies the epic warrior's prayer to the gods. Instead of bulls or treasure, he burns love letters, garters, and romances, praying for success in winning Belinda's lock. This inversion highlights the ridiculousness of elevating trivial love conquests to the scale of divine intervention.

▶ Baron's parody sacrifice ridicules love

Ariel's mustering of sylphs is a direct parody of Homeric catalogues of warriors. Each spirit is assigned a post, guarding Belinda's fan, earrings, watch, and lock. The parody lies in the disproportion: where Homer catalogued thousands of warriors preparing for Troy, Pope lists spirits

▶ Epic grandeur exposes aristocratic triviality

assigned to trinkets. The sylphs' vigilance over powder and ribbons highlights the fragility and superficiality of their mistress's world.

The canto critiques the values of an aristocracy obsessed with trifles, exposing their hollow grandeur by mimicking the serious rituals of classical epic.

Fig 2.3.2 An illustration of *Rape of lock*

Canto III: The Game of Ombre and the Rape of Lock

- Ombre game parodied as battle

Upon arriving at Hampton Court, the fashionable lords and ladies engage in gossip and diversion. Belinda sits down to play Ombre, a popular card game, with the Baron and another lord. Pope describes the game as though it were a full-scale epic battle. The cards become soldiers

on the battlefield, the fortunes of war shift back and forth, and the sylphs are imagined as guardians of the cards. At first, Belinda seems to be losing, but in a final dramatic stroke, she secures victory, triumphantly casting down her opponents.

After the game, coffee is served. The exotic aroma, brought from distant colonies, is described with mock solemnity. The drink strengthens the Baron's resolve, and Clarissa, a lady of the court, slyly provides him with scissors. Pope parodies the epic convention of a hero being armed by a goddess before battle, but here it is a suitor armed with scissors before an act of petty theft.

- Coffee ritual fuels Baron's resolve

The sylphs rush to defend Belinda's curls, tugging at her earrings and rustling her hair to warn her, but Ariel discovers in her heart a hidden "earthly lover." Disappointed, he withdraws his protection. The Baron then seizes the moment: he snips off one of Belinda's shining locks. He exults in triumph as Belinda shrieks in horror, and the sylphs lament their defeat. The "rape of the lock" is thus accomplished, narrated with the tragic solemnity of an epic catastrophe.

- Mock-epic tragedy of stolen curl

Analysis- Canto III

This canto dramatises the central action: the theft of Belinda's lock. Pope narrates the card game Ombre in the style of a Homeric battle. The suits are rival armies, the cards march like troops, and the outcome teeters as in a heroic contest. Belinda triumphs in this mock battle, securing her role as a comic epic heroine.

The theft of the lock is staged like a grand catastrophe. Coffee, imported luxury from colonies, is described with exaggerated reverence, its fumes emboldening the Baron. Clarissa lends him scissors as though she were a goddess arming a hero. The sylphs' frantic but futile resistance recalls the interventions of gods in epics, but their inability to stop the theft underscores the futility of their guardianship. Ariel's withdrawal after perceiving an "earthly lover" in Belinda's heart adds a subtle critique: Belinda's virtue is not as pure as it appears, and even her protectors desert her.

- Coffee and scissors parody epic arming

- Lock theft mocked as grand conquest

Pope exposes the absurdity of courtly gallantry by narrating the theft of a lock as though it were a conquest equal to Achilles' slaying of Hector. The canto critiques both male vanity (the Baron's arrogance) and female vanity (Belinda's excessive pride in beauty).

Canto IV: Umbriel and the Cave of Spleen

- Umbriel introduces darker mock-pathos

The tone now shifts to mock-pathos. Belinda, grieving over her lost lock, becomes the victim of exaggerated sorrow. At this point, Umbriel, a gnome, takes centre stage. Unlike the sylphs of the air, Umbriel is an earthy spirit associated with melancholy. He descends into the Cave of Spleen, a grotesque parody of the classical descent into the underworld (as seen in Virgil's Aeneid).

- Cave of Spleen parodies epic underworld

In the Cave dwell monstrous figures: Ill-Nature, Affectation, and women deformed by distempers. The Queen of Spleen reigns here, a personification of hysteria and melancholy, believed in Pope's time to afflict women especially. Umbriel petitions her for weapons of grief and receives a bag filled with sighs, sobs, and quarrels, and a vial containing fainting fits, soft sorrows, and tears.

- Sir Plume's protest mocked as vain

Returning to the upper world, Umbriel empties these upon Belinda and her confidante Thalestris, inflaming their passions. Thalestris urges Belinda to recognise her dishonour and insists that the theft will tarnish her reputation. She then incites her lover, Sir Plume, to confront the Baron. Sir Plume, described as a vapid fop obsessed with his snuffbox and cane, delivers a blustering but ineffective protest. The Baron, unmoved, declares that he will not relinquish the lock "while breath inspires his nostrils."

Analysis- Canto IV

- Belinda's grief framed as mock-tragic

The tone here becomes mock-tragic. Belinda, grieving, embodies exaggerated passion. Umbriel, the gnome, descends into the Cave of Spleen, a grotesque parody of the epic descent into the underworld (katabasis). Instead of shades of heroes, Umbriel meets grotesque figures, Ill Nature, Affectation, and twisted forms of female maladies. The Queen of Spleen presides, distributing sighs, sobs, fainting fits, and tears.

This grotesque imagery satirises the fashionable tendency toward affectation, melancholy, and

hypochondria. Women of Pope's society often cultivated delicate health and exaggerated sensibility, which Pope ridicules by imagining a whole underworld devoted to such maladies.

Umbriel's release of sighs and sobs upon Belinda and Thalestris inflames their lamentation. Thalestris exaggerates the dishonour of losing the lock, while Sir Plume, her foolish suitor, makes a blustering, incoherent protest. His failure emphasises Pope's satire of male foppery, suggesting that men are no less vain and ridiculous than women.

- Society's affectation and sensibility mocked

This canto ridicules fashionable melancholy, over-sensitivity, and the hollow codes of honour. By parodying the epic underworld, Pope shows that the aristocracy's "tragedies" are nothing more than affectation and vanity.

Canto V: The Mock Battle and Apotheosis of the Lock

The climax arrives in the form of a mock-epic battle. The ladies and gentlemen engage in a parodic combat, their weapons being glances, fans, snuff, and sharp words. Pope narrates the skirmish with all the grandeur of Homeric warfare, parodying his own translations of the Iliad.

- Society engages in mock combat

Belinda herself becomes a warrior heroine. Assisted by her companion Thalestris, she confronts the Baron directly. She throws snuff into his nose, a comic fulfilment of his earlier boast that only when he no longer breathed could he be parted from the lock. She then brandishes a deadly "bodkin," which Pope humorously traces through a genealogy of past uses, as if it were a legendary sword. The Baron pleads for mercy, declaring that his passion for Belinda has been only inflamed by her anger.

- Belinda fights Baron with wit

But when the company searches for the lock, it is nowhere to be found. At this point, Pope invokes a mythological parallel: just as Queen Berenice's lock became a constellation in the sky, Belinda's lock has ascended to the heavens. It now shines eternally among the stars, imperishable and radiant. Thus ends the poem, with the trivial incident of a snipped curl elevated into cosmic immortality.

- Lost lock ascends to the heavens

Analysis- Canto V

The final canto offers both climax and resolution. A mock battle erupts between the ladies and gentlemen, with fans, snuff, and glances as weapons. Pope parodies his own translations of Homer, substituting epic arms with courtly accessories. The description of Belinda's bodkin, traced through a mock genealogy of uses, ridicules the epic tradition of naming legendary weapons.

Belinda herself becomes an epic heroine, confronting the Baron directly. She hurls snuff into his nose and brandishes her bodkin. The Baron pleads for mercy but remains enamoured. Yet the lock is gone, it has mysteriously disappeared.

The poem concludes with the apotheosis of the lock: it has risen to the heavens as a star, like Queen Berenice's lock in classical myth. This resolution is satirical but also celebratory. While the trivial incident is mocked, the lock gains eternal glory in poetry and in the stars. Thus, Pope demonstrates the power of art to immortalise what is ephemeral.

The mock battle ridicules the martial codes of both genders, reducing their weapons to trifles. The apotheosis parodies epic endings but simultaneously reveals poetry's power to transform the trivial into the eternal.

Through these five cantos, Pope adapts every major convention of epic, invocation, divine machinery, arming, battle, underworld descent, and apotheosis, but uses them to mock the vanities of 18th-century aristocratic society. Each canto focuses on a different aspect of social life: beauty rituals, gallantry, games and pleasures, fashionable melancholy, and the pursuit of honour. Together, they form a comic epic in miniature, exposing the superficiality of court culture while also showcasing Pope's mastery of wit, heroic couplets, and classical parody.

- Pope mocks the vanities of aristocratic society that grants glory to trivial

2.3.2 Analysis

Beauty and Vanity

One of the most dominant themes of Pope's poem is the aristocracy's excessive preoccupation with beauty and outward appearance. Belinda, the heroine, epitomises this cultural obsession. From the very beginning, her beauty is

described in radiant, almost divine terms. As she sails on the Thames, she is likened to the sun, eclipsing all other figures with her charms. Pope exaggerates this effect to mock the idolatry of beauty in fashionable circles, where external charm overshadows moral or intellectual worth.

The celebrated toilette scene crystallises this theme. Belinda's dressing table is described as an altar, with cosmetics, jewels, and powders functioning as sacred offerings. The ritual of beautification becomes a form of worship, suggesting that vanity has supplanted true religion in polite society. The maid Betty believes herself to be responsible for Belinda's dazzling appearance, but Pope slyly reminds us that the real work is done by unseen sylphs, parodying divine intervention in epic tradition. Here Pope both satirises the fragility of beauty, dependent on powder, patches, and ornament, and exposes how society confuses physical appearance with virtue.

Belinda's lock of hair embodies the theme of vanity at its sharpest. Though physically insignificant, it becomes the most treasured part of her beauty, and the theft of the lock is treated as a calamity of epic proportions. The Baron covets it as a trophy, much as a warrior prizes spoils of war, while Belinda equates its loss with dishonour. The poem satirises this distorted value system, where reputation tied to looks outweighs reason, morality, or common sense. Clarissa's speech, which urges women to value sense and kindness above fleeting charms, provides the clearest critique of this obsession. Yet the fact that her wisdom is disregarded underscores how deeply intoxicated society was by appearances.

Pope reveals that beauty is both powerful and ephemeral. It captivates society, dictates relationships, and defines honour, but it is ultimately superficial and perishable. Only poetry can preserve it beyond time.

2.3.3 Gender Satire and Social Roles

Another key theme is Pope's satire on the behaviours and expectations of men and women in 18th-century polite society. Both genders are portrayed as victims of vanity, gallantry, and social codes.

Women are presented as preoccupied with beauty, gossip, and reputation. Belinda, though good-natured, is absorbed in her charms and her status as an admired

▶ Gender Satire and Social Roles

belle. Thalestris, her confidante, inflames her passions, warning that her honour is forever compromised by the theft of the lock. Pope satirises the exaggerated sensibility of women in the Cave of Spleen episode, where fainting fits, affectation, and hypochondria are grotesquely personified. The implication is that fashionable women cultivate weakness and emotional display as part of their identity.

Men, however, do not escape satire. The Baron is arrogant and unscrupulous, treating the theft of Belinda's lock as a heroic conquest. His "altar to Love," built with burnt garters and love letters, parodies not only religious ritual but also male vanity in treating seduction as warfare. Sir Plume, Thalestris's suitor, is ridiculed as a ridiculous dandy, more concerned with his amber snuffbox and cane than with meaningful defence of honour. Even Ariel, Belinda's guardian sylph, abandons her after discovering her earthly desires, suggesting that female virtue, supposedly protected, is often compromised by hidden passion.

Through this dual satire, Pope critiques the entire system of gallantry. Men pursue women as trophies, and women cultivate beauty as capital. Both are complicit in sustaining a culture of superficiality. The mock-epic form intensifies the absurdity by treating their actions as though they were heroic struggles on the scale of Homer's Iliad.

Pope's gender satire is sharp but not misogynistic. By ridiculing both sexes equally, he reveals how vanity, not virtue, governs social relations, and how artificial codes of honour distort natural human interaction.

2.3.4 Epic Parody and Mock-Heroic Style

▶ Epic Parody and Mock-Heroic Style

The most distinctive feature of the poem is its use of the mock-epic form. Pope borrows the conventions of classical epic poetry but applies them to trivial, domestic incidents, creating comic incongruity. This stylistic choice becomes a theme in itself: the parody of epic grandeur.

- Invocation: Instead of singing of arms and heroes, Pope announces a "dire offense" arising from the theft of a lock.
- Supernatural Machinery: Sylphs and gnomes

parody Homer's gods. Ariel marshals his airy troops with the seriousness of Jove mustering Olympians, yet their tasks are laughably petty, guarding Belinda's earrings, watch, and petticoat.

- Arming of the Hero: Belinda's toilette mirrors the epic arming of heroes. Cosmetics become weapons, powders and patches her armour, and beauty her means of combat.
- Battle Scenes: The card game Ombre is described like the Iliad's battles, with armies of spades, clubs, and diamonds clashing on the table. Later, the mock battle in Canto V replaces swords and shields with fans, snuff, and glances.
- Descent to the Underworld: Umbriel's journey to the Cave of Spleen parodies Virgil's katabasis. Instead of heroic shades, Umbriel meets grotesque embodiments of affectation and melancholy.
- Apotheosis: The lock's transformation into a star parodies mythological translations but also affirms poetry's power to immortalise.

Through these devices, Pope demonstrates the absurd disproportion between form and content. By wrapping trivialities in epic grandeur, he mocks both the superficiality of society and the pretensions of the epic form itself.

The poem becomes a mirror where the epic tradition itself is humorously redefined, no longer a chronicle of nations and gods, but of beauty, vanity, and fashion.

2.3.5 Reputation, Honour, and the Fragility of Social Values

Honour and reputation, especially in the lives of women, form another significant theme. In aristocratic society, honour was equated with chastity and reputation, both fragile and easily tarnished. Belinda's hysterical grief over the stolen lock illustrates how reputation, though built on trifles, was treated as a matter of life and death.

- Reputation, Honour, and the Fragility of Social Values

Thalestris emphasises this fragility when she insists that Belinda's social standing is forever damaged, while her own reputation too suffers by association. Such exaggerated responses reveal that reputation was not

grounded in virtue or moral strength, but in public perception and appearances.

Pope satirises this misplaced seriousness in Canto V's mock battle. What should have been a Homeric clash of nations becomes a flurry of fans, snuff, and flirtatious attacks. The seriousness with which both men and women guard their social standing is exposed as absurd, as it rests on superficial gestures rather than true moral values.

By treating reputation as fragile and ridiculous, Pope critiques the hollow moral codes of his age. The irony lies in how a lock of hair, physically negligible, could hold more weight in society than wisdom, courage, or integrity.

Poetry's Power and Immortality

Despite its satire, the poem ends with a theme that transcends parody: the enduring power of poetry. When the stolen lock cannot be found, the narrator declares that it has ascended to the heavens, shining eternally as a constellation. The apotheosis parodies epic endings, but it also reveals Pope's faith in art's ability to preserve beauty beyond its natural span.

▶ Poetry's Power and Immortality

The lock, trivial in itself, becomes immortal through Pope's verse. Belinda's beauty, which would otherwise fade, is fixed forever in literature. In this way, Pope turns a petty quarrel into a literary monument, ensuring that Arabella Fermor, Lord Petre, and their trivial quarrel would never be forgotten.

This theme reflects Augustan ideals of literature: art as a civilising force that outlives individuals and their follies. It aligns Pope with classical poets such as Horace and Ovid, who celebrated poetry's power to confer immortality.

The poem is both satire and celebration. While mocking the aristocracy, Pope also affirms the value of poetry itself, able to elevate the trivial into the eternal, the ephemeral into the immortal.

Through its major themes, beauty and vanity, gender satire, epic parody, fragile honour, and poetry's immortality, *The Rape of the Lock* becomes more than a witty mock-epic. It is both a cultural critique and a celebration of art. Pope ridicules the follies of his society, exposing its obsession with appearance, reputation, and trivial codes of gallantry. Yet he simultaneously preserves those very

follies in immortal verse, ensuring that the petty incident of a stolen curl achieves a permanence once reserved for heroes and gods.

The brilliance of the poem lies in this dual achievement: it both deflates and elevates, both satirises and memorialises. In doing so, it secures Pope's place as the master of the mock-epic and one of the keenest satirical voices of the Augustan Age.

2.3.6 The Rape of the Lock as a Mock Epic

Alexander Pope's *The Rape of the Lock* (1712; expanded 1714, 1717) is universally acknowledged as the greatest mock-epic poem in English literature. By elevating a trivial social incident, the cutting of a lock of hair, into the grandeur of epic form, Pope both parodied the classical tradition and satirised the vanity of 18th-century aristocratic society. His poem borrows the machinery, style, and structure of the great epics of Homer, Virgil, and Milton, but deflates them by applying them to fashionable trifles. Thus, the mock-epic serves a dual function: it entertains through comic incongruity and critiques the shallow values of Pope's age.

Epic Conventions in Miniature

▶ Epic Conventions in Miniature

A true epic traditionally begins with an invocation of the Muse and a statement of theme. Pope follows this convention but twists it to comic effect. Instead of announcing a war or a hero's wrath, he declares that he will sing of a "dire offense" arising from the theft of a lady's curl. The disproportion between the elevated style and the trivial subject immediately establishes the mock-epic tone.

Epic poetry also features supernatural machinery, gods and goddesses who intervene in human affairs. Pope replaces them with sylphs and gnomes, airy spirits derived from French occult literature. These spirits parody Homeric gods by concerning themselves not with kingdoms or fates of nations but with trifles: guarding Belinda's fan, earrings, petticoat, and hair. Ariel's dream warning, the sylphs' mustering, and Umbriel's descent into the Cave of Spleen all echo epic interventions but ridicule their seriousness by reducing them to the level of fashion and affectation.

Heroic Rituals and Battles Parodied

- Heroic Rituals and Battles Parodied

One of the most famous mock-epic moments is Belinda's toilette. Epic heroes are armed before battle, but Pope inflates a lady's morning dressing into a sacred ritual. The dressing table becomes an altar, cosmetics sacred vessels, and beauty the armour with which Belinda faces her day. This parody demonstrates Pope's wit in equating trivial female vanity with martial heroism, exposing how court society elevates appearance into an almost religious duty.

The card game Ombre in Canto III is narrated as if it were a Homeric clash of armies. Each card is personified as a warrior, the fortunes of the game shift like the tides of battle, and Belinda's triumph is celebrated like a general's victory. Yet the stakes are laughably small: success in a card game at court. Similarly, the mock battle of Canto V mirrors the great combats of epics, but the weapons are fans, snuff, and glances. Belinda's bodkin is described with the solemnity of a legendary sword, parodying the genealogy of Achilles' spear or Aeneas's sword.

The Underworld and Apotheosis

- The Underworld and Apotheosis

Pope also parodies the epic descent into the underworld (katabasis). In Virgil's Aeneid, Aeneas descends to meet prophetic shades and learn of Rome's destiny. In Pope's version, Umbriel visits the Cave of Spleen, where grotesque figures embody female distempers: Ill-Nature, Affectation, fainting fits, and hysteria. Instead of heroic prophecies, he returns with bags of sighs and vials of tears, inflaming Belinda's sorrow. The substitution of hypochondria and affectation for epic prophecy satirises the artificial emotional culture of Pope's society.

The poem concludes with the apotheosis of Belinda's lock. Just as Queen Berenice's lock became a constellation, Belinda's curl ascends to the heavens. This final gesture parodies epic endings but also emphasises poetry's power: while beauty fades, art immortalises even the most trivial of objects. Thus, the lock achieves eternity not through heroism but through the wit of the poet.

Satirical Purpose of the Mock Epic

Pope's use of the mock-epic form is not mere play. It serves a sharp satirical purpose. By treating the cutting of a lock with the gravity of the Trojan War, Pope exposes

▶ Satirical Purpose of the Mock Epic

the disproportionate values of aristocratic society. In this world, gossip, flirtation, cosmetics, and reputation are treated with exaggerated seriousness, while genuine virtue and morality are sidelined.

At the same time, the poem critiques both sexes. Belinda embodies female vanity, equating beauty with honour, while the Baron embodies male arrogance, turning gallantry into theft. Clarissa's moral speech, urging women to value virtue over beauty, is the only voice of reason, yet it is ignored, showing how deeply society is enthralled by appearances.

Pope's Mastery of Style

▶ Pope's Mastery of Style

The success of The Rape of the Lock lies not only in its satire but also in Pope's stylistic brilliance. His heroic couplets, polished to perfection, lend an air of grandeur even to the smallest details. Balanced phrases, antithesis, and epigrams sharpen the irony: "Charms strike the sight, but merit wins the soul." By weaving together classical allusion, elegant diction, and comic incongruity, Pope demonstrates his complete mastery of the mock-epic mode.

The Rape of the Lock is the quintessential mock epic, blending epic grandeur with social satire. Every canto adapts an epic convention, inspiration, divine machinery, arming, battle, underworld, and apotheosis, but redirects it toward the trivialities of courtly life. In doing so, Pope simultaneously parodies classical models and critiques the follies of his own society. At its heart, the poem reveals the vanity and fragility of human concerns, yet also the power of poetry to immortalise them. What began as a quarrel over a stolen curl became, through Pope's artistry, one of the greatest satirical epics in English literature.

Summarised Overview

The Rape of the Lock tells the tale of a young woman whose hair is stolen by an impassioned young man, and was based on a true story that was written to mend the families that had been split apart by it. Pope describes the insignificant occurrence in terms typically used to describe significant events, such as the dispute between the Greeks and the Trojans. The poem combines a wide range of literary allusions with a satirical reflection on modern society and a sense of suppressed energy that threatens to pierce civilization.

Assignments

1. Consider the poem *The Rape of The Lock* as a mock-epic.
2. How does the work critique the social life of the upper class of the time ?
3. Examine the metaphorical and symbolic implications of cutting Belinda's hair?
4. Discuss the satirical elements in the works of Alexander Pope
5. Who is the rich heroine in the poem?
6. Who are the invisible army who help Belinda with her face, hair, and outfit?

Suggested Reading

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1. Singh, Brijrah. "Pope's Belinda: A Feminist Rereading." *College Language Association Journal* 34, no. 4 (June 1991): 467–485.
2. Spacks, Patricia Ann Meyer. *An Argument of Images: The Poetry of Alexander Pope.* Harvard UP, 1971.
3. Varney, Andrew. "Clarissa's Moral in *The Rape of the Lock*." *Essays in Criticism* 43, no. 1 (January 1993): 17–32.

Space for Learner Engagement for Objective Questions

Learners are encouraged to develop objective questions based on the content in the paragraph as a sign of their comprehension of the content. The Learners may reflect on the recap bullets and relate their understanding with the narrative in order to frame objective questions from the given text. The University expects that 1 - 2 questions are developed for each paragraph. The space given below can be used for listing the questions.

1.

SGOU

2. A Red, Red Rose

Robert Burns

Background

Robert Burns (1759-1796), Scotland's National Poet and for his representation of rustic life through his poems, he is also known as Ploughman Poet. He was a pioneer of Romanticism in the 18th century. He is a prolific writer who has created more than 600 poems in his life, many of which exalted the simple feelings of the common people and expressed his deep sympathy for the suffering of the people at the other end of the society. Burns poetry was deeply influenced by Classical, Biblical, and English literature. He was not only good at writing in the Scottish language but also in the Scottish English dialect of the English language. He lived during the Scottish Enlightenment, a period in the 18th and early 19th centuries of tremendous philosophical and scientific accomplishment in Scotland.

Keywords

Scottish Ballad, Lyric Poem, Rustic life

Discussion

- Inspired by the local Scottish songs

Burns songs were inspired by the local Scottish songs that he heard in the countryside of Scotland and the local ballads. Before the romantics Burns was the first to write about the rustic life and all his poems are songs which meant to be sung out loud. The poem, "My Love is like a Red, Red Rose" has the form of a ballad and is meant to be sung aloud. It describes the speaker's deep love for his or her beloved and promises that this love will last longer than human life and even the planet itself, remaining fresh and constant forever. The core focus of the poem is for the narrator to declare his affection for his "Luve" and describe how deep his love is. The opening line is one of the most famous and romantic similes in poetry. In the first line of the poem, Burns uses the simile

'my Luve is like a red, red rose' to compare his emotions to a beautiful flower.

Much of Robert Burns's fame and popularity is due to his distinctive blend of formal English and Scottish dialect, clearly seen in "A Red, Red Rose." At the time Burns was writing, this dialect was known as "Scots." Burns himself spent the last years of his life working to preserve and formalise the traditions of oral Scots poetry, found especially in the Scottish countryside. Burns was particularly inspired by the 18th-century Scots verse of the poets Allan Ramsay and Robert Fergusson. Burns, in turn, provided inspiration for Romantic poets like William Wordsworth ("I Wandered Lowly as a Cloud"), who wanted to leave behind the formal, artificial diction of 18th-century English poetry and adopt the language spoken by the common people. Burns, who grew up farming with his father and who was fluent in the dialect and style of rural Scotland, also inspired other working-class "peasant poets" who wrote in a more conversational style, including James Hogg, Robert Bloomfield, John Clare, and, in America, Walt Whitman.

- Preserve and formalise the traditions of oral Scots poetry

A Red, Red Rose- Poem

O my Luve is like a red, red rose
That's newly sprung in June;
O my Luve is like the melody
That's sweetly played in tune.
So fair art thou, my bonnie lass,
So deep in luve am I;
And I will luve thee still, my dear,
Till a' the seas gang dry.
Till a' the seas gang dry, my dear,
And the rocks melt wi' the sun;
I will love thee still, my dear,
While the sands o' life shall run.
And fare thee weel, my only luve!

And fare thee weel awhile!

And I will come again, my luve,

Though it were ten thousand mile.

2.3.7 Summary

"A Red, Red Rose" was published in 1794, just two years before his death . The poem is representative of Burns' Lyric poems. Based on the ancient Scottish folk songs, it shows the features and charms of folk songs. Burns' poetry was richer in content, more profound in artistic conception, and far beyond them in artistic taste. Full of strong romantic colour, his poems set an outstanding example for English lyric poetry in the same period. The main manifestations are concise and musical language, vivid and far-reaching imagery, flexible and rich rhetoric techniques.

- Concise and musical language

There are four stanzas and sixteen sentences in the poem. The poem is written in the form of ballads, i.e. each quatrain has four lines. The purity and beauty of the girl and the faithfulness of the poet are perfectly reflected in the concise language of it. In the first stanza the speaker compares his love to the red rose. The red rose is considered as a symbol of love. His love is new, fresh, and young like a newly sprung red rose flower in June. He also compares his love to the melody that has been sweetly played in a tune. The speaker says that his beloved is very beautiful. She is very fair. The speaker says that he is so deeply in love with her as she is fair in skin deep.

- Quatrain stanza

He says that his love will remain if the seas do not go dry. Since this is impossible, it means that his love will never fade out. The other comparisons are to the point when rocks will melt with the sun which can never happen. He also compares his love to sands of life going on forever; since life cannot end that easily, this signifies permanence. In the last stanza, the speaker is saying goodbye to his beloved. He is going somewhere for a short time, but he promises that he will come again. He promises her that though he will have to travel ten thousand miles he will come again to see her. This love will endure until their own lives have ended and even until all human life has ended. The speaker concludes by saying goodbye to

the beloved who is, the speaker reminds her, the only person the speaker loves. The speaker wishes her well during their temporary separation. Thus, the first two sections are the expression of love, then the last two are the pledge of faithful love.

- Written in the form of a ballad

2.3.8 Analysis

"A Red, Red Rose" begins by describing the speaker's love for his beloved with images that are beautiful but not necessarily long-lasting. The speaker then affirms, however, that his or her love will outlast human life itself. Through the speaker's paradoxical claims, the poem argues that true love is both constantly renewing and completely unchangeable. Without question, this first stanza expresses the core focus of the poem, which is for the narrator to declare his affection for his "Luve." That the endearment of "Luve" is capitalized gives the title a higher level of significance than what a lowercase concept would address, as if this title is a proper name attached to the person.

- Paradoxical claims on love

The reader does not need to know the name of this lady. The speaker begins by describing love in terms that are beautiful but that don't immediately suggest permanence. The first lines compare the speaker's love to "a red, red rose." "Luve" could refer to the beloved, the person the speaker loves. It could also refer to the speaker's feelings for this person. Saying the beloved is like a rose "newly sprung in June" emphasizes her beauty and youth. Meanwhile, saying that the speaker's love for her is like a new rose implies that this is a new relationship, with all the freshness and excitement of a developing romance. Of course, a rose can only be "newly sprung" for a short time; June ends after thirty days, and flowers fade quickly. If the speaker's love is just like a new rose, maybe it won't last very long.

- Love is compared to a fresh red rose

The spelling of the word, "Luve," is less modern as well, which takes this concept into a historical era. That strategy elevates the amount of romance that is a part of the situation since ideas of chivalry and codes of historic courtship are evoked with the spelling. What the narrator has to say about his "Luve" is that she is "like a red, red rose." As a "rose" is the flower most connected to romance, this is a strong simile. In addition, "red" is seen as a colour of passion, so to attribute that colour to the

- Spelling of 'Luv'

"rose" twice in a row deposit a hefty amount of passion to the romance.

The second stanza of 'A Red, Red Rose' begins by stepping back from addressing the narrator's feelings and actions to compliment his "bonnie lass" for being "[s]o fair." the narrator returns to his own feelings by clearly stating that he is "[s]o deep in luve." It is noteworthy that "luve" in this scenario is no longer capitalized, potentially because it is used as a verb rather than a noun to address the woman he cares for. That differentiation could be an indication that the woman is more significant than the actual action of "luve," as if the only reason he is able to experience this grandness of emotions is because of her. The speaker then says this love is like "a melody / That's sweetly played in tune." But again, instruments can go out of tune, just as flowers can fade. The newness and excitement of the speaker's love initially make it seem somewhat unstable. Then, however, the speaker goes on to emphasize how long this love will last. The speaker uses three images to measure how long these feelings of love will last: the seas going dry, the rocks melting, and the sands of life running out. These events could only occur after eons of time, if ever. It seems now that the speaker's love, far from lasting only as long as a flower, will actually endure longer than human life. Although these conflicting descriptions of the speaker's love sound like a paradox, the speaker continues to insist that true love really can embody these seemingly opposite qualities of newness and permanence.

▶ Paradoxical images of love

In the final stanza, the speaker bids farewell to the beloved, as if the speaker is planning to leave on a journey. The beloved doesn't need to worry, though, because the speaker promises to return, even if the journey is "ten thousand miles" long. This promise implies that, just as long stretches of time could not exhaust the speaker's love for the beloved, a long stretch of distance cannot keep the speaker from her. And the length of this journey now seems short just "awhile" compared to the near-infinite time the speaker's love will last. It seems, then, that love like the speaker's is powerful enough to make earthly obstacles feel insignificant. That is, this love is reliable and constant, but it also feels fresh and exciting enough to adapt to changed circumstances. The moment of farewell in the final stanza highlights the speaker's

- Bids farewell to the beloved

core argument: love that lasts forever is also love that allows for change over time. The repetition of the first two lines makes clear the hopelessness felt by the persona as he considers their impending separation. Sentence structure here confirms that saying goodbye is difficult for the speaker.

- Neither time nor distance will keep him from his love

The speaker must be separated from his love for quite a period of time, it also suggests that the separation is not forever. This idea is reinforced in the third line; The speaker insists that he will come again. This definitely indicates that he intends to return to her.In the final line of the poem, the persona is resolute. Neither time nor distance will keep him apart from his love. Thematically, this poem considers human relationships and the powerful bond which can be forged between two people. In having us consider the passion of a lover at the beginning of a relationship, Burns also asks us to consider the longevity of intense emotions. He presents a universal experience – love – in readily accessible terms.

- Imagery is one of the literary devices used

Imagery is one of the literary devices used in the poem. Imagery is used by the poets to blend their thoughts with some vivid symbolic things in life to create an artistic conception. The first imagery is a "rose that's newly sprung in June". The poet compares his beloved to a rose, which can best represent her youth, beauty, vigor and even fragrance. Then, his sweetheart is also compared to the "melodie that's sweetly played in tune", which indicates that not only does his lover have a pretty appearance, but an elegant temperament and a kind heart. Then, the imagery is enlarged into a broader conception: seas, rocks and sun. All these objects are used to show the poet's love which is as deep as sea, as staunch as rocks and as passionate as sun.

Metaphor is also adopted in this poem. In the line "while the sands o' life shall run", the poet's life is just like the sand that is easily gone but love is not temporary. An oath of eternal love is implicitly taken to show his faithfulness. In addition, repetition and alliteration are also applied by the poet. The word "luve" is used for 7 times in this short poem, "till a' the seas gang dry" for two times and "my dear" for two times to pledge his infinite deep love. And words "luve" "like" and "red" "red" "rose" also strengthen the musical effect of the

- Metaphor, repetition, alliteration.

poem with repetition of their first consonantal sounds. Hyperbole is another rhetorical device applied in this poem. "Till a'the seas gang dry, my dear, and the rocks melt wi' the sun; I will luve thee still, my dear, while the sands o' life shall run", the impossible thing is depicted here to manifest his faithful and deep love.

Summarised Overview

The idealistic speaker in "A Red, Red Rose" uses a string of vivid, extravagant comparisons to declare his eternal love for a stunning young lady. He expresses his certainty that their love would endure despite their impending separation and makes a promise to return. The speaker compares his sweetheart to a newly blooming, delicate, fresh, pleasant, and beautiful red rose from July. Then he makes a comparison between his love and a song with a nice melody and a lovely tune that is played. The poet emphasises the duration of his love by comparing it to a new relationship with all its thrill and freshness. The speaker's sweetheart is as lovely as a red rose and as sweet as melody. The poet has painted a very vivid and accurate image of his intense love with the use of literary devices. In the poem "A Red, Red Rose", where his sentiments are so intense, the author expressed his romantic love for his beloved. He also vowed often to remain in love with his beloved. The main focus of this poetry is the enduring nature of a love relationship and its emotions.

Assignments

1. What is the total length of Robert Burns' piece on endless love, 'A Red, Red Rose?
2. Which dialect of English is used in 'A Red, Red Rose?
3. What instructions does the speaker give his lover?
4. Why does the speaker have to part from his lover?

Suggested Reading

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Space for Learner Engagement for Objective Questions

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1.

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3. The Lamb, The Tyger

Wlliam Blake

Background

William Blake (1757–1827), one of the greatest poets in the English language, is regarded as a forerunner of Romanticism. The elements of imagination, nature worship, humanitarianism, liberty, mysticism, and symbolism were all heavily emphasized during the Romantic period. It was in contrast to Neo-classicism, which emphasized reason, balance, and logic in prose and poetry. Excessive adherence to rules and the monotony of heroic Couplets plagued poetry. Every piece of literature adhered to a set of established classical standards. However, the Romantic poetic creed is based on recording simple emotions of humanity in a simple diction with imagination and intuition.

William Blake's poem "The Lamb" was included in *The Songs of Innocence*, which was published in 1789. It is regarded as "one of English Literature's great lyrics." "The Lamb is a poem about love. Blake's mystical, religious, and idealistic view of the world is revealed in this poem. It has a strong romantic quality in that it glorifies childhood. "The Lamb," which takes the form of a dialogue between a child and a lamb, is a mix of Christian script and pastoral tradition. Jesus the Lamb is the gentle imagination, the Divine Humanity, and the lamb is a universal symbol of selfless innocence.

Keywords

Precursor of Romanticism, Romanticism, symbolism, Innocence, Purity

Discussion

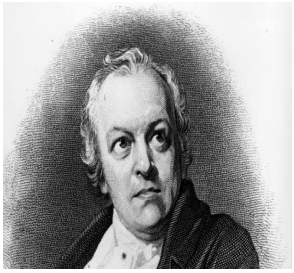

Fig 2.3.3 William Blake

Blake is not only a revolutionary thinker, but he also ponders mankind's spiritual freedom or salvation. Blake's poems are distinguished by the fact that they are based on his 'visions.' Angels, gods, and goddesses populate these visions. Finally, this implies that poetic inspiration or poetry is divine and sacred in and of itself. Human instincts and impulses play an important role in man's spiritual development, and Blake is always opposed to imposing prohibitions on them. The terms 'Innocence' and 'Experience' themselves are the core and kernel of his mysticism. These are the two complementary as well as opposing aspects of the human heart that make up the entirety of man's life and work for his soul's salvation.

- Blake's poems are based on his 'visions'

The sound of the bell in the spring season, as well as the merry voices of the thrush and sparrow, are associated with revitalizing stimulants in Blake's poems. Nature, according to Blake, is a part of the human universe and sympathizes with humans. Blake's pastoral setting adds a spiritual dimension and corresponds to children's innocence. However, this is not the only aspect of nature with which the poet deals in his poems. It has spiritual significance as well as symbolic undertones. Symbols are used to elaborate the suggestiveness and implications of both virtues and vices. Blake's symbology is far too large and complex to be explained in a single paragraph. His symbols assist him in expressing visions that may be obscure to the average reader. Blake could be considered a forerunner of Romantic poetry in nineteenth-century England because of his championing of liberty, mysticism, naturalism, idealization of childhood and simplicity.

- Nature is an important part in his poems

2.3.9 The Tyger -Poem

William Blake

Tyger Tyger, burning bright,
In the forests of the night;
What immortal hand or eye,
Could frame thy fearful symmetry?

In what distant deeps or skies.
Burnt the fire of thine eyes?
On what wings dare he aspire?
What the hand, dare seize the fire?

And what shoulder, & what art,
Could twist the sinews of thy heart?
And when thy heart began to beat.
What dread hand? & what dread feet?

What the hammer? what the chain,
In what furnace was thy brain?
What the anvil? what dread grasp.
Dare its deadly terrors clasp?

When the stars threw down their spears
And water'd heaven with their tears:
Did he smile his work to see?
Did he who made the Lamb make thee?

Tyger Tyger burning bright,
In the forests of the night:
What immortal hand or eye,
Dare frame thy fearful symmetry?

Summary

"The Tyger," a poem by William Blake, was first published in 1794 in *Songs of Experience.* It was written as a companion piece to his earlier poem "The Lamb," which appeared in *Songs of Innocence* in 1789. Blake, on the other hand, published a collection of his works in 1794 called *Songs of Innocence and Experience*, with the subtitle *Shewing the Two Contrary States of the Human Soul.* The entire plot of "The Tyger" revolves around questions about God and creation, particularly whether the same God who created vulnerable beings like the lamb could also have created the terrifying tiger. The

tiger becomes a symbol for one of the most perplexing religious questions: why does God allow evil to exist? At the same time, the poem is an expression of awe and admiration for the tiger and its terrifying power, as well as the power of both nature and God. The poem is dedicated to the Creator – God, who created such a ferocious creature. It also reflects the poet's awe of the Creator, because He is the same one who created the lamb, which is diametrically opposed to the tiger in nature. The central figure, a tiger, is depicted in the poem's title, which is spelled "Tyger." Blake depicts the world shortly after God created it, using the term's archaic spelling. The poet clarifies through this reference that God, with his diplomatic hands, symmetrically framed his creation long before the arrival of man. The Tyger thus portrays the destructive side of God, the creator.

- Poem is an expression of marvel and wonder at the tiger

Stanza 1

The poet writes in the first stanza that the tiger is "burning bright in the night forests." The line implies that a tiger in the forest is burning like fire, or, in other words, appears to be burning yellow fire in the dead of night. The tiger's bright yellow colour, which gives it a fierce appearance, is reflected in the burning bright. The poet poses a rhetorical question in the third line, referring to the immortal hand or eye that is capable of framing or building its fearful symmetry. In a way, the poet is praising God's ability to create such a terrifying structure and bear its appearance. Due to fear, man can neither create it nor bear its appearance.

- The poet appreciates the power of God

Analysis

The first verse is about 'The Tyger,' and it raises questions about its beauty and creator. The speaker clearly makes it a point to discuss God as an entity rather than the tiger as the poem progresses. The first metaphor in William Blake's poem is 'burning bright,' which refers to the tiger's bright yellow fur as it roams freely through the forest at night. The central question, as the reader gradually realises, is whether or not God exists. Slowly, William Blake criticises Christianity, questioning whether a divine being could create such a captivating creature with perfect definitions and extraordinary beauty. Fearful symmetry is a nuanced trait with two allusions: one for the tiger and the other for god. The

- Questions the beauty and its creator

sublime quality describes an entity that is both large and powerful while also remaining mysterious. As a result, the poet begins with poetic allusions before eventually posing the question of what kind of God he is if he created such a terrifying creature.

Stanza 2

- The poet talks about the eyes of the tiger

The poet discusses the tiger's eyes in the second stanza. He is curious as to where the fire came from and how it got into the tiger's eyes. The fire has come from the skies, i.e., the sun or heaven, or from deep oceans, the earth's core, or hell, because it cannot be a common fire, but a divine one that causes the tiger's eyes to be so fierce. In the third line, the poet wonders what those wings were that carried him to those faraway places. In the same way, who were the hands that dared to catch that divine fire? So he appreciates the fire in the first two lines and Wings and Hands of the Creator in the third and the fourth lines.

Analysis

- Fiery eyes of the tiger

As he appears mesmerized by the "Tyger's" fiery eyes, the poet's fascination with him grows. He believes the fire in his eyes came from a heavenly body far away, such as hell or heaven. In the first verse, the poet adds to the tiger's fiery image by using the metaphor of burning. William Blake is gradually approaching the crux of his argument, God. The main point that the poet makes is that the creature reflects its creator. The poet also conjures up a more supernatural image of the divine being by using the words "hand", "wings" and "fire."

Stanza 3

- Praising the power and amazing art of God

The poet discusses the tiger's heart in the third stanza. He wonders what kind of shoulders and art the Creator has that twist the tiger's heart muscles or ligaments. The poet is praising God's power and amazing art, which assisted Him in creating the tiger's heart. In the third line, he is astounded by the Creator's powerful hands and feet, which caused Him to stand in front of the tiger's heart when it began to beat. The poet appears to praise the Creator's physical power, daring nature, and art in this stanza.

Analysis

- Discusses the physical characteristics of the almighty creator

In this stanza, the poet considers the physical characteristics of the almighty creator, contemplating his various physical features, which could be an allegory for the characteristics of the tiger.

Stanza 4

- Image of a blacksmith

The poet praises the tiger's brain in the fourth stanza. He speculates on which hammer, chain, anvil, and furnace the Creator would have used to fashion the tiger's brain. The iron smith uses these tools to create solid and heavy objects. For the poet, the tiger's brain is no less than iron. As a result, he considers the divine tools that were used to create the brain of such a dangerous animal. Again, the poet ponders how powerful the Creator's grasp would be if it could hold the animal's lethal brain.

Analysis

- Questions the steps involved in the creation of the tiger.

The steps involved in the creation of the all-powerful jungle creature, the tiger, are questioned in this stanza. These lines contain an allegorical reference to a blacksmith. The theory goes that as a blacksmith hammers and forms metal with great effort, some intelligent creator was developing his creation. The poet becomes irritated and begins to doubt his faith in general.

Stanza 5

- The poet tends to compare this deadly animal to the lamb which is meek

The poet tends to compare this deadly animal to the lamb in this stanza, which is meek, innocent, and the polar opposite of the former. In addition, there is a reference to a Biblical incident mentioned in John Milton's *Paradise Lost.* When God created the tiger, the stars (here referring to Satan and his followers) who were at war with Him were so terrified by its (Tiger's) sight that they accepted their defeat, threw down their weapons, and wet the sky with their tears, according to the poet. The poet wonders in the third line if God smiled after creating Tiger because it was beyond words for Satanic forces. He believes He is the same God who created the lamb, despite the fact that the latter is quite innocent and meek, whereas the former is deadly enough to frighten Satan.

Analysis

- Satan's rebellion against God

These are the poem's 'Christian' verses. The first line depicts God's arch-angel 'Satan' being demoted as a sign of rebellion against God's will. It's also a veiled reference to John Milton's epic poem *Paradise Lost*. He is referring to the all-powerful creator gazing reverently at his completed work. From his poem 'The Lamb,' the lamb can mean both 'the lamb of God' and 'the lamb.' The first is a direct reference to Jesus Christ (the Lamb of God), who was sent to earth by God to atone for humanity's sins.

Stanza 6

- Poet wonders at the tiger's creation and appreciating God's power

The last stanza is a restatement of the first. The only word that has changed is 'dare' instead of could, which is a significant difference. The poet appears less awestruck by the tiger's and God's powers in the first stanza, but after going over all of the tiger's characteristics, he wonders if only God could dare to create such an animal.

Analysis

- The poet tries to challenge God's abilities in the final lines

The poet attempts to cast doubt on the creator's ability in this section. In the final lines, the poet attempts to test God's abilities.

2.3.10 The Lamb - Poem

William Blake

Little Lamb who made thee
Dost thou know who made thee
Gave thee life and bid thee feed.
By the stream and o'er the mead;
Gave thee clothing of delight,
Softest clothing wooly bright;
Gave thee such a tender voice,
Making all the vales rejoice!
Little Lamb who made thee
Dost thou know who made thee

Little Lamb I'll tell thee,
Little Lamb I'll tell thee!
He is called by thy name,
For he calls himself a Lamb:
He is meek & he is mild,

He became a little child:
I a child & thou a lamb,
We are called by his name.
Little Lamb God bless thee.
Little Lamb God bless thee.

Songs of Innocence is a collection of poems in which the poet views the world through the eyes of a child, seeing beauty and love everywhere in man's society and in nature. There is no suspicion of motives, envy, or jealousy in the world of these Songs. Humans possess the same sense of security and assurance that lambs under a wise shepherd or children with loving parents possess. God is Blake's shepherd and Father in his poems. Again, it is He who takes on the form of a lamb and transforms into a small child. God, lamb, and child are one in the *Songs of Innocence*, forming a trinity.

▶ *Songs of Innocence*

Stanza 1

"The Lamb" is a poem that teaches us something. The poet pays homage to Lord Christ, who was innocent and pure like a child and meek and mild like a lamb, in this poem. The small child inquires of the lamb as to who created it, who blessed it with life and the ability to feed by the stream and across the meadow. The child inquires if the lamb is aware of who has provided it with bright and soft wool for clothing, as well as a tender voice that brings joy to the valley.

▶ The little child asks the lamb a series of questions

The poem "The Lamb" begins with a simple question. The speaker inquires about the little lamb's knowledge of its creator. To create a poetic effect, the question is repeated in the second line. "Dost thou know?" implies that the speaker is likely aware of the answer. The speaker expands on his question in the third and fourth lines. He inquires of the lamb about the identity of the creator who gave it life and gave him the capacity and appetite to graze along the stream's edge and run through the meadows. As a result, the poem begins with a childlike directness of nature. The speaker now asks the lamb if it knows who gave it the soft, bright wool as a present. The lamb is dressed in unusual attire. The speaker refers to the wool as "delightful clothing." It is extremely thick, covering its entire body and protecting it from extreme heat and cold.

▶ Begins with a child-like direct-ness of the natural world

- Speaker praises the power of the creator

The lamb also has a 'tender voice,' according to the creator. It is so gentle and charming that it brings joy to the valley. It is yet another one-of-a-kind gift from its creator. The speaker extols the creator's power, praising him for giving the lamb such beautiful clothes and a charming voice. At the end of the first stanza, the speaker repeats his initial questions. This contributes to the poem's rhythm as well as the sense of innocence.

Stanza 2

- The purity, the innocence, the tenderness of childhood

The lamb, Christ, and the child are all mentioned in the second stanza of the poem. Christ is also known as Lamb, because he is meek and mild like a lamb. When Christ first came to earth as the Son of God, he was also a child. In this poem, the child addresses the lamb as if it were another child who could respond to what is being said. The poem captures the spirit of childhood – the purity, innocence, and tenderness of childhood, as well as a child's love for small animals. Because of the image of Christ as a child, the poem takes on a religious tone. A pastoral poem, it narrates about a lamb is a poem about a lamb. The pastoral overtones symbolizes of joy and innocence.

Analysis

- Second stanza concentrates on abstract spiritual matters

The first stanza is descriptive and rural, while the second focuses on abstract spiritual matters through analogy and explanation. The child's question is both profound and naive, and the poem's apostrophic form contributes to the effect of naiveté. Even so, the child succeeds in turning his own question into a rhetorical one by responding to it. The answer is presented as a riddle or puzzle, revealing his trust in his simple Christian faith and his innocent acceptance of its teachings.

The child is identified with God here, and he or she is shown to be aware of the wonders of creation. The poem's pastoral setting gives it a romantic feel. The image of the valleys enlivened by the lamb's tender voice and the green, river-side pasture where the lamb grazes is not only romantic, but also foreshadows Wordsworth's naturalism. The poem also transports us to a time when the earth was a near-paradise and animals communicated with humans. The poem is a lyrical triumph, which is a hallmark of romantic poetry. Spontaneity, simplicity,

sincerity, and musicality are some of the lyrical qualities that define it. Blake's poetry is replete with references to innocence. The other theme is man's relationship with nature. The natural world, unlike reality, is not a bad place in the poem. The lamb symbolizes the natural world's innocence as well as the theme of childhood.

- The child is identified with God

"The Lamb" and "The Tyger": A Comparison

William Blake's poems "The Lamb" and "The Tyger" are both representative of his work. They honor two opposing aspects of the human soul: innocence and experience. "The Lamb" honors the divinity and innocence of not only children, but also the most innocuous of creatures on the planet, the lamb. The child inquires of the lamb as to who created it and bestowed upon it its lovely and sweet voice. He does not wait for responses; instead, he responds to the questions himself. He is referring to God, the lamb's creator, and his meekness and gentleness. He ends by wishing God's blessing on the lamb. "The Tyger" depicts how experience destroys childlike innocence and replaces it with destructive forces. It replaces the free life of imagination with a dark, cold, and confining four, and the result is a fatal blow to the cheerful human spirit. Fear and denial of life that come with experience breed hypocrisy, which is a serious sin on par with cruelty. When experience destroys innocence, God creates the tiger (i.e., fierce forces) to restore innocence to the mind. God created both 'the lamb' and 'the tiger.' The "lamb" represents the gentler and milder aspects of human nature, while the "tiger" represents the harsher and more ferocious side. The lamb represents creation's peaceful and pleasant beauty, while the tiger represents its fearful beauty. The stark contrast between the lamb and the tiger prompts the poet to ask, "Did he who made the lamb make thee?"

- "The Lamb" and "The Tyger" celebrate innocence and experience

In "The Lamb," Blake begins his poem with an innocent question, whereas in "The Tyger," he begins with a question that terrorizes us. The tiger represents God's wrath, while the lamb represents His love. The tiger is a ruthless natural predator that represents man's "burning passion trapped within his natural body." On the other hand, the lamb is a joy to behold. Its bleat brings joy to all the valleys. The Lamb's questions are derived from the questioner's simplicity and innocence (the child). They

- The tiger is a ruthless, natural predator

have nothing to do with the perplexing and enigmatic creature of "The Tyger's" questions.The tiger is God's wrath, as the lamb His love.

Blake employs symbols to convey his ideas in both poems. In "The Lamb," he uses a biblical symbol and a well-known figure in the form of the Lamb of God. Blake uses the tiger as a symbol for the soul's fierce forces that are required to break the bonds of experience. The tiger lurks in the "night forests," which stand for ignorance, and superstition, with "fire" standing for wrath. Both poems stand out for their lyricism, spontaneity of expression, and intensity and sincerity of emotion. "The Tyger's" diction is almost monosyllabic, and the trochaic movement, which is freely used, adds to the musical effects. The same can be said for "The Lamb." As a result, Blake highlights the two sides of society: those who are holy and innocent, and those who are ferocious and violent. As a result, the child is perplexed when it comes to seeing society through his own eyes. However, the spiritual mysticism of God's activity is demanded in these two poems. God creates not only the holy and innocent, but also the cruel and violent that coexists in equal measure, allowing the creator to maintain balance in his creation and unity in diversity.

- Blake makes use of symbols to convey his ideas

Summarised Overview

"The Lamb" and "The Tiger" are used by the author to symbolise the many phases of a person's soul. The tiger stands for a soul that is full of strength, while the lamb represents a soul that is full of gentleness, purity, and beauty. Although the two stages of the human soul are distinct from one another, they are related since every person exhibits innocence when they are young and experience when they are older. Therefore, the poet's major goal is to strike a balance between experience and innocence, the two aspects of the human soul. A lot of questions are raised throughout the two poems in an effort to catch the readers' attention. Despite the differences in wording, these queries convey the same meaning: Little lamb, who formed thee? asks the author of *"The Lamb*." Did He who made the lamb make you, the author wonders in *"The Tiger"*? Additionally, the author makes sure to convey his point of view by selecting the most appropriate adjectives to characterise both "The Tiger" and "The Lamb."

Assignments

1. William Blake's symbolism in "The Tyger".
2. How does Blake criticise man's actions by comparing them to the image of a Tyger?
3. How is childhood depicted in 'The Lamb'?
4. "Little Lamb who made thee" – Comment.

Suggested Reading

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1.

SGOU

Unit 4

Drama

The Way of the World

William Congreve

Learning Outcomes

Upon completion of the unit, the learner will be able to:

- become familiarised with the theatrical techniques of William Congreve and Colley Cibber
- get acquainted with the characteristics of Restoration theatres
- understand the change in social context and the evolution of theatrical forms

Background

After a short revolutionary period of the Puritans, the parliamentary rule, the restoration period of British history began with the return of the exiled Stuart King, King Charles II to the English throne. Secular entertainment was frowned upon and despised while the parliament was in power, and the majority of theatres were shut down. However, when King Charles returned from France, King carried with him a love of entertainment and leisure, two interests shared by the upper-class of the society. Scholars and artists throughout the Restoration Period were fascinated with 'reason' because they thought it was what set humans apart from other creatures. Many artists used satire to recognise human reason, identifying a social issue and examining it through the perspective of satirical humour and, frequently, ridicule.

Keywords

Restoration, Comedy of Manners, Intrigue

Discussion

William Congreve's *The Way of the World* was performed on stage and also published in 1700. The play, which is regarded as Congreve's masterpiece, makes fun of the social presumptions prevalent at the time, particularly those relating to love and marriage. The plot centres on Millamant and Mirabell's attempts to get the approval of Millamant's aunt for their marriage. The two manage to win her approval, despite that the plan undergoes a number of misunderstandings and complications which are resolved towards the end of the play.

- Congreve's masterpiece

2.4.1 Brief Outline of the Plot

Mrs. Fainall, Lady Wishfort's widowed daughter, had a relationship with Mirabell, a young man-about-town who didn't appear to be wealthy. Mirabell has set up her marriage to Mr. Fainall, a man he believes has a respectable reputation suitable enough to be a match, in order to shield her from shame in the event of pregnancy. Fainall married the young widow because he needed her wealth to keep his relationship with Mrs. Marwood working great. Over time, Mirabell's relationship with Mrs. Fainall ended, and he developed feelings for Millamant, Lady Wishfort's ward. There are, however, financial matters to take into account. The other half of Millamant's fortune, or 6,000 pounds, belonged to Lady Wishfort, who agreed to give it to Millamant if she was married to a man approved by her aunt. Mirabell has therefore developed a complex plan. Waitwell, his servant, is supposed to court and win Lady Wishfort. Mirabell then intends to reveal the successful wooer's true status and win her approval for his marriage to Millamant by saving her from this misalliance.

- Finance matters for relationship

A man approaches Mirabell and tells him that his servant Waitwell and Lady Wishfort's servant Foible had married. So, Mirabell confesses to Fainall his love for Millamant. Mirabell is informed that upon Lady Wishfort's marriage, Millamant would lose the wealth that she was to inherit from her. So they had to block Lady Wishfort's marriage. Along with that, they can only obtain the riches if Lady Wishfort consents their marriage.

- Schemes to inherit wealth

Meanwhile, Mrs. Fainall confesses to Mirabell how she despises her husband. Mirabell has consequently devised a complex plan. Waitwell (Sir Rowland), a pretended uncle, has been assigned the task of courting and winning Lady Wishfort. The plan is to persuade Lady Wishfort into getting married, which will never happen because it would constitute a social stigma owing to class differences. Mrs. Marwood overhears Mrs. Fainfall and Foible discussing this scheme. She informs Fainall of the plot; Fainall has decided to use Mrs. Fainall's funds to elope with Mrs. Marwood.

- Social stigma owing to class differences

Millamant approves Mirabell's proposal. As Mirabell leaves, Lady Wishfort appears and requests Millimant to marry her nephew, Sir Wilfull. Fainall now unmasks Sir Rowland (Waitwell), the false uncle. Waitwell is consequently taken into custody by Fainall. Lady Wishfort expresses gratitude to Mrs. Marwood for helping her to reveal the plot. Then, we see Fainall employing information from Mrs. Fainall's previous relationship with Mirabell as well as Millimant's decision to blackmail Lady Wishfort. He encourages her to give him her fortune and to avoid getting remarried. As a twist to the events, Mirabell produces two servants to show that Fainall and Mrs. Marwood were guilty of adultery. Fainall denies the accusation and says that unless he receives the money, he will still start a scandal that would tarnish Mrs. Fainall's reputation.

- Expressing gratitude

Fainall and Mrs. Marwood storm off stage, swearing utter revenge. After learning that Mrs. Marwood was not a true friend and that Fainall was a villain, Lady Wishfort is ready to forgive Mirabell, allowing Millamant to wed him. The play comes to a pleasant but ambiguous conclusion on this note.

- Happy ending

2.4.2 Act Wise Summary

Act 1&2

The First Act starts as Mirabell and his friend Fainall are finishing up a game of cards. When a footman enters, he informs Mirabell that Waitwell, his servant, and Foible, Lady Wishfort's maid, have just married. Fainall encourages Mirabell to marry Millamant after hearing how much he loves her. Mirabell discovers that he will lose a significant portion of Millamant's estate if Lady

Wishfort marries. He must persuade Lady Wishfort to approve of their union in order to get this money.

The second act begins in St. James' Park with Mrs. Fainall and her friend Mrs. Marwood discussing their dislike of males. On arrival, Fainall claims Mrs. Marwood, with whom he is having an affair, is in love with Mirabell. They plot a scheme to trick Lady Wishfort into approving the marriage. Millamant, who is upset by an argument between Mirabell and her aunt Lady Wishfort the night before, shows up and tells Mirabell that she disagrees with his proposal. Waitwell and Foible arrive as she is leaving, and Mirabell discusses with them about his scheme to trick Lady Wishfort.

- Mirabell plots a scheme

Act 3 & 4

Acts Three and Four take place in Lady Wishfort's house. Strong-willed and resolute Mirabell and Millamant discuss the details of their marriage and what they anticipate, expressing the depth of their love for one another. Millamant accepts Mirabell's marriage proposal after some persuasion from Mrs. Fainall. Lady Wishfort arrives just as Mirabell departs. Millamant is instructed by Lady Wishfort that she wishes for her to wed her visiting nephew, Sir Willful Witwoud. A letter informing Lady Wishfort of Sir Rowland's plot is delivered to her. As a result of Sir Rowland stealing the letter and accusing Mirabell of attempting to ruin the wedding, Lady Wishfort consents to marry Sir Rowland that same evening.

- Lady Wishfort's house.

Act 5

Act Five begins with Lady Wishfort discovering the scheme, and Fainall taking Waitwell into custody. Mrs. Fainall informs Foible that Mirabell's affair is now widely known. Lady Wishfort makes an appearance with Mrs. Marwood, who has earned her favour for revealing the scheme. Fainall shows up and uses his knowledge of Mrs. Fainall's affair to extort money from Lady Wishfort. When Mirabell brings evidence to establish the adulterous relationship between Fainall and Mrs. Marwood, their plan of extorting money from Lady Wishfort becomes impossible. Lady Wishfort approves Mirabell to marry Millamant if he can protect her honour and fortune. Waitwell responds to Mirabell's request by bringing a document to transfer the property to Mirabell. Thus,

- Mirabell wins Lady Wishfort's approval

after foiling Fainall's attempt at extortion, Mirabell wins Lady Wishfort's approval and is given blessing to wed Millamant and acquire the entire inheritance.

2.4.3 Critical Analysis

- Flawless construction

In *The Way of the World* , William Congreve achieves nearly flawless construction, characterization, and dialogue. It is a story about romantic intrigues, character assassinations, discomfort, and the eventual coming together of lovers. The play could be considered as one of the greatest plays coming under the banner of Comedy of Manners. Comedy of Manners is the term that refers to the genre of comedies that dominated English theatre during the Restoration Era.

- Comedy of Manners

A Comedy of Manners seeks to portray the upper-class or aristocratic society while simultaneously exposing what is hidden under the surface. It demonstrates their efforts to depict themselves as the embodiment of morality and goodness. Meanwhile, in secrecy, a disorder emerges that encompasses depravity, betrayal, deception, and immortality of the characters. *The Way of the World* contains almost every element that makes up a Comedy of Manners, such as wit, humour, love, cunning characters, and passionate exchanges of speech.

- The ways of the world

The play is a collection of witty, dazzling dialogues without a serious storyline. Its most endearing feature is the witty battles between Millamant and Mirabell, Petulant and Witwoud. There are several amusing and dynamic passages where people's reputation are destroyed, and these provide the playwright with plenty of opportunities to display the strength of dialogues and their lively exchanges. However, the ways of the world are evident in its false loves, affectations, intrigues, and conspiracies. But the play goes beyond that, offering a rationale for falling in love and being married. The contract scene between Mirabell and Millamant is significant for both its witty commentary and for highlighting the play's profound issue. Mirabell, who begins out as a rake, grows to become a real lover. Despite her affectations, the play projects Millamant as a genuine, kind person.

Love and money are values that need to be considered in the world that is depicted here. Despite Mirabell's sincereity in love, he does not lose sight of how important

Millamant's wealth is. Fainall marries in order to get money for an illicit love; it appears that it would be impossible for him to marry Mrs. Marwood without having enough money. Lady Wishfort's only power over her ward and child is money. Even the marriage of the servants is founded on the assurance of a significant financial reward. This is how the world operates. Even if money frequently taints what little love there is, love without money is an impossibly romantic fantasy. Along with financial concerns of the characters, their social status is also of prime importance in the play. The characters appear more concerned about their reputations than their emotional bondage to stay loyal to their partners.

▶ Love without money is impossible

Similar to the plays' preoccupation with love, marriage and adultery, the play also showcases the class differences in the society. The play's two main classes—upper class and servants—draw attention to social class as a topic, though both issues of both classes are treated with equal importance. Congreve devotes the plot of the play to the actions of upper class people as they are the prime focus of his portrait. As described by Congreve, Foible and Waitwell, the servants of Lady Wishfort and Mirabell, seem to be happy to be wed against their will and take part in a romantic scheme at Mirabell's interest.

▶ Class differences

As a feature of Restoration comedy, everyone in the play is involved in intrigue: Mirabell intrigues Lady Wishfort into agreeing with his marriage. Fainall is also involved in an intrigue in order to blackmail Mrs Fainall and get money from Lady Wishfort. Mrs Fainall, Mrs. Marwood, and the servants are all participating in one of these plots. Even Lady Wishfort, who is willing to wed Sir Rowland, has a cunning plan in mind: to exact revenge on Mirabell. As we see in the play, Mirabell wins merely because he is the most persuasive intriguer rather than by his virtue.

▶ Intriguing rather than virtue

Congreve wrote in such a way that the speech patterns and wit of his characters stood out clearly from one another. Congreve's use of style and wit is one of his methods of characterization. In reality, Congreve's characters use "pleasant things" to express themselves. There is not a speech that does not include some humour, satire, or irony to give it a biting edge. The play is noted for its irony in the title, the plot, and the relationships between the individuals.

▶ Characterisation

Character Sketch

- Mirabell

Mirabell is the witty and intelligent Restoration gentleman, central to the play's intrigue. Though his past affair with Mrs. Fainall shows moral weakness, he is redeemed by his genuine love for Millamant. He represents refinement, wit, and strategic planning, embodying Congreve's idealised vision of a man who, despite flaws, values affection and respect in marriage.

- Millamant

Millamant is the brilliant, witty heroine of the play and a model of female independence. She insists on her right to freedom even within marriage, as seen in the Proviso Scene. Both fashionable and perceptive, she is a blend of wit, charm, and seriousness, representing Congreve's vision of an ideal companionate marriage based on equality.

- Mrs. Fainall

Once Mirabell's mistress, Mrs. Fainall marries Fainall to conceal her past. Intelligent yet trapped in a loveless union, she becomes a victim of social compromise. Her predicament highlights the dangers of marriages made for convenience rather than affection, contrasting sharply with Millamant's more cautious approach.

- Mr. Fainall

Mr. Fainall is the chief schemer and villain of the play. Cynical, selfish, and greedy, he marries Mrs. Fainall for her fortune while maintaining an affair with Mrs. Marwood. His plan to blackmail Lady Wishfort exposes him as the embodiment of lust, hypocrisy, and avarice in Restoration society.

- Lady Wishfort

Lady Wishfort is Millamant's elderly aunt, whose vanity and desire for younger men make her a comic spectacle. Her eagerness to remarry and her gullibility in believing Sir Rowland's false courtship expose her as ridiculous. She symbolises the folly of undignified passion in old age and provides much of the play's humour.

- Mrs. Marwood

Mrs. Marwood is a scheming, frustrated lover who secretly desires Mirabell. Spurned by him, she takes revenge through malice and intrigue, engaging in a deceitful relationship with Fainall. She represents jealousy, spite, and the destructive potential of unfulfilled desire.

- Sir Wilfull Witwoud

Sir Wilfull is Lady Wishfort's boorish nephew, presented as a suitor for Millamant. Rustic, awkward, and often drunk, he serves as a comic foil to Mirabell. His presence

emphasises the sophistication of city manners while exposing the absurdity of mismatched marriages.

▶ Foible

Lady Wishfort's personal maid. She is a key accomplice in Mirabell's scheme to win Millamant, as she helps deceive her mistress by marrying Waitwell and presenting him as "Sir Rowland." She is intelligent and quick-witted, playing a crucial role in the central intrigue.

▶ Waitwell

Mirabell's loyal servant and Foible's husband. He is the one who puts on the disguise of "Sir Rowland," the fictional wealthy uncle, to trick Lady Wishfort. His performance and the risk he takes in committing this act of deception are fundamental to the plot's development.

▶ Witwoud & Petulant

These two are classic "fops" of Restoration comedy. They are not central to the main plot but provide much of the play's satirical humour. They are perpetually trying to appear witty and fashionable, but their affectations are transparent and ridiculous. They serve as a comic contrast to Mirabell's genuine wit and embody the hollow vanity of London high society.

2.4.4 Satire, Mock-Epic, and Comedy of Manners

William Congreve's The Way of the World (1700) is widely acknowledged as the crowning achievement of Restoration comedy. It reflects the age's obsession with wit, fashion, intrigue, and above all, the relations between men and women in love and marriage. While the Restoration stage is notorious for libertinism and satire, Congreve's play marks a refinement of the genre, combining biting commentary on false relationships with a serious concern for what constitutes an ideal marriage. It is simultaneously a mock-epic that ridicules trivial pursuits with heroic language and a quintessential Comedy of Manners that mirrors the elite society of post-Restoration England.

▶ Restoration Context: Morality and Manners

The Restoration period (1660 onwards) was characterised by loosened morals after the Puritan interregnum. Aristocrats returning from exile in France brought with them an appetite for pleasure, wit, and sexual freedom. Playwrights, including Etherege, Wycherley, and Congreve, catered to this taste by producing comedies that depicted fashionable men and women, their intrigues, adulterous liaisons, and the pursuit of wealth through marriage.

Yet Congreve was not merely reproducing fashionable immorality; he was satirising it. His play exposes hypocrisy, greed, and adulterous tendencies, but at the same time suggests the possibility of an ideal marriage based on mutual respect, embodied in Mirabell and Millamant.

The Play as a Mock-Epic

Like Dryden's Mac Flecknoe or Pope's The Rape of the Lock, Congreve's The Way of the World employs mock-epic strategies:

- Trivial affairs presented with epic seriousness: The theft of a lock of hair in Pope or the signing of a marriage proviso in Congreve are inflated into events of cosmic weight.
- Satiric ridicule of false values: Just as mock-epic ridicules shallow aristocratic pursuits, Congreve mocks adulterous liaisons, fortune-hunting marriages, and Lady Wishfort's late-life amorous ambitions.
- Heroic parody of love intrigues: Characters speak in polished wit as though their trivial concerns were matters of state or war. For example, Mr. Fainall's schemes are treated with Machiavellian gravity, though motivated by greed and lust.

Thus, The Way of the World holds up Restoration society to laughter through the epic lens of satire, making the ridiculous appear both comic and instructive.

At the same time, The Way of the World is a perfect specimen of Comedy of Manners, a genre defined by:

1. Focus on upper-class society: The play centres on aristocrats and their complex intrigues of love, fortune, and reputation.
2. Wit as social currency: Every character, whether Mirabell, Millamant, or even minor figures, sparkles with repartee. Dialogue is not merely conversation but a contest of wit.
3. Satire of social pretensions: Lady Wishfort's vanity, Sir Wilfull's rustic manners, and Fainall's hypocritical morality exemplify the ridicule of fashionable folly.

4. Marriage as social transaction: Marriages in the play are arranged for fortune (Fainall and Mrs. Fainall), lust (Fainall and Mrs. Marwood), or ambition (Lady Wishfort's eagerness for Mirabell/Sir Rowland). Only Mirabell and Millamant's union rises above these motives.

The Play as a Comedy of Manners

The "Proviso Scene" is the heart of this comedy of manners. Mirabell and Millamant negotiate terms of their marriage with playful wit but serious undertones, establishing equality and mutual respect, an idealised alternative to the failed marriages around them.

Congreve mocks a wide spectrum of false and corrupt relationships:

- Satirising False Relationships

- Adulterous liaisons – Mirabell's earlier affair with Mrs. Fainall; Fainall's affair with Mrs. Marwood.
- Marriage for convenience: Mrs. Fainall marries Fainall to cover her past; Fainall marries her for her fortune.
- Lust and hypocrisy: Lady Wishfort, at 55, desperately desires young men, making herself a comic spectacle.
- Greed and scheming: Fainall and Mrs. Marwood plot to seize Lady Wishfort's wealth, treating marriage and love as tools for money-making.

These failed relationships form the negative backdrop against which the genuine union of Mirabell and Millamant shines.

Though the play sparkles with wit and satire, Congreve's serious social purpose is revealed in the final resolution. Mirabell and Millamant's marriage is not one of lust, vanity, or financial convenience, but of affection tempered with respect and independence. The Proviso Scene demonstrates this modern vision of marriage:

- Millamant insists on retaining personal space and freedom.
- Mirabell accepts her conditions, suggesting a union of equals.

- The Serious Purpose: Ideal Marriage

- Their marriage becomes a corrective model to the corruption of their society.

Thus, the play moves from mockery of false love to affirmation of true companionship, elevating it above mere satire.

Critics have debated whether The Way of the World is a light mockery of love and marriage or a serious play. On one hand, it contains all the glitter of Restoration wit, mockery, and intrigue. On the other hand, it aims at reforming attitudes toward marriage and presents a moral core. As such, the play is best understood as a Comedy of Manners with a serious corrective function, laughing at folly but upholding an ideal.

The Way of the World is a remarkable fusion of mock-epic satire and Comedy of Manners. Through adultery, intrigue, and hypocrisy, Congreve exposes the corruption of Restoration high society. Yet, through Mirabell and Millamant, he presents a vision of marriage grounded in love, respect, and equality. The play may sparkle with wit and laughter, but beneath its polished surface lies a serious social purpose: to ridicule false values and suggest the way toward the true "world" of love and marriage.

Summarised Overview

This play offers a satirical perspective on the attitude, mannerisms, and flaws of the upper classes. The description of the way of the world highlights the prevalence of deceit, greed, and love. The plot revolves around two lovers, Mirabell and Millamant, seeking a means to marry without losing their inheritance. There are several characters who are connected to one another in some way. The play also reveals some dark secrets of characters. Mirabell and Millamant are keen to get married, but they are conscious that Millamant's aunt, Lady Wishfort, would not approve. They must have her approval to inherit her wealth. As a result, it offers an intriguing perspective on the extent the couple go to in order to achieve the same purpose by any means.

Assignments

1. Consider the play as a Comedy of Manners.
2. How do the characters involve in schemes to inherit wealth?
3. How does the play display the link between love and money?

Suggested Reading

1. Congreve, William. *The Mourning Bride: A Tragedy*. Strand, 1753.
2. Johnson, Samuel. *Lives of the Most Eminent English Poets*. Derby, 1861.
3. Macaulay, Thomas Babington. *The Comic Dramatists of the Restoration.* Longman, 1853.

Reference

1. Rump, Edward, ed. *The Comedies of William Congreve.* Penguin, 1985.
2. Thomas, David. "Life and Work." *William Congreve*. Ed. Bruce. King. St. Martin's, 1992.

SGOU

Space for Learner Engagement for Objective Questions

Learners are encouraged to develop objective questions based on the content in the paragraph as a sign of their comprehension of the content. The Learners may reflect on the recap bullets and relate their understanding with the narrative in order to frame objective questions from the given text. The University expects that 1 - 2 questions are developed for each paragraph. The space given below can be used for listing the questions.

1.

SGOU

Prose and Fiction

BLOCK-03

Block Content

Unit 1 - Prose (Detailed Study)
Unit 2 - Prose (Non-Detailed Study)
Unit 3 - Fiction (Non-Detailed Study)

Unit 1

Prose

(Detailed study)

Learning Outcomes

Upon completion of the unit, learner will be able to:

- understand the thematic and stylistic features of the essays by Steele and Addison
- identify the purpose and structure of *The Spectator* as a periodical essay
- describe the major characters of the Spectator Club as representatives of eighteenth-century society
- explain the uses of humour, irony, and social commentary in Steele's prose writing

1.The Spectator Club

Richard Steele

Background

Sir Richard Steele (1672–1729) was born in Dublin, the same year as his life-long friend Joseph Addison. Their friendship played a decisive role in Steele's literary career. In 1709, Steele began *The Tatler*, and in 1711 he collaborated with Addison to start *The Spectator*, a periodical that combined entertainment with moral and social instruction.

Steele is remembered for his engaging creation of characters, most notably in *The Spectator Club*, and for his collaborative work on the series popularly known as the Coverley Papers. His talent lay in developing character sketches with vivid individuality and emotional depth. The modern novel owes much to Steele's style, where narrative cohesion often emerges from the interplay of diverse characters rather than a singular storyline. Thackeray observed that the enduring charm of Steele's papers lies in their humanity and sincerity. While Addison is celebrated for his wit and intellectual brilliance, Steele is especially valued for his warmth, sympathetic portrayal of ordinary life, and nuanced understanding of human nature.

The essays in *The Spectator* used the fictional Spectator Club as a device to present different social types and attitudes of early eighteenth-century England. Its members - Sir Roger de Coverley, Sir Andrew Freeport, Will Honeycomb, a lawyer, a clergyman, and Captain Sentry - represented varied professions and character traits. Through their portraits, Steele and Addison produced a lively picture of contemporary society. Steele's essays are notable for their originality, warmth, observation, and humour. *The Spectator Club,* especially the essays on Sir Roger de Coverley, remains one of his most memorable contributions to English prose.

Keywords

Periodical essay, Spectator Club, Social commentary, Eighteenth-century prose, Character writing

Discussion

Fig. 3.1.1 Richard Steele

The influential periodical *The Spectator* was published in London by the essayists Richard Steele and Joseph Addison in 1711–1712 and later revived by Addison in 1714. The paper successfully combined entertainment with instruction on manners and morals. One of its most memorable creations was the character Sir Roger de Coverley, a simple, kind-hearted, and slightly whimsical country bachelor.

The Spectator adopted a fictional mode of presentation through the device of the Spectator Club, whose imaginary members expressed the authors' reflections on society. These characters represented different social groups and occupations. Sir Roger de Coverley, created by Addison, stood for the country gentry. The essays centred on him offered lively sketches of early eighteenth-century English life and were regarded as some of the periodical's finest writings. The notice of Sir Roger's death appeared in issue number 517.

The formation of the Spectator Club marked a significant improvement over the organisational model used in *The*

Fig 3.1.2 Richard Steele

Tatler. Earlier, Steele had linked *The Tatler*'s content to four well-known London coffee-houses, each associated with specific social or professional circles. By introducing the Club, Steele and Addison replaced these separate venues with a unified setting, creating a more human and cohesive framework. Within this space, Mr Spectator could interact with people from diverse professions and social classes gathered together in one place. This literary innovation gave a more realistic tone to Mr Spectator's observations and strengthened the credibility of his social and moral commentaries.

Summary- " The Spectator Club"

"The Spectator Club" presents Richard Steele's introduction to the fictional Spectator Club, a literary device created to embody and examine various social types of early eighteenth-century English society. Written in March 1711, this essay introduces six distinctive gentlemen who form this imaginary association, each representing different aspects of contemporary social, professional, and cultural life

Sir Roger de Coverley emerges as the most prominent member, a fifty-six-year-old baronet from Worcestershire whose family invented the famous country dance bearing his name. Steele portrays him as an eccentric but benevolent country gentleman whose singularities stem from good sense rather than mere oddity. His behaviour contradicts fashionable society only because he believes the world has gone astray. His amiable nature creates no enemies, and his freedom from conventional modes makes him more capable of pleasing others. Roger maintains residences in both

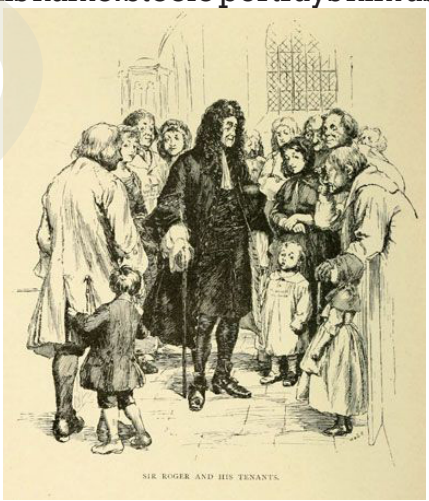

Fig 3.1.3 Sir Roger de Coverley

Soho Square and the countryside, remaining a bachelor due to disappointment in love with a perverse widow from a neighbouring county. Before this romantic setback, he was a fashionable gentleman who dined with notorious figures like Lord Rochester and Sir George Etherege, fought duels, and even kicked the infamous Bully Dawson in a coffeehouse. The heartbreak transformed him from a fine gentleman into a carelessly dressed figure who continues wearing the same style of coat and doublet from the time of his rejection. Despite rumours of impropriety with beggars and gypsies, his friends regard these as jest rather than truth. Roger is beloved rather than esteemed, maintaining prosperous tenants and satisfied servants whilst serving as a Justice of the Peace with considerable ability. He is a justice of the quorum. That he is quite efficient is brought out by the fact that some three months ago, he gained universal applause by explaining a passage in the Game-Act.

- Roger's genteel eccentricity.

Game-Act

The Game Act of 1671 put significant restrictions on hunting, such that hunting of pheasants, rabbits, partridges and other small game could only be hunted by property owners. Up until that point, it had been legal for just about anyone to hunt small game, and was considered something of a right for poor people to supplement their diets by hunting. With the Game Act, that was defined as poaching, and landowners could prosecute people who did not own property who hunted on their land.

Fig 3.1.4 Law Student

The second member is an unnamed law-student from the Inner Temple, a man of great probity, wit, and understanding who chose his legal residence to please his eccentric father rather than pursue his own inclinations. Though placed there to study English law, he has become more learned in theatrical matters, understanding Aristotle and Longinus better than legal authorities Littleton and Coke. His father regularly sends queries about marriage articles, leases, and tenures, which he arranges to have answered by an attorney while he studies human passions rather than legal debates. He knows every

oration of Demosthenes and Cicero but remains ignorant of English court cases. His refined literary taste makes him somewhat out of step with his age, having read extensively but approving of very few works. His familiarity with ancient customs makes him a keen observer of contemporary life, He is, however, a regular theatre-goer. Before visiting the theatre, he usually drops in at Will's to gossip with his friends. He is particularly concerned over his dress when he goes to the theatre, serving as an excellent critic whose expertise shines during theatrical performances. His daily routine involves crossing through Russell Court and taking refreshment at Will's coffeehouse before attending plays at the Rose tavern. He is a very good critic of the stage. It is very advantageous to the rest of the audience if he is present in any performance, because every actor does his best to please him.

- Learning over profession.

- **Inner Temple** is one of the Inns of Court, the headquarters of the legal profession in London.
- **Aristotle (384-322 BC):** Greek philosopher. He studied at Plato's Academy and later founded his own school Lyceum. He was tutor to Alexander the Great.
- **Longinus:** a celebrated Greek philosopher of the third century of this era. His famous work is 'On the Sublime' which contains criticisms of poetry.
- **Littleton:** Sir Thomas Littleton (1402-81) was a famous jurist. His reputation rests on his treatise on 'Tenures', then written in French, first printed at London, in 1481, and translated into English about 1500. It was the text that Coke commented on in his "Coke upon Littleton."
- **Coke:** Sir Edward Coke (1552-1634), a famous jurist. He wrote commentaries on Littleton
- **Demosthenes:** The Greek orator of antiquity, was born about 382 B.C. He lost his father at an early age. The fortune bequeathed to him was reduced by the neglect or fraud of his guardians; when he came of age he prosecuted them, and gained his cause, but most of his inheritance was irretrievably lost. He died in 322 B. C.
- **Tully:** Marcus Tullius Cicero, orator, statesman, and man of letters; he was born in 106 B.C.; an Arpinum in Latium of a good family. Of his speeches the most famous are those against Verres and Catiline. As an essayist and letter-writer he is most attractive. As a politician, however, he failed. He died in 40 B.C., in his 63rd year. '**Wills**': the coffee-house frequented by writers a tavern favored by actors

Fig 3.1.5 Sir Andrew Freeport

Sir Andrew Freeport represents the merchant class as a person of indefatigable industry, strong reason, and extensive commercial experience. His noble and generous notions of trade lead him to call the sea "the British Common," emphasising his belief that true power derives from arts and industry rather than military conquest. He argues that diligent cultivation of trade brings more lasting acquisition than valour, citing the maxim "A Penny saved is a Penny got" amongst his frugal principles. His natural eloquence and clear discourse provide the same pleasure that wit offers in others. Having made his fortune through his own efforts, he maintains that England could become richer than other kingdoms through the same practical methods that made him wealthier than other men. His commercial interests span globally, owning shares in ships trading to every point of the compass.

- Commerce over conquest.

Fig 3.1.6 Captain Sentry

Captain Sentry embodies military virtue as a gentleman of great courage and good understanding, yet cursed with invincible modesty that prevents him from promoting his own merits. Having served with gallantry in various engagements and sieges, he quit military service because advancement requires courtly skills alongside military ability. He laments that in a profession where merit should be conspicuous, impudence often triumphs over modesty. Rather than expressing bitterness, he frankly acknowledges leaving military life because his honest nature and regular behaviour created obstacles in seeking commanders' favour. He philosophically observes that successful military advancement requires overcoming false modesty and supporting one's patron against competing pretenders through proper self-assertion. His military experiences provide entertaining conversation without overbearing behaviour, despite his command experience, nor excessive deference from his habit of obeying superiors.

- Modesty in service

Fig 3.1.7 Will Honeycomb

Will Honeycomb represents the fashionable gentleman well-versed in gallantries and social pleasures. Despite his advanced years, his careful attention to his person and comfortable fortune have preserved him remarkably well. His well-formed figure and considerable height complement his skill in discourse typically used to entertain women. Having dressed well throughout his life, he remembers fashions as others remember people, possessing comprehensive knowledge of every mode and style. He can trace the origins of current fashions to specific French royal mistresses, explaining how various clothing styles emerged from particular women's attempts to conceal frailty or display vanity. His conversation and knowledge centre entirely on the female world, recounting social encounters with celebrated beauties who became mothers of current nobility. Where other men discuss political affairs, Honeycomb relates romantic conquests and social interactions. His vivacious manner enlivens the conversation of his more sedate companions, earning recognition as a well-bred fine gentleman whilst remaining honest and worthy when women are not involved.

- Fashionable raconteur.

The Spectator is hesitating whether to include the last person in his company. He is a clergyman, and he visits them very seldom. But whenever he comes, he puts every man into a better mood. He is also a sort of philosopher of much learning and observes great sanctity in life. But unfortunately, he has a weak constitution (weak physical health). So, he is unable to take an active part in his professional function. He only gives his opinions on important religious matters. He has a peculiar way of speaking on his subject. He knows when his listeners are in earnest to hear him, and he starts speaking on some divine topic. His way of putting things is also remarkable. He appears to be absolutely unconcerned about this world, in a manner that befits a person who will soon leave this world for an eternal life.

These characters collectively represent a cross-section of eighteenth-century English society, embodying different professions, social classes, and personality types whilst

Main Ideas

In this essay Steele gives an account of the six gentlemen who, along with Mr. Spectator, are members of the Spectator Club. These gentlemen are:

1. Sir Roger de Coverley: he is a good-natured, jolly country baronet who was once very particular about elegant dress and sophisticated manners. However, after his unsuccessful love-affair with a widow, he has given up attending to his dress and polite pursuits.
2. A member of the Inner Temple: his name is not mentioned. Though his profession is law, he does not attend legal studies much. Rather, he gives full attention to theatre and literature.
3. Sir Andrew Freeport: he is a prosperous merchant and is a champion of trade and commerce.
4. Captain Sentry: he is an ex-serviceman. He is modest and self-critical.
5. Will Honeycomb: he is an old man-about-town and a lady-killer. He is also a recognised authority on fashions and fads of the town.
6. An unnamed clergyman: he enjoys but poor health. He is a great authority on divinity

serving Steele's broader purpose of moral instruction through entertaining social observation.

Critical Analysis

▶ *Social painting compared*

Steele and Addison were painters of their contemporary society. By conceiving a club with members drawn from diverse walks of life, they could vivify and broaden their picture of society. Every member of the Club represents a profession, and through their representative characteristics they collectively build an authentic picture of the age of Queen Anne. The Club serves as a miniature version of contemporary society. While envisaging the Club and its members, Steele was attempting something new but not entirely original, for there had been some notable predecessors. Boccaccio (1313–1375) and Chaucer (1340–1400), for example, had also tried to depict their respective societies by bringing together and describing characters drawn from different professions. Boccaccio, in *The Decameron*, sketched ten persons including seven ladies, while Chaucer in *The Canterbury Tales* portrayed twenty-nine

characters with a fair number of women among them. Steele and Addison followed the same technique in their depiction.

Steele and the 'Character-writers'

In his brief portrayal of six characters in this essay, Steele may also have been influenced by the seventeenth-century character writers, notably Hall, Stephens, Earle and Overbury. These writers drew upon real people and painted them briefly through words, focusing more on representative than individual traits of their "modes." On the whole, their work fell short of excellence, as their characters often seemed stiff and lacked vitality. This was possibly because they imitated too slavishly the example of Theophrastus, the first Greek character writer. Steele, however, with his keen observation, experience, insight, humanity and mastery of detail, avoided mere imitation. His characters are vivid and full of life. They are not lifeless figures but real men, alive and dynamic. Hence, despite some indebtedness to his predecessors, Steele's achievement remains largely his own.

▶ Steele's originality affirmed.

Sir Roger de Coverley

Steele's broad-mindedness is evident in the respectful treatment he extends to Sir Roger and Sir Andrew. Prior to him, it had been customary to present country gentlemen and merchants in a ridiculous light. The post-Restoration dramatists, in particular, had ridiculed these figures, depicting country gentlemen as simple-minded and ignorant of urban manners, and merchants as dishonest and greedy. Steele was the first major writer to treat these stock figures with sympathy and understanding. Sir Andrew is portrayed as wealthy and somewhat dull, yet never greedy or corrupt. Similarly, Sir Roger appears as a respectable country baronet, even though he is mildly eccentric. This essay is significant because it introduces readers, for the first time, to Sir Roger, one of the enduring figures of English literature. Although Addison later modified Steele's conception of this gentleman in *The Coverley Papers*, their portrayals remain complementary.

▶ *Sympathetic portrayal new.*

Steele's Humour, Irony and Satire

Some critics observe that Steele's humour in this essay resembles Addison's in its mildness, subtlety and sympathy. There are gentle touches of irony directed at three characters—Sir Roger, Sir Andrew Freeport and Will Honeycomb—while the Templar, the Clergyman and Captain Sentry are spared. Interestingly, the characters subjected to irony appeal more strongly to readers because they display liveliness and colour. The others, though virtuous, appear rather dull by comparison. Sympathetic humour, therefore, enhances the charm of such characters. Steele also seizes the opportunity to criticise certain pursuits fashionable among gentlemen like Honeycomb, whose attitudes belonged to an earlier Caroline period. Additionally, he seems to disapprove of the system of promotion in the army.

▶ Humour with criticism.

Steele's Style

Finally, Steele is less of a conscious artist than Addison. His prose lacks the polish and effortless flow that distinguish Addison's style. Nevertheless, there are moments in this essay where Steele employs stylistic devices such as balance and antithesis effectively. Yet he is not as careful as Addison in refining and perfecting his sentences.

▶ Style less polished

Summarised Overview

The Spectator (1711–12) introduced a fictional club of six gentlemen representing different sections of eighteenth-century English life. Through this group, Steele and Addison explored moral, social, and professional themes with wit and sympathy. The most engaging figure is Sir Roger de Coverley, a kind and eccentric country gentleman whose simple honesty contrasts sharply with urban sophistication. Other characters include a learned lawyer from the Inner Temple, the industrious merchant Sir Andrew Freeport, the modest soldier Captain Sentry, the fashionable raconteur Will Honeycomb, and a devout but delicate clergyman. Together, they form a vivid cross-section of society, allowing Steele and Addison to criticise social follies and manners while promoting civility and virtue. The essay blends humour, irony, and moral reflection, demonstrating Steele's insight into human nature and his contribution to the development of English prose and character writing.

Assignments

1. Bring out Steele's gift for characterisation with reference to the description of the members of the Spectator Club.
2. Examine how the Periodical essays helped to capture the contemporary social ethos of the eighteenth century.
3. Give an account of English Prose in the Eighteenth century with special reference to Joseph Addison and Richard Steele. How did they make morality fashionable?

Suggested Reading

1. Dammers, Richard H. *Richard Steele*. Twayne Publishers, 1982.
2. Maurer, Shawn Lisa. *Reforming Men: Gender, Sexuality, and Class in the Early English Periodical*. University of Michigan, 1991.
3. Herrig , Ludwig Christian Friedrich . *The British Classical Authors: Select Specimens of the National Literature of England with Biographical and Critical Sketches. Poetry and Prose*. George Westermann, 1869.

Reference

1. Drabble, Margaret, et al.eds. *The Concise Oxford Companion to English Literature*. Cambridge UP, 2007.
2. Nichols, John . *The Epistolary Correspondence of Sir Richard Steele.* Cambridge UP, 2014.

Space for Learner Engagement for Objective Questions

Learners are encouraged to develop objective questions based on the content in the paragraph as a sign of their comprehension of the content. The Learners may reflect on the recap bullets and relate their understanding with the narrative in order to frame objective questions from the given text. The University expects that 1 - 2 questions are developed for each paragraph. The space given below can be used for listing the questions.

1.

SGOU

2. On Procrastination

Dr. Samuel Johnson

Learning Outcomes

Upon completion of the unit, the learner will be able to:

- analyse Johnson's exploration of procrastination and its psychological underpinnings
- explain how Johnson balances moral exhortation with sympathetic insight
- evaluate the essay's relevance to contemporary understandings of delay and motivation
- apply Johnson's principles to reflect on personal time-management practices

Background

Dr. Samuel Johnson (1709–1784), whose life spanned the major part of the eighteenth century, has left an indelible image on English literature. Born into the family of an impoverished bookseller, he contracted scrofula in infancy, resulting in lifelong deafness in one ear and partial blindness in an eye. His physical ailments and prodigious memory shaped a character respected by peers and instructors alike. After attending Lichfield Grammar School, a small legacy enabled him to enter Pembroke College, Oxford, in 1728, though he left a year later due to poverty. He moved to London with the actor David Garrick and earned a living through "inspired hackwork," writing for *The Gentleman's Magazine*.

Johnson's reputation rested on several major works: the poem "The Vanity of Human Wishes" (1749), the tragedy *Irene*, the periodical essays *The Rambler* (1750–1752) and *The Idler* (1758), the *Dictionary of the English Language* (1755), the philosophical novel *Rasselas* (1759), his edition of Shakespeare (1765), and *Lives of the Poets* (1779–1781). In 1763 he met James Boswell, whose *Life of Johnson* (1791) became the most celebrated biography in English literature. Johnson died in 1784 and was buried in Westminster Abbey.

This section will discuss Rambler #134, "On Procrastination" (29 June 1751), Johnson's meditation on delay and idleness. It will explore how

Johnson uses personal anecdote, classical allusion, and moral argument to examine the causes and consequences of procrastination and to advocate decisive action in the face of life's brevity.

Keywords

Procrastination, Idleness, Enlightenment morality, Classical allusion, Time management

Discussion

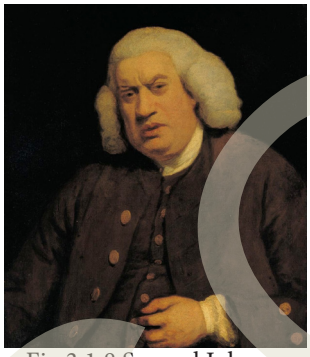

Fig 3.1.8 Samuel Johnson

In the second half of the eighteenth century, the periodical essay began to merge with the newspaper. Dr. Johnson's series of about one hundred essays, *The Idler*, appeared in the newspaper *The Universal Chronicler* and are lighter and shorter than those in *The Rambler*. *The Rambler* ran twice weekly from 20 March 1750 to 14 March 1752 for 208 issues. Although its essays address a wide range of topics, their tone is always serious. In these writings Johnson appears as a moralist and sage, each essay an exercise in earnestness. His style is Latinate and antithetical, and his purpose was to reform society. Beginning in poverty and already at work on his dictionary, Johnson wrote anonymously for *The Rambler* without fail, twice weekly for two years, whether well or ill. The essays stand out for their clarity, weight, and practical morality. They guide readers on cultivating proper mindsets and using their time efficiently. Though seldom concerned with current affairs, *The Rambler* offers ponderous, shrewd, ironic, compassionate, wise, and perceptive commentary on society and the human condition.

Johnson's essays in *The Rambler* reflect his own experience of universal anxieties and frustrations. No. 134, "On Procrastination," is a masterly examination of idleness and delay. Johnson begins by recounting his difficulty in choosing a topic, highlighting our shared tendency to postpone inevitable tasks. He shows how this habit is fuelled

by fear and the hope of future relief, leading to wasted time in anxiety and hesitation. He argues that overthinking and perfectionism only complicate decision-making. By reminding us of life's brevity and death's certainty, he urges decisive action: exerting effort and facing challenges honestly is far preferable to idleness, even when success is not assured.

3.1.2 Summary – "On Procrastination"

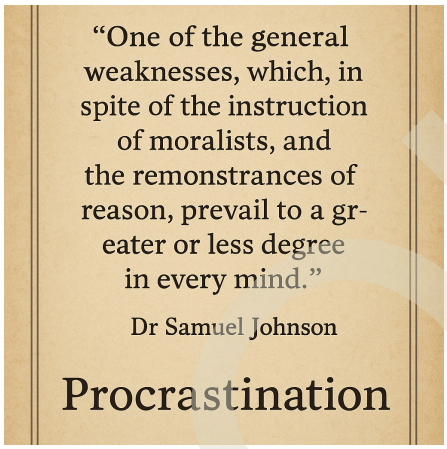

Fig 3.1.9 "On Procrastination"

Dr. Johnson begins the essay by explaining his struggle the previous day in deciding the topic for his writing. His thoughts wandered without settling on any subject until the pressing deadline reminded him to start. He reflects that a writer with broad and thorough knowledge can adapt easily to writing about any topic from life or nature. Nevertheless, he reproaches himself for the unnecessary delay in beginning his work. Despite this, he finds some comfort in knowing that with renewed effort he can still recover lost time. He contrasts himself with those who lose opportunities beyond recovery, leading only to calamity and fruitless sorrow, thus reaffirming the value of seizing chances before they slip away.

- *Johnson's initial delay, self-reproach, and recovery hope.*

Despite warnings from moralists and the remonstrances of reason, all humans tend to postpone inevitable tasks. Even those who resist this impulse find it never fully disappears, being defeated but not totally extinguished. Johnson observes with a wry humour that humans have a strong attachment to the present moment because it makes the strongest impression upon us by its immediacy. As a result, we often postpone unpleasant or difficult actions, hoping that future circumstances will provide some support or advantages that are not currently available. This leads to a false belief that the moment of necessity, the deadline we dread , will be far away, making it easier to defer action.

- *Human nature's tendency to delay due to focus on the present.*

Life is then wasted in a fog of anxiety, spent making resolutions that vanish with the morning light. We set goals that we fail to fulfil and justify our cowardice with absurd excuses, weakening our firmness of purpose. Overthinking and excessive fear impair our resolve and deepen the hardship we face. Instead of acting, we waste the very time that could allow us to overcome our challenges. Although procrastination itself does not increase the difficulty of the task, the fear that underlies it makes the challenge appear greater. While it is often impossible to avoid delay entirely, we can reduce the length of waiting. If we flee from our problems, they will catch up with us; if we face them directly, the burden is lighter, deprived of the extra torment caused by doubt and anxious anticipation- that is, baseless fear.

▶ *Anxiety, fear, and inaction worsen hardship*

Acting is ultimately far easier than merely worrying, yet the progress of life is frequently hindered by simple reluctance to move forward. Many people grumble over their difficulties, which are in fact caused by their own idleness and failure to act. Johnson compares such people to Tantalus from myth, who was punished by having fruit continually retreat from his grasp. However, such pity cannot be extended to idle people, since unlike Tantalus they do not even attempt to lift their hands and relieve their own suffering.

▶ Idleness causes needless suffering and missed relief

Johnson describes this inactive generation as being especially prone to complain of unease, a feeling bred from laziness and fear. Their imagined troubles, which they believe to be real, could be removed if they chose to act. However, fear of failure or past unsuccessful attempts often blocks their efforts. A persistent desire to avoid work gradually builds false terrors within the mind. Once these fears take full control, they generate visions of disaster, making life miserable. Lazy people endure not only actual hardships common to all but also torment from unreal problems born of cowardice and imagined dangers, which only clear minds can dispel by recognising their origin.

▶ *Laziness and fear create imagined and real troubles alike.*

The greatest failures belong to those who are idle, neglecting their duties solely to avoid effort. This leads them to sink under the weight of their own laziness. Such people can never find peace, because their conscience nags them without the power to push them

▶ *Idleness results in lasting regret and unrest.*

into action. This causes sleepless nights, haunted by remorse and frustration over their inability to stay committed to their goals or make meaningful progress.

Procrastination also affects even the most active and intelligent minds. Those who pursue many goals tend to hesitate and waver between options, causing delays. Sometimes a person abandons previously advanced progress in favour of new interests. Those confronted with multiple solutions to the same end waste time comparing advantages instead of choosing a path and starting. Highly perceptive individuals may foresee many distant consequences and seek new methods, making them hesitant to begin. This leads to endless refining and complicating of plans. Perfectionists who want every convenience or ideal condition are never satisfied, endlessly gathering materials, consulting experts, and researching instead of taking action. A desire for perfect results can cause missed opportunities to accomplish good work.

▶ *Procrastination hampers even the capable and perfectionists.*

Johnson concludes by reminding us that life is shorter than we tend to imagine and far shorter than nature allows. This awareness should awaken in us a sense of urgency to pursue our goals diligently. While no amount of effort can guarantee success, and death may interrupt any undertaking unexpectedly, a person who dies while honestly striving for a worthy aim has not wasted their effort. They carry the honour of having fought bravely in their position, even if victory or full success eludes them.

▶ *Life's brevity demands urgent and honest effort.*

Through this essay, Johnson touches on universal human themes such as fear, time, mortality, and willpower with psychological insight and moral seriousness. His personal tone, combined with philosophical reflections and classical references, lends the essay timeless authority. The message of the essay remains a powerful reminder of how procrastination undermines human potential and how overcoming it is essential to a virtuous and productive life.

▶ Timeless moral wisdom.

Analysis

Samuel Johnson's essay "On Procrastination" offers a profound meditation on human procrastination and the nature of action versus inaction. His reflective tone combines moral seriousness with a subtle wit, engaging readers in a timeless exploration of why people delay duties and how this affects their lives. The essay stands out for its psychological insight, practical wisdom, and literary elegance, making it a valuable text for learners of English literature and philosophy alike.

- Insightful reflection on procrastination

Johnson's strength lies in his ability to connect individual behaviour with universal human tendencies. He convincingly argues that procrastination is almost ineradicable, even among the most resolute people, and that it arises from natural attachment to the present and fear of future discomfort. This nuanced view goes beyond simple moralising, recognising procrastination as a complex psychological struggle rooted in human nature. His use of classical references like Tantalus enriches the essay, linking personal experience to enduring myths and moral tradition.

- *Deep psychological and classical connections.*

One notable feature of the essay is Johnson's balanced approach. He neither condemns procrastinators outright nor dismisses their plight. Instead, he shows sympathy for human weakness while clearly endorsing timely action as the path to honour and fulfilment. His points about how fear distorts perception and how perfectionism can trap even the capable are especially relevant. These reflections encourage readers to recognise their own tendencies and to strive consciously against them.

- *Balanced critique and encouragement*

The essay's style is formal but accessible, ideally suited for readers seeking moral and practical illumination. Johnson's use of clear, composed sentences and careful argumentation makes difficult ideas approachable without oversimplification. His occasional humour, such as the metaphor of Tantalus, adds a lightness that deepens engagement rather than detracting from seriousness. Overall, the prose achieves a classical dignity that matches the weight of the subject matter.

- Clear, formal, and engaging style.

- *Limited by historical context, idealistic focus on will.*

However, some modern readers might find Johnson's emphasis on individual will and moral responsibility somewhat idealistic. The essay largely overlooks external factors such as social, economic, or mental health barriers that complicate procrastination for many. Contemporary discussions about procrastination often incorporate these wider contexts, which Johnson's 18th-century perspective naturally lacks. Still, his focus on personal agency remains valuable for understanding the mindset behind delay.

- Timeless wisdom with classical richness.

The essay provides a timeless and eloquent exploration of procrastination, combining philosophical depth with practical advice. Johnson's insights into fear, perfectionism, and the urgency of life encourage readers to value action and resist the temptations of delay. Its classical allusions and balanced tone enrich the essay, although its 18th-century viewpoint does not address all modern complexities. This makes it an excellent text both for literary study and for personal reflection on human habits.

Summarised Overview

In "On Procrastination," Johnson confesses his own delay in choosing a writing topic and generalises this weakness as universal. He explores how fear of discomfort and over-attachment to the present fuel indecision, leading to wasted life in anxiety and empty resolutions. Drawing on the myth of Tantalus, he warns that idleness compounds hardship, and perfectionism traps even capable minds in endless preparation. Johnson concludes that, despite uncertainty and mortality, decisive action is preferable to delay, honouring both effort and life's short span.

Assignments

1. Examine the influence of Enlightenment thought on Johnson's views of human will and action.
2. How does Samuel Johnson find correlation between idleness and procrastination
3. How does the writer describe the evilness of delay?

4. How does pursuing many goals lead to procrastination?
5. What are the major arguments that Samuel Johnson introduced in his "On Procrastination"?

Suggested Reading

1. Johnson, Samuel. *The Rambler: A Selection of Essays*. Edited by John Kinsella, Oxford University Press, 2008.
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3. Wright, George T. "The Moral Economy of The Rambler." Studies in English Literature 1500–1900, vol. 38, no. 2, 1998, pp. 321–42.

Space for Learner Engagement for Objective Questions

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1.

SGOU

Unit 2

Prose

(Non-Detailed)

Learning Outcomes

Upon completion of the unit, the learner will be able to:

- be familiarised themselves with comprehensive characterisation of Addison as an essayist
- estimate the contribution of Joseph Addison and Jonathan Swift to the genre of essay
- critically approach the characterisations of everyday figures in the social context
- identify the elements of subtle humour and satirical distance in the essay.

1. Sir Roger at Home

Joseph Addison

Background

The periodical essay, conceptualized towards the end of the seventeenth century, reached its peak of success early in the eighteenth century in the work of Joseph Addison (1672-1719) and Richard Steele (1672-1729). On April 12th of 1709 Steele published the first number of *The Tatler*. Addison wrote regularly for the periodical. His essays were 42 in number. Then he wrote 274 essays for *The Spectator*. Addison also assisted in the *Guardian* in 1713 and contributed fifty essays to it.

Addison wrote four hundred essays in all. They are the true representation of the People of the age. They deal with fashions, head dresses, and practical jokes. He also wrote on serious themes like immorality, jealousy, prayer, death and drunkenness. *The Spectator* contained essays on morality, manners, art and literature, foibles and faults of the society. Addison became a contributor in *The Spectator*. He wrote 274 essays out of the total of 555. But Steele wrote only 236 essays for it. The best known essays of *The Spectator* are those about Sir Roger de Coverley. He was an imaginary, eccentric old country squire. In the essay "Sir Roger at Home" Addison pictures the full character of Sir Roger. He praises the qualities of his eccentricity and common sense. The sketch is vivid and realistic. The character of Sir Roger's Chaplain has

also been well drawn. It shows the typical humor of Addison. His style is marked by clarity, antithesis and balance.

Keywords

Periodical essay, Foibles of the society,subdued humour, Satirical aloofness, Character sketch.

Discussion

Fig. 3.2.1 Joseph Addison

Steele had contributed the first sketch of Sir Roger de Coverley to *The Spectator* (No.2). But Addison so developed the sketch that he must be looked upon as the real creator of that immortal character. In this essay, Addison acquaints us with the household of Roger. In his admirable way, Addison brings home to us the familiar surroundings of Sir Roger's country home. There is a satirical aloofness in describing the goodness of the master as reflected in the old house-dog. But throughout the essay the gentle manner of, Sir Roger is felt by the readers. "The figure of Sir Roger," says Prof. Courthope, "though it belongs to a by-gone stage of society, is as durable as human nature itself, and while the language lasts the exquisite beauty of the colours in which it is preserved will excite the same kind of pleasure."

▶ Sir Roger's country home

Summary- "Sir Roger at Home"

▶ Invitation from Sir Roger

Accepting the oft-repeated invitation of Sir Roger, Mr. Spectator goes to stay at Sir Roger's country house for a month. Sir Roger, respecting Mr. Spectator's reticent and reserved nature, lets him have his own way, never interfering in his daily schedule. Even when visitors come to see Mr. Spectator, Sir Roger keeps them at a distance from him.

All of Sir Roger's servants are serious, sober and aged. Most of them have given to his service many years of their life. All of them live like a family, and Sir Roger acts as the "Master of the family." He is kind even to his servants too old to serve him any longer. When Sir Roger and Mr.

Spectator are sighted by these domestics, their faces cheer up and some of them even weep for pleasure. All of them vie with one another to be able to serve him. When they ask him any questions concerning him, he asks them questions concerning them. When he shows through cough or any other symptom that he is becoming old, all feel concerned for him. Mr. Spectator is put by Sir Roger under the care of the butler.

▶ Sir Roger acts as the master of the family

Sir Roger's chaplain has been in his service for more than thirty years. He is sensible and learned. He has a good personality and a charming way of conversation. Sir Roger is slightly eccentric. He does not want his chaplain to bandy Latin and Greek or exhibit his learning. That is why he selected this particular man for the job. The chaplain helps him in settling lawsuits in the parish. According to Sir Roger's suggestion, this chaplain does not compose his own sermons, but delivers in the church on Sundays sermons originally written by famous authorities such as Archbishop Tillotson and Dr. Barrow. On account of his dear voice and fine personality and the excellence of his choice of the right sermons, he charms the congregation and even Mr. Spectator is 'charmed with the gracefulness of his figure and delivery.'

▶ Sir Roger is slightly eccentric

In the end, Addison suggests that other chaplains should take a cue from Sir Roger's chaplain and likewise deliver sermons written by great masters. They should concentrate only on the effective methods they should employ in delivering them.

▶ Sir Roger's chaplain

Critical Analysis

This essay makes an advance on the knowledge provided to us by Steele's paper originally setting forward the character of Sir Roger de Coverley. Whereas Steele just drew the outline of the portrait, Addison here fills up colours to make it advance towards completion. What is particularly note-worthy here is the sureness of Addison's touch as an artist. Apparently, he dallies from one point to the other, from one detail to the other, without any method or even reason. The whole narrative sounds like the evidence of an eye witness. The apparent artlessness makes for verisimilitude and is an art by itself. Minute details in their cumulative effect give the sense of fullness and life likeness. A critic comments that it is difficult to imagine

▶ Realistic portrait of the character

that Sir Roger and his 'family' are but fictitious figures. They look like the creations not of Addison's art but God's art.

Addison excels particularly in the art of impressing the readers through brilliant portrayal of characters, giving minor details of incidents, actions or appearance. For example, see how he succeeds in conveying the excessive kindness of Sir Roger through a reference to his dog and horse. He almost casually refers to "a gray pad that is kept in the stable, with great care and tenderness out of regard to his past services, though he has been useless for several years".

▶ Minute detailing

This essay contains a few examples of that subdued kind of humour which came so naturally to Addison. Addison disliked boisterous horse-play and rough-and-tumble farce. He loved cheerfulness rather than mirth. He makes us smile rather than laugh. Here are some specimens:

(i) Sir Roger, in deference to the wishes of Mr. Spectator, does not allow his visitor (country gentlemen) to see him. They and Sir Roger treat Mr. Spectator as a show-piece or as an animal in a zoo or a wild game sanctuary with a sign-board proclaiming 'Do not disturb the animals' ! That is the impression we get from these words: "When the gentlemen of the country come to see him, he only shows me at a distance. As I have been walking in his fields, I have observed them stealing a sight of me over a hedge..." These gentlemen are spectators of the Spectator!

(ii) Then we are told that Sir Roger did not wish to employ a learned chaplain on the plea that "he was afraid of being insulted with Latin and Greek" at his own table,

▶ Addison's humour

(iii) In the last but one paragraph there is a felicitous and witty simile "A sermon repeated after this manner, is like the composition of a poet in the mouth of a graceful actor."

The ease, flow, polish and subtle artifice of Addison's prose are remarkable. How, through excellent artistry, Addison lends a charming harmony and pleasing rhythm to his sentences may be illustrated through an example taken from this essay:

1. I am the more at ease in Sir Roger's family

2. The knight is the best master in the world

4. He seldom changes his servants

- Style of Addison

5. He is beloved by all about him

6. His servants never care for leaving him

7. Grow old with their master

The reader can easily notice the sense of balance in between the two lines of each 'couplet' (that is in lines No. 1 and 2, 3 and 4 etc.) This sense of balance is subdued and natural and does not stand out as a deliberate mannerism.

Glossary

valet de chambre: a valet; a man-servant who personally attends a man, taking care of his apartment, clothes, etc.

Privy councillor: member of the Privy Council, a group of confidential advisers to the sovereign, especially in Great Britain.

Pad: a slow-paced horse.

Backgammon: a game played on a board by two persons with fifteen checkers each, the moves being determined by throwing dice. The game, though still played, is not so much in vogue as in Addison's day; the origin of the word is uncertain.

Chaplain: a clergyman who performs religious services in a private household. In those days gentlemen of means employed a private chaplain attached to the household. Unlike that of Sir Roger's chaplain; was usually of an almost menial character.

Parsonage: residence of a minister in charge of a church or parish; especially the house and plot belonging to a parish or church which is set apart for the use of the minister.

Annuity: a grant of money paid yearly in one sum or in installments.

Bishop of St. Asaph: Dr. William Fleetwood.

Archbishop Tillotson, Bishop Saunderson: They were famous divines of Addison's age.

Summarised Overview

The Coverly Paper by Joseph Addison and Richard Steele contains the essay "Sir Roger at Home." In this essay, Sir Roger's persona is revealed to be a complex amalgam of compassion, friendliness, love, disappointment, honesty, goodness, and even superstition. The essay "Sir Roger at Home" describes how the author accepted an invitation to stay at Sir Roger's country estate. He visited there and had the opportunity to personally experience the graciousness and hospitality of his host. He observed that every servant admired and adored their employer, and that most of them had been employed here for more than ten years. In the home, the novelist Addison was free to do anything he pleased. Additionally, Sir Roger had previously instructed his staff not to bother Addison because he enjoyed his loneliness. The book also notes that because of their master's esteem and devotion, the servants would become anxious and start fretting if he coughed or otherwise displayed any indications of aging.

Assignments

1. Analyse Addison's use of detailed description and satirical aloofness to bring Sir Roger de Coverley to life as a realistic character.
2. Design a character analysis chart showing how Sir Roger's treatment of his servants, chaplain, and guests reveals his personality traits and social values.
3. Discuss Addison's writing style and his use of humour in the essay "Sir Roger at Home."
4. Explore Addison's realistic portrayal of characters in the essay "Sir Roger at Home."
5. Write a note on Addison's description of country state and its people in the essay "Sir Roger at Home.

Suggested Reading

1. Addison, Joseph. *The Spectator: Selected Essays*. Edited by Donald F. Bond, Oxford University Press, 1996.
2. Courthope, William J. "Sir Roger de Coverley and the English Character." *Studies in English Literature, 1500–1900*, vol. 10, no. 2, 1970, pp. 245–62.

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3. Hirsch, E. D., Jr. "The Aesthetic of the Essay." Essays on the Essay, edited by Joanne Feit Diehl and Laura L. Mielcarek, University of Iowa Press, 2003, pp. 55–68.

SGOU

Space for Learner Engagement for Objective Questions

Learners are encouraged to develop objective questions based on the content in the paragraph as a sign of their comprehension of the content. The Learners may reflect on the recap bullets and relate their understanding with the narrative in order to frame objective questions from the given text. The University expects that 1 - 2 questions are developed for each paragraph. The space given below can be used for listing the questions.

1.

SGOU

2 The Battle of the Books

Jonathan Swift

Learning Outcomes

Upon completion of the unit, learner will be able to:

- understand the satirical techniques and allegorical structure employed by Swift in *The Battle of the Books*
- identify the historical context of the ancient-modern controversy and Swift's role in defending Sir William Temple
- describe the symbolic significance of key episodes, particularly the spider and bee allegory interpreted by Aesop
- explain Swift's use of mock-heroic conventions, irony, and literary parody in critiquing intellectual pride and contemporary scholarship

Background

Jonathan Swift was born in Dublin in 1667, the posthumous son of English parents. His father's death left his mother and sister in poverty, but Swift's uncle arranged for his education at Kilkenny School, one of Ireland's finest. He later attended Trinity College, Dublin. In 1688, after his uncle's death, Swift accepted a position in the household of Sir William Temple at Moor Park, Surrey. Temple, a retired diplomat and patron of letters, became Swift's lifelong mentor.

Swift's early attempts at poetry met with mixed success. His Pindaric odes to the king and to Temple drew a dismissive verdict from his distant kinsman John Dryden, who reportedly told him, "Cousin Swift, you will never be a poet." Redirecting his talents, Swift turned to prose satire. In 1697 he published "A Tale of a Tub" and "The Battle of the Books" as a prologue to Temple's *Essay on Ancient and Modern Learning*. After Temple's death in 1699, Swift returned to Ireland, where he produced works such as "Meditation on a Broomstick"(1699) and the "Vindications of Sir Isaac Bickerstaff"(1708). His masterpiece, *Gulliver's Travels*, appeared in 1726. Swift died in 1745 and was buried in St Patrick's Cathedral, Dublin.

"The Battle of the Books" is Swift's sharp satire on the "Quarrel of the Ancients and Moderns." Published alongside "A Tale of a Tub", it stages a literal battle between books in St James's Library to continue the argument begun by Sir William Temple. Swift imported a debate that had already provoked heated exchanges on the Continent, especially in France, and gave

it a distinctly English shape. Today, the phrase "Battle of the Books" stands for the wider dispute over the value of classical learning versus modern scholarship. In this unit, learners will explore how the controversy ignites between Temple and Bentley, how the books themselves take up arms, and how Swift introduces his view of satire before narrating the conflict with a professed impartiality.

Keywords

Satirical allegory, Ancient-modern controversy, Mock-heroic style, Literary patronage, Intellectual satire

Discussion

Introduction

Swift wrote "The Battle of the Books" to support his patron, Sir William Temple, who was involved in the famous ancient-modern controversy that was raging in England. Temple had written an essay called *Essay on Ancient and Modern Learning*. In 1697–98, Swift worked as Temple's confidential secretary. Temple's essay was ridiculed by William Wotton, who was later joined by Richard Bentley, the librarian of the King's Library. Some intellectuals, like Charles Boyle, supported Temple. This dispute led to a battle of words and pamphlets, which further fuelled the controversy. It was at this point that Swift came forward to defend Temple with his famous satire, "The Battle of the Books." The historian Macaulay, in his essay on Sir William Temple, described the ancient-modern controversy as "the most idle and contemptible one… touching the comparative merit of ancient and modern writers." Although the controversy had existed since the Renaissance, it was formally launched in England with Temple's essay. This was followed by William Wotton's "Reflections upon Ancient and Modern Learning," published in 1694.

"The Battle of the Books" begins with a statement from the bookseller explaining when it was written. He notes it was composed in 1697, "when the famous dispute was on foot about ancient and modern learning." He explains that the controversy started from Sir William Temple's essay, which

was answered by William Wotton, B.D., with an appendix by Dr Bentley. Bentley and Wotton aimed to discredit Aesop and Phalaris, who had been highly praised by Temple. Temple and Boyle stood for the ancients, while Bentley and Wotton supported the moderns. The books in St James's Library joined the dispute by fighting the battle themselves. After this, Swift's preface follows. In it, he defends satire, calling it "a sort of glass, wherein beholders do generally discover everybody's face, but their own." He explains that this is why satire receives a mixed response and why few are offended by it. Swift warns shallow people against provoking the wise, for they cannot bear the lash of intelligent criticism.

Fig 3.2.2 "The Battle of the Books"

Structure

The full title of the essay is "A Full and True Account of the Battle Fought Last Friday Between the Ancient and Modern Books in Saint James's Library." The essay is divided into six sections. The first section describes the origin of the battle between the ancients and moderns and the preparations

made for the confrontation in the library. Swift cleverly assigns the two peaks of Mount Parnassus to the ancients and moderns, giving the highest peak to the ancients. The second section narrates a quarrel between a spider and a bee in the library, followed by Aesop's interpretation. The bee falls into the spider's cobweb but manages to escape. The spider becomes angry, and a debate arises about which creature is superior: the spider, which produces poison, or the bee, which offers "sweetness and light." Aesop sees the bee as a symbol of the ancients and the spider as representing the moderns. This episode provides a fine example of allegory in English literature. The third section shows the two armies being deployed under their leaders. The ancients are led by Homer, Pindar, Virgil, Herodotus, Temple, and others. The moderns are led by Dryden, Cowley, Bacon, Boyle, and Hobbes.

The fourth section describes a meeting of the gods under Jupiter. The gods take sides, with Momus, the god of ridicule, pleading for the moderns, and Pallas, the goddess of learning, supporting the ancients. The fifth section describes some of the combats in the battle, following epic traditions set by Homer and Virgil. The combat between Virgil and Dryden is particularly funny. Dryden calls Virgil "father" and exchanges his worthless armour for Virgil's shining armour. The sixth and final section deals with the deaths of Wotton and Bentley at the hands of Boyle. Boyle and Temple are raised as heroes, while Wotton and Bentley are portrayed as cowardly fools.

Summary - "The Battle of the Books"

▶ *Origin of controversy*

The wok begins with a bookseller telling the reader that what follows is an account of a controversy between ancient and modern writers. The quarrel began when Sir William Temple wrote an essay comparing the ancients and the moderns, in which he supported the ancient authors. William Wotton and Dr Bentley replied to Temple's essay, criticising Aesop and Phalaris, who had been admired by Temple. The debate grew serious, and the books in St James's Library decided to settle the matter through an actual battle among themselves. Thus, a "battle of the books" took place. The bookseller also reminds the readers that in this account, when an author's name appears, it really means the book and not the author himself. The author then steps in and defines satire in the preface.

▶ *Definition of satire*

He explains that satire is like a mirror in which readers can see everyone's face except their own. Swift warns that many readers cannot tolerate criticism coming from superior minds. Their angry reaction, he says, is like cream that, when skimmed off, leaves behind residue fit only for pigs. He claims he is not worried about such readers because people who dislike satire are, by nature, dull and slow-witted.

▶ *Pride caused by poverty*

Swift then turns to a discussion of war and pride. It is generally believed that war arises from pride and pride from riches. Swift partly agrees but argues instead that pride more often comes from poverty. He illustrates this with the example of the poor people of northern Europe who have often invaded the rich countries of the south. Poverty gives rise to greed and lust, which naturally lead to conflict. He compares this to the behaviour of dogs, which remain calm when they have eaten but begin to quarrel when hungry or restless.

▶ *Dispute on Parnassus*

A similar kind of struggle exists among intellectuals. A war began among them over the ownership of the two peaks of Mount Parnassus. The ancients occupied the higher peak, while the moderns stayed on the lower one. The moderns insisted that the ancients should descend and give up the upper peak to make room for their own learning. They claimed that the higher peak blocked their sight of the eastern horizon. The ancients dismissed this claim as absurd because they were the original inhabitants of the hill and had generously allowed the moderns to remain below. They refused to surrender their height but said they were willing to help the moderns raise the height of their own hill if they wished. The moderns refused this friendly proposal, and thus a war began.

▶ *Ink war recorded*

In this strange war, streams of ink were shed instead of blood. The ink, mixed with gall and copperas, served as their weapon. After the battle, both sides claimed victory, displaying their achievements like the Greeks showing war trophies. These trophies took the form of books written about the quarrel. The records of these arguments - called disputes, reflections, rejoinders, and confutations - filled libraries and came to be known as "books of controversy." Such books, the narrator says, were haunted by restless and disorderly spirits.

Once, Scotus went to visit his master Aristotle but quarrelled with Plato and threw him out of the library. After that disgraceful event, it was decided that the books of controversy should be kept in chains. The author had already suggested that the ancients and the moderns be placed separately in the library, but his advice was ignored. As a result, a great battle arose the following Friday between the two parties in the king's library. The author claims that the account he gives is fair and impartial.

Warning ignored again

Recap:

The librarian, who acted as guardian of the collection, was a supporter of the moderns. He made a vain attempt to climb Mount Parnassus and push down the two ancient authors Phalaris and Aesop. Later, he decided to remove all the ancient books and pile them in one corner, mixing the rest of the volumes in total confusion. As a result, a quarrel began among the books. The ancients and the moderns loudly argued over who was greater. The moderns refused to accept that the ancients had been their original teachers, though some moderates, including Sir William Temple, sided with the ancients.

Library quarrel begins

During the height of this dispute, a separate argument broke out between a spider and a bee. The spider had long lived proudly in a corner of the library window, happy within the fine web it had made. One day, a wandering bee accidentally flew in through a broken pane and fell into the web. The web shook under the bee's weight, and the spider believed that the universe itself was collapsing. When the bee freed itself, the spider angrily insulted it, calling it a vagabond and thief that stole from flowers. The spider praised itself for spinning its home from its own body, while the bee boasted that its honey and wax were fruits of honest labour and divine gifts. The bee added that the spider produced only dirt and venom.

Debate of spider and bee

Aesop, who had watched this quarrel carefully, concluded that the spider represented the moderns- arrogant, proud, and claiming to create knowledge from themselves. The bee, on the other hand, symbolised the ancients, who gathered wisdom from the world and gave back sweetness and light, pleasure and knowledge to humanity. When Aesop finished speaking, both sides began preparing for the inevitable battle.

Aesop's observation

▶ *Leaders of moderns*

The moderns faced confusion in choosing their commanders. Among them were Tasso, Milton, Dryden, and Wither, each eager to be leader. Cowley and Desperaux commanded the light horse. Descartes, Gassendi, and Hobbes led the bowmen. The dragoons were led by Harvey, while the engineers and mercenaries were under Regiomontanus and Guicciardini. The remaining disorderly soldiers gathered under Scotus, Aquinas, and Bellarmine.

▶ *Leaders of ancients*

The army of the ancients, though smaller, was better organised. Homer led the horsemen and Pindar the light horse. Euclid served as the chief engineer. Plato and Aristotle commanded the bowmen. The foot soldiers were led by historians Herodotus and Livy, while Hippocrates and Vossius led the dragoons. Sir William Temple commanded the allied forces who supported them.

▶ Gods oversee battle

When both sides were ready, Fame left the library and went to inform Jupiter of what was happening. Jupiter assembled a council of gods. In this council, Momus spoke in favour of the moderns and Pallas supported the ancients. Jupiter wished to know who would win, so he looked into the Book of Fate but chose not to reveal its secret. He then sent his invisible messengers to the king's library to watch everything closely.

▶ *Goddess Criticism summoned*

Momus, fearing that misfortune might befall the moderns, went to seek the help of the goddess Criticism, who lived in a snowy cave at Nova Zembla. She was surrounded by her husband Ignorance, her mother Pride, her sister Opinion, and her children Noise, Impudence, Vanity, Dullness, Pedantry, and Ill Manners. The goddess had the ears and voice of an ass and lived on bitter gall. When Momus explained his mission, she promised to bless her followers, the moderns of Britain. She then described how she influenced every part of society, from coffee-house gossipers to university thinkers, and finally mounted her chariot and flew with her companions to the royal library in London.

▶ *First clash of battle*

Arriving there, the goddess disguised herself as a small book, found her son Wotton, blessed him, and left Dullness and Ill Manners to help him during the fight. The battle soon began with the clash of dragoons. Galen fought Paracelsus, but the result is not told because the story is interrupted. Harvey was wounded and carried away. Aristotle shot

an arrow intending to hit Bacon, but it missed and killed Descartes instead.

▶ *Poetic duels begin*

Among the epic poets, Homer slew Gondibert, Denham, Wesley, Perrault, and Fontenelle. Apollo rewarded Denham for his effort by turning him into a star. Virgil was then looking for an opponent and met Dryden, who made himself seem foolish. Dryden wore a helmet too large for his head and spoke in a weak voice. He claimed he was closely related to Virgil and requested to exchange armour. The goddess Diffidence advised Virgil to agree. Virgil's armour was gold, while Dryden's was iron.

▶ *Further combat details*

Lucan fought Blackmore, who was saved by the god Aesculapius. Lucan recognised divine help and ended the fight peacefully by exchanging gifts. Later, Creech chased an illusion of Horace created by goddess Dullness, but he was disarmed by his father Ogleby and died. Pindar killed several moderns before meeting Cowley, who was protected by Venus. However, Cowley suddenly panicked and surrendered. Pindar refused to spare him and cut him into two halves. Venus turned one half into a dove and used it to pull her chariot.

▶ *Arrival of Bentley*

As evening approached, half the moderns wanted to retreat. At that time, Bentley appeared, the most misshapen of all. He wore an old helmet, rusty armour patched with many pieces, and carried a flail and a vessel of filth. The other moderns laughed at his appearance as he tried to hide his deformities. They used him for his ability to rail and abuse others, though sometimes he turned his sharp tongue against his own companions.

▶ *Bentley and Wotton scheme*

Bentley scolded the rest for cowardice and accused their generals of poor leadership. Scaliger, one of the leaders, mocked him but allowed him to take whatever spoils he could from the ancients, wishing, however, that he might be eaten by birds and worms. Bentley and his companion Wotton went in search of easy prey like hungry dogs. They found Aesop and Phalaris sleeping and saw their armour hanging on nearby trees. Bentley stole the armour while Wotton wandered off in search of glory.

Glossary of Key Characters and Symbols		
Character / Symbol	Description	Symbolic Meaning
Sir William Temple	Author who supported the ancients and sparked the controversy with his essay.	Advocacy for classical wisdom
William Wotton	A modern writer who criticised ancient authors and took part in the battle.	Modern criticism and ambition
Dr Bentley	A harsh modern critic, physically deformed but verbally fierce; steals ancient armour in the battle.	Sharp wit, harsh criticism
Aesop	Ancient fabulist who observes the dispute calmly.	Ancient wisdom and morality
Phalaris	Ancient tyrant symbolising the old tradition; robbed of armour by Bentley.	Ancient power
Spider	Represents the moderns, proud and claiming to create knowledge independently.	Modern pride and self-importance
Bee	Symbolises the ancients, who gather and share wisdom and beauty.	Ancient wisdom, generosity
Homer	Leader of ancient horsemen, great epic poet and warrior.	Classical heroism
Virgil	Ancient poet who fights Dryden.	Classical poetic excellence
Dryden	Modern poet who tries awkwardly to match Virgil.	Modern ambition
Momus	God who supports the moderns and seeks help from Criticism.	Mockery and faultfinding
Pallas	Goddess who supports the ancients.	Wisdom and defence of tradition
Goddess Criticism	Harsh goddess influencing writers, mother of negative qualities; aids moderns in battle.	Harsh literary criticism
Apollo	Protector of the ancients who punishes disrespect.	Divine justice and classical protection
Bentley and Wotton	Modern critics who die in battle, symbolising modern folly and defeat.	Modern folly and downfall

Wotton reached the fountain of Helicon and tried to drink from its sacred waters, but the god Apollo stopped him, leaving him only mud on his lips. He then saw Sir William Temple and prayed to his mother, the goddess Criticism, to strike Temple down. The goddess partially granted his wish: his spear only grazed Temple's belt. Apollo saw this act of disrespect and called Boyle to avenge it. Boyle attacked, and Wotton fled.

▶ *Wotton attacks Temple*

Meanwhile, Bentley returned carrying the stolen armour. When he met Wotton again, both ran away in fear. At last, Boyle threw his lance at the fleeing pair, and it pierced both of them. They died together on the battlefield. The author ends the tale by bidding farewell to Bentley and Wotton and ironically wishing that their foolish fame should last forever.

▶ *Death and farewell*

The Battle of the Books displays the clarity, vigour, and strength typical of Swift's satires. As Dr Johnson states in *Lives of the Poets*, "the reader of Swift needs little previous knowledge. It will be enough to know common words and things. His path is always on a level road." Unlike some authors, Swift does not take imaginative flights or express madness; his style remains clear and direct.

▶ *Style and clarity*

Analysis: Satire in *The Battle of the Books*

Swift is regarded as the most powerful and subtle satirist of his time. He lived in an age famous for its satirists, including Addison and Pope, but Swift stands out as the greatest. In his work, humour and irony are closely blended. Even in his harshest attacks, there is always a touch of humour, though he cannot avoid criticising his victims severely, even when his satire is meant only to entertain rather than to create hatred.

▶ *Swift's satirical excellence*

There are two main types of satire: one that ridicules and punishes its victims, and another that gently laughs at them or criticises them. The satirist is either good-humoured or angry and bitter. Each of these forms is usually linked to a famous Roman satirist. Horace is the gentle satirist who tries to cure people of their faults by laughing at them, while Juvenal angrily denounces and condemns them.

Two types of satire

Swift is generally considered a follower of Juvenal rather than Horace. His own comments about his work support this view. He wrote to Alexander Pope that his aim was "to vex the world rather than divert it." However, it is widely

▶ *Swift follows Juvenal's style*

accepted that while his later writings show Swift at his angriest, in his early works like *The Battle of the Books* and *A Tale of a Tub*, he is more inclined to laugh than to attack bitterly. It should be remembered that in all his works, both early and late, the two types of satire are present, though in different proportions.

In the preface to *The Battle of the Books*, Swift writes, "Satire is a sort of glass wherein beholders do generally discover everybody's face but their own." In his poem "Verses on the Death of Dr Swift," he claimed:

> *Yet malice never was his aim,*
> *He lashed the vice but spared the name.*
> *No individual could resent,*
> *Where thousands equally were meant.*

▶ *Swift's satirical claims*

This claim is not entirely accurate. While there is much general satire in *The Battle*, there is also much that is clearly directed at specific individuals.

▶ *General to personal satire*

In the earlier sections of *The Battle*, the satire is more general, targeting "thousands" rather than individuals. The moderns as a whole are the victims of his attack. In the episode of the spider and the bee, the faults criticised belong to the entire class of moderns, not individual writers. As the story progresses, however, the satire becomes increasingly personal and pointed.

▶ *Personal attacks intensify*

For example, whenever Bentley is mentioned, Swift attacks him mercilessly. Throughout the battle, Bentley is the chief villain, and Swift uses all his satirical weapons against him without restraint. Similarly, Wotton becomes the object of his contempt and criticism. Swift treats Dryden too harshly, showing no appreciation for his real talents and presenting him as completely worthless. In his judgment of other moderns like Bacon, Denham, Blackmore, and Cowley, there is at least some appearance of fairness.

▶ *Limited scientific criticism*

Although Swift was an uncompromising and sometimes ignorant critic of the scientific developments of his time, he does not give a full account of the encounters between ancient and modern champions in this field.

This is perhaps because he realised he was not qualified to discuss modern developments, especially in medicine.

- *Unfair but humorous attacks*

Swift's attack on Bentley is unfair. He completely ignores the fact that in the real controversy between Temple and Bentley, Bentley had actually won. Swift's purpose is simply to ridicule Bentley, which he does with a vengeance. Even so, the sting of the attack is softened by the amusing, if grotesque, picture he presents. In this way, the satire here differs from that in the later books of *Gulliver's Travels*. His portrayals of the Struldbrugs, the projectors in the Academy of Lagado, and the Yahoos contain no trace of humour. The satire is harsh, bitter, and lacks politeness, gentleness, and grace.

- Swift's complex personality

In "The Battle of the Books," Swift is not as cynical as he appears in his later works. Even when he was young, according to the Earl of Orrery, his first biographer, Swift suffered from a serious temperament that made him unpopular with his fellow students at Trinity College, and he was not loved by many. The Earl of Orrery noted, "He was sour and severe, but not absolutely ill-natured." Bolingbroke told Swift bluntly, "If you despised the world as much as you pretend, and perhaps believe, you would not be so angry with it." While T.S. Eliot called him "the amazing madman," Sir Harold Nicolson thought of him as a human beast. George Orwell perhaps comes closest to the truth when he sees Swift as one who attacks all of mankind. However, Swift's friends knew well that he could be cheerful and entertaining.

Summarised Overview

The Battle of the Books begins with a note from the bookseller informing the reader that it concerns a "famous dispute … about ancient and modern learning." Sir William Temple had championed the ancients, while Charles Boyle, William Wotton, and Richard Bentley defended modern writers. This quarrel escalated into a literal battle between books in the King's Library, though the manuscript is incomplete and the victor remains unknown. The narrative opens with reflections on the causes of conflict, chiefly pride and need, arguing that, like dogs, people brawl when resources are scarce but live in harmony when they have plenty.

Assignments

1. Analyse the spider-and-bee allegory, discussing its symbolic function and its effectiveness in representing the ancients and the moderns.
2. Write an essay essay on mock-heroic techniques in "The Battle of the Books".
3. Investigate the historical controversy between Temple, Wotton, and Bentley and assess Swift's accuracy in his satirical portrayal.
4. Create profiles of five key "combatant" books, explaining how each embodies specific intellectual or moral flaws criticised by Swift.
5. Propose a modern "battle of the books" by selecting ten contemporary texts to represent two opposing intellectual camps.

Suggested Reading

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SGOU

Space for Learner Engagement for Objective Questions

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1.

SGOU

Unit 3

Fiction

(Non-detailed)

Learning Outcomes

Upon completion of this unit, the learners will be able to:

- analyse Defoe's use of the first-person narrative to create intimacy and authenticity
- explain how factual sources and verisimilitude ground the novel's blend of fact and fiction
- evaluate the themes of individualism, capitalism, and Protestant ethics in Crusoe's character
- discuss the portrayal of colonialism and race, particularly in Crusoe's relationships with Xury and Friday
- assess the novel's exploration of isolation and the human struggle against nature

1.Robinson Crusoe

Daniel Defoe

Background

With its realistic subjects and real-life autobiographies of the major characters, the novel form of writing has entertained readers as one of the great literary forms in English literature. The English novel has been a major component of English literature for a very long time. Daniel Defoe, Samuel Richardson, Henry Fielding, Laurence Sterne, Oliver Goldsmith, Tobias Smollett, Charles Dickens, and others are some of the novelists in English literature. The early English books *Robinson Crusoe* by Daniel Defoe and *Tom Jones* by Henry Fielding are credited with establishing the novel as a genre at the start of the eighteenth century. The industrial revolution and the emergence of the middle class increased people's desire to read about topics relevant to their everyday experiences. Daniel Defoe, who made significant contributions to English literature, particularly in the area of novel writing, is credited with helping the English novel flourish. He later came to be known as the "father of the English novel."

Keywords

Fictional autobiography, Travel writing, Realistic description,Colonial encounter,Individualism

Discussion

- Fictional autobiography

Fig :3.2.3. Daniel Defoe

Robinson Crusoe is considered as the first novel in English. The novel is a fictional autobiography of Crusoe. Crusoe is a castaway on a remote island and has to survive for nearly twenty eight years on his own. If Jonathan Swift wrote his novel in the form of a travelogue then Defoe combined fact with fiction.

- Captivating thoughts

His narrative is based on the real-life account of a Scottish sailor named Alexander Selkirk. However Defoe adapts the story and gives a detailed and captivating account of Crusoe's thoughts, occupations and activities which go far beyond the description of Selkirk's isolation on an island. The first unit deals with Crusoe's decision to leave home, his survival of a shipwreck and his first year of isolation on the island.

The Sources of Robinson Crusoe

- Inspiration of the novel is Alexander Selkirk

The original inspiration for this novel was the experience of a British sailor named Alexander Selkirk. Selkirk was a quarrelsome young Scotsman who ran away from home to become a sailor. He was sailing the sea off the coast of Brazil when he quarreled with the captain of the ship and was dropped on the island of San Juan where he had to spend four years alone on the uninhabited island. He was later rescued and brought home; this experience the subject of the poem "The Solitude of Alexander Selkirk" by William Cowper.

- first person narrative

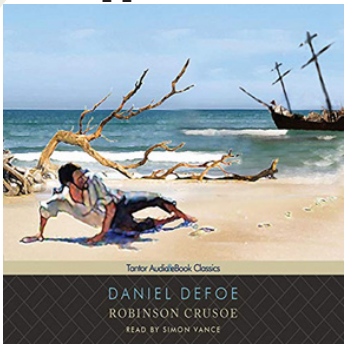

Fig :3.2.4.*Robinson Crusoe*

3.7.1 Summary- *Robinson Crusoe*

Robinson Crusoe is a tale told in the form of a first person narrative. It is the hero who tells the story. The adoption of such a method attains a level of intimacy between the readers and the character and also lends the tale a dramatic quality and an appearance of authenticity. The first person account that follows can be roughly divided into three parts; the first describing the hero's life before he is marooned on the island, the second detailing his struggles and experience as a solitary survivor on the island and the third part charting out his return to civilisation.

Crusoe's story begins with details of his family background: he is the young son of a wealthy York merchant. He always had a desire to go to the sea, and run away from home despite his father's wishes. While aboard a ship, a storm develops and Crusoe fears for his life. He prays to God and promises to repent if he is saved. Once the ordeal is over, Crusoe's friend's father also repeats the warning that had been earlier sounded by his own father - against the uncertainties besetting a sailor's life. Paying no heed to their advice and in spite of his harrowing experience, Crusoe gives in to temptation and goes on another voyage, because he is "young and foolish."

▶ Beginning of the story

From the beginning, the story is cast in the form of a moral fable, with the prefatory emphasis on the didactic value of the account. The theme of the prodigal son further enforces this Protestant allegory of God's grace being bestowed on the suffering and penitent individual. The novel thus records in minute and vivid detail the ups and downs in the life of its protagonist, and attempts to unfold the pattern of "Providence." There is in Crusoe an undying will to never give in to his fate, and make the most of his circumstances. The strong Protestant values of individualism, labour and self-retrospection are keys to understanding the evolution of Crusoe's character. So when his ship is captured by Moorish pirates and he is enslaved, he is resourceful enough to find the right opportunity not only to escape, but also to take a slave with him. Crusoe is rescued by a kind Portuguese captain who takes him to Brazil where he becomes a Brazilian planter. He decides to set off on another voyage to collect slaves for his plantation.

▶ In the form of a moral fable

The middle and crucial section of the novel begins when, setting off upon "an evil hour", he is shipwrecked and finds himself marooned on a desolate island. He spends

his first night on the island on a tree, and thanks God for saving him. Crusoe next returns to the ship to collect useful things including clothes, food items, weapons and tools. He meditates on the uselessness of money in his situation. He makes a raft and returns to the ship several times. Crusoe next devotes his energies to the making of what he calls his "fortress", a safe dwelling which will protect him from wild animals and savages, and at the same time provide a good vantage point. He also constructs a makeshift calendar, to record the passage of days. Most importantly, he begins a journal in which he records the good and evil aspects of his experience.

- Shipwrecked and marooned on a desolate island

A singular feature of Crusoe's narrative is the matter-of-fact documentary manner of recording the incidents, with a keen eye for verisimilitude. This novel method of storytelling is not only in keeping with the contemporary values of rationality and individualism, it also set the trend for the emerging fiction of the period. The stress on verisimilitude and documentation serves to disguise the "strange and surprising" nature of Crusoe's adventures and Crusoe continues to record in his journal the mundane, everyday aspects of his life in his "island of despair" alongside the miraculous accounts of discovery and survival.

- Matter-of-fact documentary

He learns through accidents, mistakes and experience. He is fortunate enough to survive the onslaught of the forces of nature, including an earthquake and a hurricane. Not only does he survive tremendous odds, he also benefits from most of these harrowing situations. After the hurricane, more remains from the wrecked ship are washed ashore. The next blow comes in the form of a prolonged period of illness, during which the weakened and hallucinating protagonist sees a terrible vision, in which he is admonished for his waywardness and warned for not repenting in spite of his many sufferings. After his recovery, Crusoe is a reformed man, and turns to religion for solace. While he had in the past, when faced with danger, turned to religion, his faith in God on those earlier occasions had always been short-lived, disappearing with the passing of the period of crisis. He now comes to regard the island as a site of salvation and his desolate state as necessary for his penitence.

- Crusoe emerges as a reformed man

However, there remains an ambiguity about his religious experience: it is not clear whether it is a "true" divine vision or a hallucination generated by his fevered mind.

- Ambiguous religious experience

Such ambivalence is characteristic of Defoe's narrative, an account which seamlessly blends fact and fiction, passing one off for another. The disruption in Crusoe's calendar can therefore be read not only as a symbolic representation of his loss of authority and submission to God's will, but also a cancellation of fixed timelines, one of the indispensable tools used to ration and order reality. At the same time, his deliverance from repeated predicaments fills him with optimism and he begins to view the island as a land of opportunity. With renewed faith and optimism, he sets out on another exploration, going to the other, more beautiful end of the island. However, he prefers the security of his first home with his "family" of goats, cats and a parrot which he teaches to talk. At the same time, his mood does not remain positive throughout, and he suffers from bouts of highs and lows, often despairing of his situation and then turning to the Bible for comfort.

- Anachronisms in Crusoe's journal entries

Crusoe's journal comes to an end at this point, thus marking the closure of an important rhetorical strategy within the larger narrative, a device which contributes to a sense of the real and more importantly, helps to construct identity, offering insights into Crusoe's character. Yet, the subtext provides vital giveaways which reveal the fabricated and fictional nature of the journal: he deliberately gives a wrong date for his first entry in the journal, matching it with the day of his arrival on the island. Anachronisms mark Crusoe's account, pointing to the subjective and unreliable nature of any narrative. By the time his journal ends, Crusoe is well settled in the island with two homes, self-sufficient and lord of all he surveys. He continues his life on the island by keeping himself busy in different activities and in acquiring new skills.

The next disruption in Crusoe's orderly existence comes when he finds a footprint on the shore, a discovery which terrorises him and makes him run to the shelter of his "castle". At first he thinks it is the doing of the devil, then reasons it must be the mark of a cannibal. His fears are further confirmed when he discovers human skulls and bones, and after this he seldom ventures far from the security of his enclosure. While at first his attitude is non-judgmental and resigned to the will of God, he later turns aggressive and is ready to attack the savages, who visit his island again. Though his faith in God was shaken by the discovery of the footprint, another event makes him realise

how fortunate he has been, in spite of his many travels. One night he hears a gunshot and in the morning finds a shipwreck and realises how Providence has been on his side. He compares his disobedience of his father's wishes to "original sin" and when he dreams of rescuing a victim from the cannibals, he considers this as his only path to redemption. Crusoe's opportunity comes a year and half later, when he sees a man being pursued by cannibals. He rescues the victim and names him Friday, after the day on which the latter was saved.

▶ Mark of a cannibal

It is in his relationship with Friday that we find the most detailed working out of Crusoe's ambivalent attitude towards the other: the contrary pulls of attraction and repulsion or fear have, from the beginning, shaped the contours of his desires and his travels. His desire to go to the sea cannot simply be interpreted as wanderlust nor does he fall into the category of the romantic adventure hero of the past. From the beginning, he is cast as homo economicus, keen to advance his fortunes and maximize utility through the use of his rational faculties. He is therefore a successful planter, trader and colonial master who establishes his sovereignty over the island on which he arrives as a castaway. At various points in the novel, he acquires slaves and with Friday, he at once, unquestioningly, accepts the latter's subservient position. In this master/servant or father/ son relationship, Crusoe is clearly the superior, tutoring the savage cannibal in the ways of civilisation. Although he is genuinely fond of Friday's company, he does not completely trust him.

▶ Crusoe's ambivalent attitude

Faith in his pre-eminence is shaken: after Friday's conversion to Christianity, Crusoe is amazed by his religiosity and admiringly upholds him as a true Christian, superior to many in Europe. Crusoe's own troubled relationship with his God makes him recognise Friday as a better Christian. Yet, he continues to be apprehensive about Friday, not quite sure whether he has been able to completely reform him. At the same time, Friday's company boosts his self-image and he feels that much of his earlier fear of the cannibals was a result of his imagination.

▶ Friday's company boosts his self-image

With the arrival of Friday, a new chapter may be said to have started in Crusoe's life: he is no longer the lone inhabitant of the island, and soon after, Crusoe's solitary island is populated by other presences. As Crusoe and Friday plan to voyage out to Friday's island, another group

- Friday's father

of cannibals arrive with victims and this time Crusoe has Friday to help him rescue the ill-fated men. One of them is a European and the other turns out to be Friday's father. Crusoe is amazed to see the bond between the savage father and son duo, yet wastes no time in establishing his imperial sway over his "new subjects".

- Arrival of an English boat

Assured by the rescued Spaniard that the other Europeans in his group would accept Crusoe's leadership, Crusoe sends him and Friday's father to the other island to bring them. As they wait for their return, they are surprised to see the arrival of an English boat, with prisoners. When the prisoners are left on the shore by their captors who set about to explore the island, Crusoe approaches them and finds out they have been held captive by a mutinous crew who plan to abandon the captain and his two faithful men on this desolate island. Crusoe agrees to help the Captain on the assurance of free passage back home, and on condition that the Captain and his men swear allegiance to him. Although they are not many in number, they succeed in overwhelming the mutineers through clever strategy and Crusoe makes them believe he is a governor of a royal colony. The Captain and Crusoe decide to take along twelve men they consider trustworthy and leave the rest behind on the island. Crusoe informs them of the Spaniards who are going to arrive and instructs them about the ways of survival on the island.

- Crusoe remains an isolated man

After they leave the island, they reach Lisbon where Crusoe finds his old friend the Portuguese Captain, and although he is tempted, he decides against going to Brazil and a life of luxury. He decides to take the land route to England because he is now, at the end of his adventures, apprehensive of sea voyages. However, ill fortune continues to beset him and he nearly loses his life in an attack by wolves. Finally, back in Hull, he settles down to a sedentary life, married, with children. Yet, Crusoe remains an isolated man: he does not seem to have formed any genuine attachments and although he has friends, he remains aloof once back in civilized society. Though married, there is little mention of his wife, and we do not even get to know her name. Crusoe seemed happier in his island home, in the company of Friday and his pets. Given Crusoe's character, it comes as no surprise that after his wife's death, he is bitten by wanderlust again, and sets out on yet another voyage.

He visits his island, which is now a thriving colony, with the cannibals warded off. The novel is therefore circular in structure, with Crusoe's return to a life of adventure. The idea that a character like Crusoe is not born to lead a sedentary life is conveyed in the hint of a sequel, which promises to chart out his "further adventures".

Characters

Robinson Crusoe: He is the hero and narrator of the story. Headstrong and reckless, belonging to a protestant middle-class family of York, he goes away to the sea against the wishes of his father. He meets with a series of disastrous adventures and finally is marooned on a remote island. The island experience changes him. He returns to his religion and becomes a kind of missionary of it.

Friday: A savage who is saved from ritual sacrifice by Crusoe, Friday proves to be an intelligent loyal servant and companion of Crusoe

Crusoe's Father: Well to do merchant who advises his son not to go to the sea.

Xury: A.Young Moorish boy who is helped to escape from slavery by Crusoe.

Portuguese Captain: He saves Crusoe and Xury from the sea and helps him find a plantation in Brazil, and remains his lifelong friend.

Friday's father: He is saved from ritual sacrifice at the hands of savages by Friday and Crusoe. He is still alive when at the end of the novel, Crusoe returns to the island for a visit.

English Captain: An early friend of Robinson Crusoe in the days when he was ambitious of going to the sea, He whets the hero's appetite for the sea by helping him make profit in business on the first trip. But he dies soon afterwards.

The Widow: The dead captain's wife and life long friend to Crusoe in London.

Spaniard: A prisoner of the cannibals who is rescued by Crusoe and Friday.

3.7.2 Themes

a. Slavery

We are given a glimpse of the great age of colonial empire building. The history of this begins with the attempts to find a sea route to India by the Europeans. Columbus' voyage landed him on the American continent and very soon the Europeans with supérior technology and cunning overran the native peoples. The British followed the Spanish, the Portuguese and the Dutch. In the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries the British gradually attained supremacy. The prime purpose of the colonial enterprise was trade(Recall Napoleon Bonaparte's famous remark about Britain as a 'nation of shopkeepers'). Their brand of Christianity did not deter them from cruelly exploiting the indigenous peoples of the other lands.

▶ Age of colonial empire building

On the other side the Moors and Arabs though not as enterprising or technologically superior to the Europeans, also practiced these atrocities. We have the example of Crusoe's experience with the Turks and Xury who was bought by the Portuguese Captain from Crusoe. The White man's attitude towards the black is evident in the relationship between Crusoe and Friday. He is the loyal slave engaged in the process of being "civilized by the white master. Crusoe certainly was not cruel towards the boy. Not only that, he plays a savior to the boy and his father. Their companionship is also remarkable. But Crusoe leaves no doubt as to who is the master in every case. In all his dealings with human beings, Crusoe treats human beings in economic terms. For instance, the little slave boy Crusoe sells Xury who serves him faithfully without much qualms. The same economic attitude is reflected in the treatment of Friday. In Friday's creation Defoe has projected the way in which the European world looked upon the Africans, Polynesians and Asians who were at the receiving end of the colonial enterprise.

▶ Crusoe treats human beings in economic terms

Crusoe is overjoyed at getting Friday for a companion not because there is someone at last to share his solitude, but because he has someone to help him in the bigger projects that he wants to do but cannot do alone. He is satisfied with little communication with them; even after their many years together, Friday is still speaking Pidgin English. We are reminded of the Prospero-Caliban-Ariel situation in *The Tempest.* Crusoe's character embodies the middle class

- Companion-ship

values of his time. The absence of human considerations appears again and again in the story. Crusoe's attitude toward the cannibals is based first upon the consideration that he has no right to interfere in their practices and, even more important, on the pragmatic consideration that he fears that they might return with more of their tribe and destroy him. This is in a way a foreshadowing or an unconscious allegory of the history of colonization itself.

b. **Religion**

- Protestant puritan ethics

Defoe is essentially a product of the Protestant Puritan ethic. One of the problems that he has to struggle with is his Christian conscience. It is initially in the form of a conflict between conforming to the values of middle class life personified by his father and his own wanderlust. We notice how he behaves in each case when confronted with a danger. On the island he picks up the Bible and becomes an avid reader of the Bible. He also enters into a pact with the savage to convert him to Christianity. It surely gives him strength to survive. But his religion is one of individualism coupled with practical materialistic concerns as well. His Anti-Catholic prejudice was so typical of the British of the time. European Christianity of the Protestant variety had a major role to play in the Colonial enterprise. We can read Robinson Crusoe as a representation of some aspects of these religious piety, his desire to make money and the cautious was he approaches the crises of his life are typical of the British attitudes of the time.

Crusoe views the shipwreck, not only as a judgment for his sins, but also for his mistakes. He questioned why it happened to him especially. A profound religious insight takes place on Crusoe's part. Instead of trying to determine why it had happened to him, he tries to determine why it had happened at all. When he turns to the passage at random in the Bible, he finds that it is possible to take two interpretations from the passage. He may consider it to signify deliverance from his present troubles or salvation in deliverance from life. Crusoe chooses to believe in the former. His utilitarian view of religion comes to the fore. He speaks of the consolation of his removal from the world's wickedness. He sounds like a primitivist, but he is not because he wants to be removed from the world's wickedness and still share the world but sin. He wants to create a world on his terms. There are no complications in

all the world's benefits. By wickedness, Crusoe means sin. He wants everything in or problems for him except that of survival. There are no humans to complicate matters or to bring sin. Economically and morally he has the desire to serve himself.

▶ Profound religious insight

The moral seems to be that God helps those who help themselves. There is no sense of an abject sin in Crusoe's reflections, nor even of a sense of dependence on God. It is as though God and Crusoe have a sort of partnership. The strongest idea is that man's salvation lies through hard work. Crusoe is completely Puritan, except perhaps for the quality of piety, which he does not seem to possess. His religious piety, his desire to make money and the cautious way he approaches the crises of his life are all typical of the British attitudes of the time. His religious piety, his desire to make money and the cautious was he approaches the crises of his life are all typical of the Brit attitudes of the time.

▶ Salvation lies in hard work

c. **The Theme of Isolation**

Robinson Crusoe is essentially a loner, a breakaway from society as all individualists are. The theme of isolation is stressed throughout the story. He separates himself from his home, and has few intimate friends, and is guided by a desire to wander in the unknown worlds. He is a great survivor indeed. On the island, though he would like to escape, he makes the best of a bad situation and survives, initially in the company of animals and then of course Friday. Even after his return he overcomes the desire to wander and in his old age again takes to the sea.

▶ Crusoe is essentially a loner

d. **Individualism, Capitalism, Money**

In this novel Defoe has created the character as an archetypal capitalist. He and his adventures are the embodiment of the middle class myth of ascendance to superior position through industry and money. The shipwreck of Crusoe symbolises the destruction of tradition and order, and the need to build a new order in social and religious stages. This was the ambition of the so-called Pilgrim Fathers of the American settlers who were Puritans who established the first colonies in the New World. They laid the foundations of a powerful democracy and its supporting economic system, capitalist free enterprise fostered by the philosophy of ruthless

individualism. It was an individualism that upheld equality and liberty as absolute values but this principle in the case of the indigenous peoples of Africa and America whom they overran and dispossessed. Robinson Crusoe is an embodiment of those qualities; he is the man of 'success', which is the catchword of modern capitalism.

▶ Man of 'success'

Crusoe embodies all the qualities, virtues and habits of mind and thought and Protestant capitalism. The book is a celebration of individualism. The focus of all Crusoe's activities is money. The only scenes showing strong emotion are scenes in which money is involved. The entire book is the tale of the rise of Robinson Crusoe the adventurer from the upper class to millionaire. In all his dealings and activities, money becomes the motivating factor.

▶ Money a motivating factor

One of the great appeals that the book has is based on Crusoe's self-sufficiency. The core of the myth is the celebration of the unaided man able to survive and exist through the great middle class virtues. Supreme among these virtues is the idea of industry and hard work. One showed adoration to God through daily work. But glossed over and almost forgotten is the fact that few men ever had so many aids in their troubles as Crusoe had in his. Not only was the island wealth to Crusoe, but also he had a treasure - a house of assistance that he carted ashore from the wreck.

▶ Crusoe's self-sufficiency

e. **Man and nature**

Robinson Crusoe symbolises the triumph of rational will over untamed nature. The familiar binaries of nature versus nurture, wild untamed nature on the one hand versus civilization and art on the other are further strengthened in the representation of the protagonist as the successful male colonial adventurer who establishes his dominion over feminine nature and the effeminate, submissive inhabitants of the island. This combination of reckless spirit of adventure and a capacity for limitless enterprise makes Crusoe the quintessential homo economicus or the economic man, one who is guided by his reason and driven by self interest to impose order and design on the primitive state of nature.

▶ Nature versus nurture

Narrative Technique

- First person 'point of view'

Defoe's narrative technique is significant. He adopts the first person 'point of view'. It is significant in many ways. The first person point of view is one in which one of the characters (often the hero) in the story becomes the narrator. It has many advantages-first it is a dramatic method, second it creates a sense of intimacy between the character and the reader and facilitates greater involvement. It helps in revealing the character. Defoe used this method in all of his novels.

The Popularity of Crusoe

- Novels of sea adventure

Robinson Crusoe can be enjoyed at different levels. It has remained a favorite Children's classic, an adventure story that can be enjoyed for its own sake. The fact that this book inspired a host of other novels of sea adventure itself is proof of its popularity. As a craftsman Defoe has influenced generations of fiction writers. His storytelling methods have been adapted and imitated by many.

Summarised Overview

In the book *Robinson Crusoe*, a young, impetuous Englishman rejects his parents' wishes and sets out in search of adventure. For 28 years, the young Robinson Crusoe is a castaway on a secluded tropical island due to a shipwreck. The plot may be based on the actual experiences of Henry Pitman, a political rebel surgeon shipwrecked from a Caribbean penal colony, or Alexander Selkirk, a Scottish castaway who endured four years on a Pacific island. This well-known adventure story includes mutineers, hostages, and cannibals. According to some, it was the first modern novel ever written in English, founding the publishing industry.

Assignments

1. Discuss the major themes of the novel, *Robinson Crusoe.*
2. Is *Robinson Crusoe* a "picaresque" novel?
3. Can *Robinson Crusoe* be described as the first novel in English given the author's insistent critique of fiction as a genre? What are the characteristics of the novel that can be found in this seminal text?

4. How does Friday act as a foil to the character of Crusoe? Assess the relationship between the two and bring out the multiple tensions inherent in such a bond.
5. Comment on the plot and structure of *Robinson Crusoe*. How far is it true to describe it as an episodic tale of adventure?

Suggested Reading

1. Drabble, Margaret, ed. "Defoe". *The Oxford Companion to English Literature*. Oxford U.P, 1996.
2. Severin, Tim (2002). *In Search of Robinson Crusoe*. New York, 1996.

Reference

1. Severin, Tim. "Marooned: The Metamorphosis of Alexander Selkirk". *The American Scholar*. 71 (3): 73–82. JSTOR 41213335, 2002.
2. Varian, Hal R. *Intermediate Microeconomics: A Modern Approach*. W.W. Norton. 1990.

Space for Learner Engagement for Objective Questions

Learners are encouraged to develop objective questions based on the content in the paragraph as a sign of their comprehension of the content. The Learners may reflect on the recap bullets and relate their understanding with the narrative in order to frame objective questions from the given text. The University expects that 1 - 2 questions are developed for each paragraph. The space given below can be used for listing the questions.

1.

SGOU

2.Pamela,or,Virtue Rewarded
Samuel Richardson

Learning Outcomes

Upon completion of the unit, the learner will be able to:

- analyse Richardson's use of the epistolary form to convey Pamela's inner life and moral resolve
- explain how themes of virtue, class tension, and gendered power dynamics drive the narrative
- evaluate the novel's portrayal of sexual harassment and social mobility in eighteenth-century England
- discuss the influence of parental guidance and Protestant ethics on Pamela's decisions
- assess the novel's legacy in sparking contemporary parodies and its role in defining the English novel

Background

Pamela or Virtue Rewarded is an epistolary novel by Samuel Richardson, first published in 1740. It tells the story of a maid named Pamela whose master, Mr B., makes unwanted advances towards her. She rejects him continually, and her virtue is eventually rewarded when he shows his sincerity by proposing an equitable marriage to her. In the second part of the novel, Pamela attempts to accommodate herself to upper-class society and to build a successful relationship with him. The story was widely mocked at the time for its perceived licentiousness and it inspired Henry Fielding (among many others) to write two parodies: *Shamela (*1741), about Pamela's true identity; and *Joseph Andrews* (1742), about Pamela's brother.

Pamela was Richardson's first novel, and according to the critics it was the first novel in English literature since Defoe's works were more or less accounts of accidental adventures. Richardson must have been upset by the prevailing evil of exploitation of the poor young maids by the rich. Richardson chose epistolary form to enable the young maid-servants to give a daily account of the treatment they were getting from the rich employers.

Keywords

Epistolary form, Virtue rewarded, Gender politics, Class exploitation, Protestant morality

Discussion

Fig: 3.2.5 Samuel Richardson

3.8.1 Origin of *Pamela, or Virtue Rewarded*

Samuel Richardson had a strong inclination towards religion and morality from his days. Walter Allen writes that Richardson's school was nicknamed 'Serious and Gravity' obviously because the school sought to inculcate moral values in the students. The Age, the Eighteenth century, was also the age of peace and moral atmosphere. In 1739 he was commissioned by two London booksellers to compile a volume of 'Familiar Letters' which should not only serve as models for the uneducated in their correspondence but also demonstrate 'how to think and act justly and prudently in the common concerns of human life.' The booksellers desired to let people learn how to act prudently, and morally in social life. The booksellers had expressed their concern, against the exploitation of the poor girls by their rich Masters.

▶ Inculcate moral values

Richardson remembered a true story he had been told twenty five years earlier, while staying in the country, of the way in which the local landowner came to marry his wife. A child of humble parents, reared in the strictest principles of morality, had been engaged as a maid by the landowner's mother. After his mother's death the Squire tried, in Richardson's words, by all manners of temptations to seduce her, she had recourse to many innocent stratagems, to escape the snares laid for her virtue; once, however, in despair, having been near drowning. At last, her noble resistance, watchfulness, and excellent qualities subdued him, and he thought fit to make her his wife in which station she behaved with so much dignity, sweetness, and humility, that she made herself beloved of everybody. and ever by his relations, who at first despised her, and

▶ A true story

now had the blessings of both the rich and the poor, and the love of her husband."

This story moved Richardson so much that he put aside working on Familiar Letters for another occasion, and started working on *Pamela or Virtue Rewarded*.

Pamela was infused with the spirit of morality right from her childhood days. Her parents were poor and were aware of the rampant evil of exploiting the poor young maid servants by the rich Masters and leaving them to their fate. It was an intolerably humiliating situation. The poor parents therefore, had no option but to inculcate moral values in their daughters, more so when the daughters happened to be handsome. It must have been a serious social problem but nobody had an inkling of it except the poor parents, yet their emphasis was on the moral values so that their daughters could evade the situation of being exploited and abandoned.

- Inculcate moral values

3.8.2 Summary

Volume 1

Fig:3.2.6 Pamela

Pamela Andrews is a pious, virtuous fifteen-year-old, the daughter of an impoverished labourer, working in a rich family as an attendant of the Old Lady of the house. The Lady was very kind to her. She got her training in reading, writing, needle work and even in singing. The Old Lady asked her son while breathing her last that he should take care of Pamela.

- Virtuous fifteen-year-old daughter

After the death of the Old Lady, Pamela came under the control of the young Squire, Mr. B, who gave special attention to Pamela, partly in obedience to his mother, and partly due to his own liking and admiration for the girl. Pamela informed her parents that the young Master took her by the hand and promised that he would be her friend. He gave mourning and a year's wages to all her Lady's servants, but he gave her four golden guineas besides lesser money which was in the Old Lady's pocket while she died. While Pamela was writing to inform her parents about these happenings, her Master appeared and appreciated

- Pamela under the control of Mr. B

Pamela's habit of reading and writing so much that he allowed her to use his mother's books to improve herself.

Pamela was already instructed by her parents to maintain her virtue and innocence at all costs, yet when they came to know of the special care their daughter was receiving from the young Master, they feared it might be a ploy to get her closer to violate her. Therefore they wrote to her immediately, "Indeed, my child we begin to be in great fear for you, for what signifies all the riches in the world with a bad conscience and to be dishonest?..... We would sooner live upon the water and clay of the ditches I am forced to dig, than to live better at the price of our dear child's ruin." He further wrote, "Oh! that fatal word that he should be kind to you if you would do as you should do, almost kill us with fear."

▶ Maintain her virtue

He wanted to know why her Master should smile to her so kindly, take a poor girl by her hand, stoop to read her letter written to them, give her leave to read his mother's books. Pamela's father thought that these might be the tactics to exploit the poor girls. Then he advised Pamela, "We both charge you to stand upon guard, and if you find the least attempt made upon your virtue, be sure to leave everything behind you and come away to us." Thus he made it clear to his daughter that they would not bear it if it was said about her daughter that she preferred worldly conveniences to her virtue. Pamela assured her parents that she wouldn't do anything "that would bring their grey hair with sorrow to the grave". As feared, Mr. B gradually begins to pay Pamela romantic attention: first gifting her his mother's fine clothes, and then attempting to seduce her. Pamela rejects Mr. B's advances multiple times, by fleeing and locking herself in her bedroom. In one instance, she faints, and finds the laces of her stays have been cut.

▶ Tactics to exploit the poor girls

When Mr. B attempts to pay her to keep his failed seduction secret, she confides in her best friend and housekeeper of the estate, Mrs. Jervis. Later, Mr. B hides in Pamela's closet and tries to kiss her when she undresses for bed, causing Pamela to consider leaving her position and returning to her parents to preserve her innocence. She is insistent on remaining at the estate to finish embroidering a waistcoat for Mr. B, hoping that by doing so he will let her leave on good terms.

▶ Failed seduction

Angry at Pamela for telling Mrs. Jervis of his attempted seductions, Mr. B informs Pamela that he intends to marry her off to Mr. Williams, his chaplain in Lincolnshire, and gives money to her parents to persuade them to give consent. Pamela refuses the engagement and decides to leave the estate, but Mr. B intercepts her letters to her parents and tells them she is having an affair with a poor clergyman, and that he will send her to a safe place to preserve her chastity. Pamela is forcibly taken to Mr. B's Lincolnshire Estate by his servant Monsieur Colbrand, where she begins a journal with the intention of sending it to her parents. The Lincolnshire housekeeper, Mrs. Jewkes, is 'odious' and 'unwomanly', devoted to Mr. B, and keeps Pamela as her bedfellow. Mr. B promises he won't approach Pamela without her consent, and stays away from the estate for some time.

▶ She begins a journal

As Pamela is mistreated by Mrs. Jewkes, she begins communicating with Mr. Williams by letters, which they leave for one another in the gardens. Mrs. Jewkes beats Pamela after she calls her a "Jezebel" and Mr. Williams entreats the village gentry for help. Though they pity Pamela, they too are loyal to Mr. B, and are convinced a seduction would either not occur or be inconsequential due to Pamela's low social standing. Mr. Williams proposes marriage to her to help her escape the estate and Mr. B's advances, but shortly after is attacked and beaten by robbers. Pamela attempts to flee home to her parents, but is terrified by two cows she mistakes for bulls. Mr. Williams accidentally reveals his correspondence with Pamela to Mrs. Jewkes, and so Mr. B has him arrested, announcing that he will marry Pamela to one of his servants. Desperate, Pamela attempts unsuccessfully to escape by climbing a wall, and, injured, gives up.

▶ Pamela attempts to escape

Mr. B returns and offers Pamela a list of conditions he would meet, should she accept his hand in marriage, but she refuses, citing her reluctance to think above her social status to become his mistress. In league with Mrs. Jewkes, Mr. B molests Pamela while she is in bed, dressed as the housemaid Nan. Pamela is sent into hysteria and seems likely to die: Mr. B repents and is kinder in his seductions, but Pamela implores him to stop altogether. Mr. B implies he loves Pamela, but will not marry her due to her social status.

▶ Mr. B molests Pamela

Volume 2

Pamela hides a parcel of letters to her parents in the garden, but they are seized by Mrs. Jewkes, who gives them to Mr. B. He sympathises with Pamela on reading her account of their relationship, and once again proposes. Pamela, still doubtful of his intentions, begs him to let her return; though vexed, he does so. On leaving, Pamela is strangely sad, and on her way home he sends her an apologetic letter that prompts her to realise she is, in fact, in love. When she hears that he is ill, she returns to him. The two reunite and become engaged, and Pamela explains that she rejected Mr. B's advances because she feared he would attempt to take advantage of her without marrying her.

- Pamela returns to home

Mr. Williams is released from prison, and the neighbouring gentry come to the estate and admire Pamela. Pamela's father arrives at the estate, fearing that she will accept Mr. B's proposal by force, but is reassured when he sees her happy. Pamela and Mr. B wed. When Mr. B leaves to attend to a sick man, his sister, Lady Davers, arrives at the estate and threatens Pamela, calling her marriage a sham. Pamela escapes by the window and is taken by Colbrand to Mr. B. The following day, Lady Davers enters their bedroom without permission, revealing that Mr. B previously seduced a girl called Sally Godfrey and had a child with her.

- Pamela's father arrives for her marriage

Pamela reconciles the furious siblings; they return to Bedfordshire. Pamela rewards her friends and servants with money and forgives her father for attempting to end her engagement. They visit a farmhouse where they meet Mr. B's daughter, and learn that her mother now lives, married, in Jamaica; Pamela proposes taking the girl home with them. The neighbourhood gentry who once despised Pamela now praise her.

- Neighbourhood gentry praise Pamela

The novel has a running plot, as it is free from deviations. It remains a story of ever growing love of the Squire for Pamela and Pamela's efforts to resist the temptations due to her fear of being violated and abandoned as was being done with girls in general. The novel is a simple narration of a passionate love and the resistance and revulsion by the beloved. There is no villain-like person to deter the lover from proceeding in his venture except Williams who had offered to marry the girl out of pity. The issue was easily resolved. The plot therefore continues to grow unhindered and the story succeeded in conveying the message to

the world that a true lover should never try to take undue advantages and should win the heart of the beloved by instilling love and confidence in the heart of the beloved. The plot covering about 500 pages runs smoothly to the end.

▶ Passionate love

Pamela Andrews

Pamela Andrews, a virtuous servant girl of Lady B, mistress of an estate in Bedfordshire. After the death of her mistress, she intends to return home but is persuaded to stay by the son, Mr. B, who promises to be a good master to her. Later, she has cause to suspect his intentions; after he makes a series of attempts on her virtue, she determines to leave. The coach, however, deposits her at Mr. B's country estate, where she is held prisoner. She meets the local minister, Mr. Williams. She tries several times to escape. Finally Mr. B, moved by her virtue, offers her an honorable marriage, and she accepts his proposal. Despite anonymous letters and suspicions of other love affairs, she remains faithful and eventually turns Mr. B into an honorable husband.

▶ Pamela Andrews, a virtuous servant

Mr. B

A country squire, 25 or 26 years of age, with properties in Bedfordshire, Lincolnshire, Kent and London. He is Pamela's employer, pursuer, and eventual husband. Richardson has censored Mr. B.'s name in order to protect the pretense of non-fiction, but scholars have conjectured based on manuscripts that the novelist had "Brandon" in mind. Mr. B. has rakish tendencies, and he attempts to compel Pamela's reciprocation of his sexual attentions, even to the point of imprisoning her in his Lincolnshire estate. His fundamental decency prevents him from consummating any of his assaults on her, however, and under her influence he reforms in the middle of the novel.

▶ Pamela's employer

3.8.3 Critical Analysis

Master's Special Regard

Pamela was written in the epistolary form in order to make the heroine report to her parents what kind of life she was living in her Master's house and they advise her how to tackle the situations. Pamela was appointed to attend to her Master's mother who, she wrote to her parents, had died. The Lady was so good and noble that she left all her

attendants 'much grieved'. Pamela was the Lady's most favourite employee, so much so that she felt 'destitute' since the Lady had "put me to write and cast accounts, made the little expert at my needle, and other qualifications above my degree, it would have been no easy matter to find a place that your poor Pamela was fit for." Besides getting her trained to get a job, the good Lady said to her son an hour before she died "Remember my poor Pamela!"

- Lady's most favourite employee

In order to honour the words of his mother he said, holding Pamela's hand, "for my mother's sake. I will be your friend to you, and you shall take care of my linen." He gave mourning and a year's wages to all his mother's servants, but he gave her four golden guineas besides lesser money which his mother had in her pocket when she died. When the young Master came to the Late Lady's Dressing Room and saw her writing to her father and mother he was good enough to say "Pamela, you write a very pretty hand", and allowed her to read any of his mother's books to improve herself.

- Give mother's books to improve Pamela's writing

Insistence of the Parents on Chastity

Pamela's parents were happy to learn of the special consideration she had received, but they could not help expressing the fear that her Master might have some ulterior designs. They exhorted, "Indeed, my dear child, we begin to be in great fear for you; for what signifies all the riches in the world with a bad conscience, and to be dishonest ?... I hope the good Master has no design, but when he has given you so much money, and speaks so kindly to you, and praises your coming on; and Oh ! that fatal word, that he would be kind to you if you would do as you should do, almost kills us with fears." The parents were, in fact, suspected that her Master might have his way to entice her to let him violate her chastity. The fear must have been caused by the general tendency of the masters of the time. The parents made it clear to Pamela that they had been happy because they have lived a life of honesty and innocence, "but the loss of our dear child's virtue would be a grief that we could not bear, and would bring our grey hairs to the grave at once." Such an exhortation must have made Pamela all the more determined to maintain her virtue at all costs.

- Parents suspected her Master's intention

Fight against Social Evil

Pamela can be studied as an attempt to fight against the social evil. Pamela's parents were aware of the prevailing evil to such an extent that they warned their daughter against the temptations and favours she was receiving from her Master. When they came to know through the first letter of Pamela that the Master treated her with excessive kindness, they wrote back immediately "Everybody talks how you have come on, and what a genteel girl you are and some say you are very pretty, and indeed, six months service, when I saw you last, I should have thought you so too, if you was not our child. But all avails all this, if you are to be ruined and undone-Indeed, my dear child, we begin to be in great fear for you; for what signifies all the riches in the world with a bad conscience and to be dishonest." And the father does not stop here. He adds, "We continue to be good, though our lot is hard here; but the loss of our child's virtue, would be a grief that we could not bear, and we would bring our grey hairs to the grave at once." Thus Pamela's father made it clear to his daughter that if she bartered away her virtues for money he would die at once. Pamela replied at once, "My dear father and mother, be assured that by God's grace, I never will do anything that shall bring your grey hairs with sorrow to the grave." Pamela assured her parents that she would do nothing that would kill them with shock.

- A fight against the social evil

Pamela is well aware of evil. She was horrified when she heard of instances of other poor girls who were violated and abandoned to live like a wretch for their whole life. She told Mrs. Jervis, "I have read of things almost as strange, from great men to poor damsels. He may condescend, may-hap, to think I may be good enough for his harlot; and those things don't disgrace men that ruin poor women as the world goes-for even wicked men I have read soon grow weary of wickedness one sort, and love variety." She made such accusations several times through the text, to confirm that it was a serious social problem.

- Pamela was horrified at the stories of poor girls

Mrs. Davers wrote a letter scolding her brother for intending to marry a poor maid-servant. Mrs. Devers knew it thoroughly that Pamela was a noble, virtuous, and beautiful girl. She admitted it in her letter, "The girl was innocent and good girl." She snubbed her brother if he had a mind to make her a mistress. She wrote, "There

are enough to be had, without ruining a poor wench that my mother loved, who really was a very good girl and of this you may be ashamed." And she further admonished her brother that it would be intolerable if he went to the extent of marrying the girl as "it would be very wicked of you to ruin the wench too." It was out of her love that she suggested to her brother, "So that I beg you will restore her to her parents, and give her one hundred pounds or so, to make her happy in some honest fellow of her own degree, and that will be doing something and will also oblige and pacify." This letter shows the prevalent social problem. The disparity between the rich and the poor and victimization of the poor by the rich was gnawing at the minds of the best of the people. Mrs. Davers knew well that Pamela was a good, and noble girl, beloved of her mother but the prejudice against the poor was the driving force. In view of this, Pamela can be studied as an attempt against social evil.

- Mrs. Davers scolds Mr.B for his plan of marrying Pamela

As an Epistolary Novel

Epistolary novels, that is, novels written as a series of letters, were extremely popular during the 18th century and it was Richardson's *Pamela, or Virtue Rewarded* that made them so. Richardson and other novelists of his time argued that the letter allowed the reader greater access to a character's thoughts – Richardson claimed that he was writing "to the moment," that is, Pamela's thoughts were recorded nearly simultaneously with her actions.

- A Novel of series of letters

In *Pamela, or Virtue Rewarded,* Richardson discusses a lot of significant issues, such as the nature of virtue and interpersonal relations, sexual politics and class discrimination, and some other issues. The main character of the novel is Pamela Andrews, a pretty young girl of 15 years old, who serves as a maid servant in one of the rich houses. Pamela becomes a victim of sexual harassment of Mr. B., her new employer. It is known that Richardson uses a special style of writing epistolary form, which helps the readers to better evaluate the situation and to analyze the character of Pamela in a proper way.

- A lot of significant issues

The plot is developed through the use of different letters and journal entries written by the main character. These letters help to gain insight into the character's nature, and to analyze her thoughts and feelings. The letters

help to reveal that in Bedfordshire, the main character Pamela Andrews is psychologically aware of suppressed emotions and tensions which are social and sexual, while on Lincolnshire, it is clear that her psyche reveals tensions which are more moral and spiritual. Richardson portrays his main character as the model woman who tries to maintain her morality despite her protests against sexual temptations and advances from her master. A young girl's behavior and morality help her to solve many problems and to succeed in her life.

▶ Journal entries

Pamela's character attracts the attention of the readers due to such traits as self-confidence, persistence, courage, love and respect for the dearest people. Pamela is represented as a devoted and most dutiful daughter to her poor parents, Mr. and Mrs. Andrews, to whom the girl regularly writes letters. Her parents had an enormous impact on the girl's moral formation due to which she protects her purity as much as she can. For example, in Letter 1, Pamela tells her parents about the changes that took place in the house of her masters and about her grief. She writes, 'I have great Trouble, and some Comfort, to acquaint you with. The Trouble is that my good Lady died of the Illness I mentioned to you, and left us all much griev'd for her Loss'. It is clear that Pamela is an educated young girl who takes care of her parents, as she writes to them regularly. Moreover, she had respect and love for her good Lady. Besides, her letters give an opportunity to understand that she is a religious person who loves God and follows the key Commandments of God. For example, she often uses such phrases in her letters as 'God bless Him/Her!'.

▶ enormous impact of parents on her moral formation

It is known that Pamela resists her powerful young master Mr. B. through a long period of time. She witnesses his aggression toward her, tries not to capitulate to his assaults and his later tenderness. Samuel Richardson describes Pamela's behavior, her feelings and her thoughts. It is clear that Pamela needs some time to realize that she loves Mr. B. Soon, they marry and Pamela becomes a Lady. Dying to her virtue and honesty, the young girl managed to avoid seduction and soon she was rewarded by marriage. Although some critics consider Pamela' story to be a story of a servant girl who decided to climb the ladder of social class, it is a wrong opinion . It is known that the major goal of Samuel Richardson was to give practical examples, worthy

▶ Pamela takes some time to realize that she loves Mr. B.

to be followed in the most critical and affecting cases, by the virgin, the bride and the wife.

Pamela is portrayed not only as a good daughter to her parents, but also as a true and reliable servant, and later as a loving wife. In the second part of the novel, the author praises Pamela's positive qualities, such as benevolence and generosity. Her husband, Mr. B. highly values all these qualities, as he proposed to Pamela to marry him. When he found her entries in the journal and read them, he discovered her tenderness and true feelings toward him. Pamela is an honest and kind person who deserves love and respect.

▶ Pamela's positive qualities

In conclusion, it is necessary to say that Pamela is represented as a courageous character in the novel who tries to follow her principles and protect her honor and virtue. The novel *Pamela: or Virtue Rewarded*, which discusses the inequalities of status and power, proves the fact that virtue is always rewarded.

▶ Courageous character

Summarised Overview

One of the most well-known love stories from the eighteenth century is found in Samuel Richardson's *Pamela: or Virtue Rewarded*, even if the book may not sound particularly romantic to readers today. In it, *Pamela*, a lovely and virginal serving girl, is aggressively pursued by a wealthy man named Mr. B for her virginity. Mr. B is a sleazy rake who wants nothing more than to get his way with the young girl. He makes repeated attempts to rape and attack her. Pamela, who is a model of morality and consistently manages to evade Mr. B's attacks, is unfortunate for him. Eventually, Pamela's inherent kindness transforms Mr. B, and he stops pursuing her and instead proposes to her. Pamela eventually decides to accept Mr. B's proposal and becomes engaged in an unexpected turn.

Assignments

1. Discuss the Sexual Gaze in *Pamela.*
2. Is Pamela ultimately a sympathetic character?
3. Give the character sketch of Pamela Andrews.
4. Discuss the complex relationship between Pamela and her employer.

Suggested Reading

1. Keymer, Thomas, and Sabor, Peter. *Pamela in the Marketplace: Literary Controversy and Print Culture in Eighteenth-Century Britain and Ireland*. Cambridge U.P. 2014.
2. McDermott, Hubert. "Vertue Rewarded: The First Anglo-Irish Novel". *Studies*: *An Irish Quarterly Review*. 75 (298): 177–185. 1986, *JSTOR*

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1. Bray, Joe. *The Epistolary Novel: Representations of Consciousness.* Routledge, 2003.
2. Fysh, Stephanie. *The Work(s) of Samuel Richardson.* U of Delaware, 1997.

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Space for Learner Engagement for Objective Questions

Learners are encouraged to develop objective questions based on the content in the paragraph as a sign of their comprehension of the content. The Learners may reflect on the recap bullets and relate their understanding with the narrative in order to frame objective questions from the given text. The University expects that 1 - 2 questions are developed for each paragraph. The space given below can be used for listing the questions.

1.

SGOU

Critical Responses

BLOCK-04

Block Content

Unit 1 - Poetry from the Age of Milton to Pre-Romantics

Unit 2 - The Rise of the English Novel

Unit 3 - Restoration Drama

Unit 4 - Periodical Essays

Unit 1 Poetry from the Age of Milton to Pre-Romantics

Learning Outcomes

Upon completion of the unit, the learner will be able to:

- understand the evolution of poetry from the age of Milton to pre-romanticism
- be familiar with historical context of various genres of poetry during the period
- know about different authors belonging to these ages
- examine different genres of poetry

Background

John Milton is considered as one of the influential poets of English literature. He holds a very prominent position among English poets. Due to his writing prowess and affiliation with the Puritan Movement of the time, he is often identified with the well-being of ordinary people. His poetry is most noted for its sublimity which elevates a common concept into something greater as a poetic sentiment. His idea of sublimity reaches its pinnacle in "Paradise Lost" and other subsequent poetry.

Neoclassical poetry is a type of poetry that is modelled after the ancient Greek and Roman writers of that era. The most prominent poets who deviated from the established poetic schools and looked for inspiration in the writings of classical Greek and Roman authors were Pope and Dryden. In the Augustan Age, they made an effort to adhere to the letter and spirit of ancient literature. Consequently, Neoclassicism is the movement in the history of English literature that placed a strong focus on a resurrection of the classical spirit between 1680 and 1750, at the time of Pope and Dryden. Sensibilities, ideas and forms were developed by the end of the Neoclassical period which led to Pre-romantic phase of poetry. Pre-romantic poets composed poems which reflect a more poetic and personal perceptions of life. They were simply writers who were inspired by contemporary moods and trends. They did not conform to conventions of neoclassical poetry as they stood for the change of conventionalities.

Keywords

Age of Milton, Sublimity, Satire, Pre-Romanticism

Discussion

- Milton's sublimity

It is accurate to call John Milton's style in "Paradise Lost" (1667) as a "grand" style. The mature style of Milton could be best explained by the adjective "sublimity." He got it through years of harsh experience. The value of "Paradise Lost" and "Paradise Regained" depends not on the reader's theological preferences, but rather on the stark grandeur of numerous descriptive passages and the poet's abiding passion for nature, which shines through in all of his writing. According to Broadbent, Milton is one of the few English authors whose style can be described as intellectual; his imagery is distinctive and his words are elevated. Similarly, Joseph Addison claims that Milton's poetry has an attractive diction and allusive style.

- Grand style of Milton

According to C.S Lewis, the following three components are what give grandeur to Milton's style in "Paradise Lost". The first is the employment of some archaic vocabulary and sentence structures. The second is the use of proper names, particularly because of how they sound but also because they are the names of wonderful, far-off, awful, sensuous, or celebrated things. Thirdly, there are allusions to most of the sense experiences such as darkness, light, flowers, storms etc.

- Description of Satan

The opening speech and description of Satan, one of the main characters in this poem, contain thoughts that are incredibly appropriate to give the reader a complete understanding of him. His obstinacy, despondency, and impenitence are all expertly weaved together with his pride, envy, and revenge. In essence, his initial speech in the poem is a compilation of all the passions that appear independently in a number of other speeches. When Milton refers to objects or people, he never ends the simile until it reaches a very lofty ideal that is frequently unrelated to the occasion that gave rise to it.

- Sublime portrait of Satan

In Book I of "Paradise Lost", Milton paints a dignified and sublime portrait of Satan. Satan is heroically characterised, and the words used to introduce him have only one purpose: to exalt the devil in order to make him more pitiful. According to Slotkin, "Paradise Lost is principally concerned with explaining the presence of evil in a cosmos ruled by an almighty and compassionate God".

- Milton develops Satan as a hero

Because of his sin of pride, Satan believed he could be on par with his Creator. Milton used exalted language to describe Satan in order to depict him as a leader who is contemplating lost happiness and defeat. In order to attract the people he is leading, the leader needed to appear heroic. Forsyth argues that Satan being the principal figure of "Paradise Lost", the plot revolves around him; as a result, Milton naturally develops Satan as a hero. The speeches that Satan makes throughout Book I are more instances of the high, epic style. Satan always uses rhetorical, eloquent language that tremendously impresses us and inspires our awe.

- Milton's mastery of blank verse

These epic similes, sometimes known as long-tailed similes, inexorably add to the impression of the sublime beauty of style. Another key aspect of Milton's poetic style in "Paradise Lost" is his mastery of blank verse. The use of blank verse also contributed to the magnificent effect of the epic poem. After deciding on it, he went on to construct from it a hitherto unheard style of verse that was wonderfully suited to the grandeur of his topic.

In his *An Essay on Man*, Alexander Pope bears on the same content that Milton deals with in *Paradise Lost.* Pope begins the work with his description which states: "Garden, tempting with forbidden fruit". But there was a drastic change in form; instead of adopting Milton's epic style, Pope adopted the form of the epistle and rather than using Milton's blank verse, Pope used the heroic couplet.

As "Paradise Lost" could be termed as the first epic in English, it was in a sense impossible for John Dryden to ignore the epic tradition of poetry. Dryden wrote his *The State of Innocence and the Fall of Man*(1677) in a style similar to Milton.

- Dryden's Satire

Later, Dryden wrote *Mac Flecknoe; or, A Satyr Upon the True-Blue-Protestant Poet, T.S.* in a version that was approved in 1684, but it had been in circulation since 1682

in unauthorised versions. The year that Dryden composed it is unknown to critics, but he might have done it as early as 1678.

In contrast to Milton's epic poetry, the''mock-heroic''poetry of Dryden refers to a distortion of the literary norms and styles of an epic in the presentation of trivial or insignificant characters; this results in an absurd parody of the personalities, social customs, or vices that the author finds objectionable and wishes to criticise. The use of disproportionate incongruity is a component of the mock-heroic method. A sense of comical incongruity is created when trivial objects are treated with epic methods that are typically associated with nobility and majesty. When considered from this angle, John Dryden's poem "Mac Flecknoe" looks to be the quintessential illustration of a mock-heroic poem. With considerable lyrical flair, the poet here satirises Thomas Shadwell's literary aspirations. By employing the mock-heroic technique, he raises Shadwell's stature before bringing him down.

▶ Mock-heroic Style

The grandness of heroic poetry and the triviality of low comedy are expertly juxtaposed throughout the poem "Mac Flecknoe". Dryden creates a mock-heroic atmosphere by ironically putting satirical objects with legendary persons. He degrades Shadwell by drawing comparisons between silly man and legendary figures. Shadwell is likened to Ascanius, the great Roman ruler, or the famed musician Arian only to demonstrate how insignificant his personality is. The mock-heroic method is also used to describe Shadwell's coronation. Thus, Dryden accomplishes the mock heroic effect by mixing serious description with ridiculous details. T. S. Eliot observes that Dryden's success as a mock-epic poet is due to his mastery of the technique of turning the silly into heroic poetry.

▶ Juxtaposing the serious and the ridiculous

The middle years of the eighteenth century witnessed a reaction against the static, and balanced views and forms of the neoclassical writers like Pope and Dryden. The new emphasis was perfectly visible by turning back to the themes of pastoral and self-reflective return to the rural. It was very hard to categorise the poetic trends of the time as it is differently termed as the poetry of sensibility and pre-romantic poetry. This age sees a co-existence of different tendencies, between the concepts of regularity, clarity, order, neo-classicism and the supremacy of reason and,

on the other side, the new romantic emphasis on feeling and emotions and the rediscovery of Medieval times. The age is noted for its contradictory co-existence of concepts such as clarity, regularity, order of neoclassicism and the rediscovery of medievalism, emotions and feelings of romanticism.

▶ Co-existence of the contradictory trends

Pre-Romanticism was indeed a cultural trend that emerged in Europe about the 1740s and foreshadowed and preceded the Romantic era of art. The most notable of these changes was a change in public preference away from grandeur, austerity, nobility, idealisation, and other exalted sentiments of Neoclassicism or Classicism towards a simpler, more sincere, and more organic mode of expression.

▶ Pre-Romanticism

Between the Age of Milton and the Age of Wordsworth, a plethora of poets emerged who had significantly contributed to the cause of English literature. These poets, who are Pre-Romantic in style, are frequently referred to as "transitional poets." Following the age of Enlightenment, this era reflects a preference for and a return to the realm of creativity, sensibility, and imagination. This period illustrates how gradually the Age of Reason is giving way to the Age of Imagination.

▶ Age of Reason to the Age of Imagination

The American Revolution and the French Revolution occurred during the pre-romantic era, which had an impact on the young writers of that time. A few significant novels from this era also served as catalysts. The works of Gibbon and Tom Paine, *The Rights of Man* and *The History of the Rise and Fall of the Roman Empire*, respectively, contributed new messages to Western culture.

▶ The catalyst to the period

The major poets from the pre-romantic era include James Thomson, Oliver Goldsmith, Robert Burns, William Blake, William Collins, William Cowper, and Thomas Gray. James Thompson was the first of the transitional poets to emerge. Oliver Goldsmith was the transitional poet who is both the most well-known and most representative of the time. One of Goldsmith's most significant literary works, "The Deserted Village," was born out of the Enclosure Movement, in which landowners blocked off public grounds to keep tabs on the land and its inhabitants. Massive urbanisation was a result of this movement. In the poem, the poet laments the desolation of rural places and

how the artificiality of industrialization has taken the purity of the depopulated village. The poet mourns the loss of the straightforward, bucolic rural way of life that has vanished as a result of the changing economic circumstances in 18th-century England.

- The poet laments the desolation of rural places

"The Elegy Written in a Country Churchyard" and the two Pindaric odes, "The Bard" and "The Progress of Poesy" are what Thomas Gray is most known for. The modest rural existence portrayed in "The Elegy" is similar to Wordsworthian poetry. The speaker of this poem strolls around the countryside at dusk while bemoaning the death of all men, but especially the poor. He promotes the natural cycle and muses on the inevitable nature of death. The romantic poetry of the nineteenth century has a strong resemblance to Gray's poetry, which maintains a melancholic mood.

- Bemoaning the deaths of all mankind

The poet William Blake is regarded as "the first of the romantics" and is considered a pivotal figure in the history of poetry. Blake, who was greatly influenced by the French Revolution, remained a radical in his views on religion, politics, and art throughout his life. Blake's political views were significantly influenced by the French Revolution, which is clear in his poetry.

- Blake is regarded as "the first of the romantics"

Blake's major work, " Songs of Innocence," is a perfect example of how passionate he was—not just in terms of his enthusiasm for liberty, but also in terms of his love for children and the natural world. A few of his revolutionary artistic creations are *The French Revolution, The Visions of the Daughters of Albion, America, The Book of Thel*, and *Europe* and they reflect his love of the gothic and medieval periods with the same fervour. As a lyricist, Blake's final significant work is *Songs of Experience*, which had a temperament very different from *Songs of Innocence*. The lighthearted tone was replaced by a certain seriousness that highlighted the contradictory elements of nature, which are both stunning and brutal. Compared to most romantics, Blake was more outspoken in his war against the Augustans.

- Songs of Innocence and Experience

Folklore was first incorporated into canonical literature by Robert Burns, the national poet of Scotland who is renowned as the "Ploughman Poet." His works vividly depict country life and its simplicity since he thought the

natural way of living was the best. Burns rose to fame for his "Poems Chiefly in the Scottish Dialect". Due to Robert Burns' penchant for poetry, Shelly has frequently been compared with him. Simple human feelings were given a precious and enduring emotion in his poems. Among Burns' other well-known poems are "The Cottar's Saturday Night," "To a Mouse," "Tom O' Shanter," etc.

- Depict country life and its simplicity

William Cowper, one of the most well-known poets of his day, influenced the direction of poetry in the 18th century by depicting rural and urban surroundings. For his "Olney Hymns," he is most notably remembered. Under Lady Austen's guidance, Cowper wrote the renowned "John Gilpin" and "Lines on the Loss of the Royal George" during the second stage of his career. Cowper wrote "The Task" on Lady Austen's request, detailing his own experiences. The poet contemplates the basic pleasures of living in solitude, such as a quiet walk in the summer or fireside evenings in the winter in this poem, which masterfully portrays the author's deepest thoughts and emotions.

- Rural and urban surroundings

Summarised Overview

The epic poem *Paradise Lost*, largely regarded as the best in English, is what makes Milton most famous. Along with *Samson Agonistes* and *Paradise Regained*, it solidifies Milton's standing as one of the greatest English poets. Following him, Dryden composed two prominent original satires—*Mac Flecknoe* and *The Medall*—but he is better recognised today for his satire *Achitophel and Absalom*, his best known work, includes a number of brilliant satirical depictions. Different from neoclassical trends of poetry, a new sensibility in poetry and a new generation of poets were emerging in the second half of the 18th century. These poets exhibited a new kind of lyrical and emotional expression through the use of subjective, autobiographical elements. They displayed a range of emotional states of the soul and were less intellectual and more emotive.

Assignments

1. How does Dryden create a mock-heroic atmosphere?
2. What is another term for Pre-Romantic poetry?
3. Name some of the important poets of the Pre-Romantic era.
4. Which poet is regarded as "the first of the romantics"?
5. What are the two works by William Blake which deal with opposite themes? Make a contrastive analysis of them.

Suggested Reading

1. Quinn, Vincent. *Pre-Romantic Poetry*. Oxford U.P, 2012.
2. Winn, James Anderson. *Critical Essays on John Dryden*. G.K. Hall, 1997.

Reference

1. Simone, Nechelle. *Poetry in Transition*. Nechelle, 2020.
2. Gaddis, Rev James H. *Emotional Transitions*.Createspace, 2017.

Space for Learner Engagement for Objective Questions

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Unit 2 The Rise of the English Novel

Learning Outcomes

Upon completion of the unit, the learner will be able to:

- understand the origin and evolution of novel as a genre during the eighteenth century
- be familiar with the historical background which enabled the origin of the novel
- know the different forms of fictional narratives like realistic and epistolary novels

Background

The English novel took its refined form and pattern in the 18th century, though some raw forms of it existed in other languages. Increased release of novels could be seen between 1685 and 1815.The novel is regularly and profoundly connected with the society in which the novelist lives and feels and they explain, glorify, or critique more than any other literary form. The social, political, economic, scientific, and cultural facets of England have had a significant impact on the English novel throughout its history, from its diverse origins to its evolution in the eighteenth century through its rise in the nineteenth century to its current status.

Keywords

Novels, Picaresque, Eighteenth Century, Epistolary

- Indispensable eighteenth century

Matthew Arnold referred to the eighteenth century as "excellent" and "indispensable." Immanuel Kant, a German philosopher, succinctly described the era's hegemony in an essay titled "What Is Enlightenment?" (1784) by saying: "Dare to know!, "Have the guts to utilise your own argument!".

- Rise of the middle class

It could possibly be argued that the industrial revolution set the way for the rise of the middle class and growing interest in reading books on everyday life. The growth of industries is one of the main factors that propelled the novel's popularity. With machinery, work could be done faster and people had more leisure that they used to read novels. Lots of copies could be produced at a lower cost using printing presses. In contrast to the past when only aristocrats were readers, the current average person could afford to acquire and read books.

- Early novels

As a result, the novel developed into a work of prose fiction that featured characters in actual events and circumstances. Early English novels include *Robinson Crusoe* (1719) by Daniel Defoe, *Pamela* (1740) by Samuel Richardson and *Tom Jones* (1749) by Henry Fielding. Numerous other writers had actually done some work before them to give a new form to its structure, which enabled the pioneers in various ways.

- Everyday actions of ordinary folks

According to Skilton, *Robinson Crusoe* is the first novel in the sense that it is the first fictional account in which the everyday actions of ordinary folks are the focus of literary attention. His novels are typically written in a highly realistic manner, and he began his literary career as a journalist. The reader constantly gets the impression that Defoe is telling a factual narrative about a real person since he writes in the first person. He always writes from a middle-class perspective in all of his writings. Before Daniel Defoe, Augustan authors were ardent proponents of the status quo, and their philosophical and religious works were built on the myth of the perpetual coherence of things. Defoe, on the other hand, advocated radical transformation, economic individualism, social mobility, trade, and freedom of thought.

In *Robinson Crusoe*, Defoe discusses important aspects of Western civilization such as commerce, mercantile capitalism, and the spread of culture and beliefs, such as

- Important aspects of Western civilization

when Crusoe tries to convert Friday to Christianity because he views him as a savage. This reflected the British effort to dominate other continents. Britain's economy in the eighteenth century was dependent on slave trade, which was abolished in the early nineteenth century.

- Defoe's works lacked complex characterization

Robinson Crusoe (1719), *Journal of the Plague Year* (1722), and *Moll Flanders* (1722) are among his best-known works. All the three books are written in the style of made-up histories. The first is a book that purports to represent the account of a man by the name of Robinson Crusoe. The second book purports to be a man's diary from the time of the Great Plague. The third depicts memoirs of a girl named *Moll*. The heroes and heroines of Defoe's works lacked complex characterization or design. In Defoe's stories, he described the struggles and troubles that real individuals with names like Robinson and Moll faced and how they overcame them.

In English social history, the eighteenth century is remembered for the rise of the middle classes and the consequent expansion of trade and commerce. David Daiches, a historian said, the novel "was in a large measure the product of the middle-class, appealing to middle-class ideals and sensibilities, a patterning of imagined events set against a clearly realized social background and taking its view of what was significant in human behavior from agreed public attitudes."

- The individualistic concern

Linking the rise of the novel to the rise of individualism, Ian Watt traced the origin of narrative realism to specific changes in British social history. Eighteenth-century Britain became interested in stories of "particular individuals having particular experiences at particular times and at particular places" and in novels that give the impression of "a full and authentic report of human experience" as a result of emerging Protestant, capitalist, and empiricist ideologies, which Watt refers to as "the rising tide of individualism."

- Ian Watt- "the rise of the novel"

The critic Ian Watt is credited with the phrase "the rise of the novel," which he used as the title of a book published in 1957, that had a huge impact. The publication of *Pamela* by Samuel Richardson in 1740 was a historic milestone. This book, which described a 15-year-old servant girl's courageous attempts to stop her "boss," Mr. B, from seducing her, became an instant bestseller. It made a

convincing case for the novel to be taken seriously from a moral perspective and was a work of high moral intensity.

- The story through a string of letters

Another significant novelist of the era was Samuel Richardson. His renowned novel *Pamela* is told through a string of letters. We believe the person is much more real and actually alive because we are reading their writings. Samuel Richardson's books are morality tales that are based on real-life characters. As a result, Richardson's characters become richer and more complicated. *Pamela, or Virtue Rewarded*, and *Clarissa* are among his best-known works.

- Epistolary novels- *Clarissa*

Clarissa, Richardson's second novel, was also written in an epistolary model, and it is another story about an alleged seduction attempt. The noble Clarissa is chased by the rakish Lovelace, a well educated libertine, who also assaults, bewitches, and lies to her. Both the letters between Lovelace and his fellow rake Belford as well as those between Clarissa and her acquaintance Anna Howe are provided to us. We perceive the discrepancy between Lovelace's plans and what Clarissa believes they are, and we are captivated by the villain's plans and obsessions. Richardson was shocked to discover that some of his most committed readers appeared to have gone for Lovelace as well. He revised the book in later printings to make Lovelace a clearer villain.

- Flexible characterisation of Fielding

Like Richardson, Henry Fielding possesses brilliance in capturing the emotions of the human heart, but their methods vary significantly. The reader can experience the flexibility in the characters of Fielding, in contrast to the fixity of Richardson's characters, so that his characterisation is distinguished for its flexibility, roundness and attraction. Fielding wrote *Joseph Andrews* in 1742 as a parody of Richardson's *Pamela*, a novel about a morally upright woman. For those who were unable to write for themselves, Richardson was requested to create a number of sample letters. This task showed that he had the ability to express himself in letters at his fingertips. *Pamela*, *Clarissa*, and *Sir Charles Grandison* are three lengthy works he authored in the years that followed and established his name.

Henry Fielding told stories in a joyful way. In his writings, he does not construct richly detailed, fully realised characters or convey any sort of lofty moral messages. He merely tells a compelling tale. He frequently interrupts the narrative in order to speak in the "author's

voice," explaining the craft of novel writing and providing observations about society. *Joseph Andrews* (1742), and *Tom Jones* (1749) are his two fictional accounts which drew much critical acclaim. Fielding's works are quick reads with humorous themes that are amusing rather than having a higher moral aim.

▶ Joyful narration

Fielding's novels are renowned for their picaresque characters. Picaresque novels are typically first-person accounts of the exploits of a rogue or lowborn adventurer, who moves around from one place to another in an effort to survive. The picaresque novel, which offered the first realistic counterpoint to the vast, winding romances of medieval chivalry, is episodic in structure.

▶ Picaresque novels

Summarised Overview

The novel from the 18th century was deemed realistic because its characters were realistic individuals with common names and titles, were described in the course of their daily lives, were situated in real places, and were based on real events. Contrary to the early Augustans, novelists preferred to represent ordinary folk behaving in realistic situations. The novelists tried their best to connect to the middle-class readers who sought to relate with the protagonists of the stories and desired to read about ordinary folks. The most significant novelists of the time were Daniel Defoe, Samuel Richardson and Henry Fielding.

Assignments

1. Explain the reasons for describing the eighteenth century as "excellent" and "indispensable?
2. What is the story of *Clarissa* about?
3. Discuss the perspective that Daniel Defoe adopts to narrate his stories.
4. What is meant by a picaresque novel?
5. How did the industrial revolution enable the popularity of novels?

Suggested Reading

1. Allen, Walter. *The English Novel: A Short Critical History*. Borwicks, 2015.
2. Downie, James Alan (ed.). *The Oxford Handbook of the Eighteenth-Century Novel*. Oxford UP, 2013.

Reference

1. Downie , James Alan (ed.). *The Oxford Handbook of the Eighteenth-Century Novel*. Oxford, 2013.
2. Richter, David H. *Reading the Eighteenth-Century* Novel. Wiley & Sons, 2017.

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Unit 3

Restoration Drama

Learning Outcomes

Upon completion of the unit, the learner will be able to:

- understand the origin and evolution of drama during restoration period
- be familiar with the historical background which enabled the origin of Comedy of Manners
- know moral and social outlook of the people during the period

Background

Despite a Parliamentary restriction on dramatic performances in 1642, the theatre continued to play a role in English culture throughout the English Civil Wars and the succeeding Commonwealth. Between 1640 and 1660, English Puritans tried to reform numerous aspects of English politics, administration, and society. Elizabeth I, James I, and Charles I had all publicly supported the theatre and had opposed Puritan endeavors to rid the country of theatre, despite a Parliamentary resolution that outlawed it in 1642. Since the majority of London's performers, playwrights, and theatre-owners supported the royalist cause during the Civil War, many of them were sent into exile when their side lost.

Keywords

Restoration Play, Comedy of Manners, Immorality

Discussion

- Restoration drama

The primary dramatic genre during the Restoration was comedy. Despite the commonwealth's restrictions on play acting, comedy has still occasionally been performed, primarily in the form of droll. Then the age witnessed the popularity of the comedy of intrigue. In many Restoration comedies, there is an element of intrigue. The term "Restoration" cannot be limited to the event that saw the monarchy reinstated in England, but considered it broadly, it is a time frame between 1660 and 1700, which saw the emergence of numerous new political, sociocultural and literary movements.

- Comedy of Manners

The restoration has a rich tradition of drama owing to the Comedy of Manners. Although the skeleton of this type was created much earlier, Etherege, Wycherley, Congreve, Vanbrugh, and Farquhar were responsible for its lush blossoming.

- Reopening of theatres

The "immortality" of restoration drama has been debated to the exclusion of all other aesthetic factors. When the theatres reopened in 1662, watching of plays played a significant role in the uprising against Puritanism that had been going on for several decades. Many cultural historians believe that restoration theatre better represents the time. New plays commenting on the restored monarchy and a new culture of performance, luxury, and more open sexuality thrived even if many plays from the Shakespearean age were repeated.

- Comedy of Manners represent restoration society

The Comedy of Manners, also known as Restoration Comedy, is the most representative literary genre of Restoration society and is renowned for its wit, urbanity, and refinement. It is known as the Comedy of Manners, because it depicts the manners, styles, and norms of the aristocratic and upper class, fashionable society of England.

- Aphra Behn as a representative woman playwright

Even though it made an effort to revert to earlier forms, the theatre of the Restoration era significantly improved. As the theatres themselves relocated into better areas of London and began to draw a wider array of patrons, it first became approachable and respectable. As women started to perform on stage in greater numbers for the first time and several of them achieved success as playwrights, most notably Aphra Behn, playhouses began to open up professionally for them.

- Backlash against the excesses of Restoration

A backlash against the excesses of the Restoration began with the Glorious Revolution of 1688 and the restoration of parliament, with most of the attention being focused on the theatre, the culture of performance and exhibition, and, in particular, its sexual licentiousness. *The Way of the World*, the final play of William Congreve, was written in 1700 in response to a particularly strong criticism of his earlier plays. Congreve attempted to prove his own skill by returning to the early form of the Restoration comedies with this play, and in the process, he produced one of the best comedies to appear during the Restoration era.

- Critiquing the society

Drama during the restoration included complex plots, sexual intrigues, and moral deception. Through these traits, the comedies of manners both reflected and critiqued a world where sexual mores, gender roles, and social status were becoming more fluid. With its many narratives, ethically dubious characters, and depiction of love and money as a game of wits, Congreve's *The Way of the World*, perfectly encapsulates many of the essential characteristics of these changing times.

- Sexual innuendos and vulgar jokes

Characters in *The Way of the World* use sexual innuendos and vulgar jokes. The play exudes humour and wit. The characters serve as representations of various facets of the time's society, particularly the nobility. Since none of the characters in the play can be considered to be particularly "good," it is challenging to identify a hero or heroine, or even someone who is deserving of sympathy or identification.

- Renowned for their wit and good humour

Born in 1640, William Wycherley wrote plays at the height of the Restoration. His writings were renowned for their wit and good humour as well as the filthy overtones and quick pacing that the audiences of the period most sought. A play called *The Country Wife*, which was composed in 1675, in many respects sums up the majority of comedies created during the Restoration.

- Characters as individuals rather than types

George Farquhar's comedies, which are remarkable for their greater sensitivity to characters as individuals rather than types and were written at the end of the period, serve as a transition to later comedies. *The Beaux' Stratagem* (1707) features a breakup that is surprisingly modern in style since the couple was unable to make each other happy, while *The Recruiting Officer* (1706) ridicules some of the flaws of military heroes.

- Shallowness and vulgarity of the period

A striking feature of Restoration Comedy is the use of humour. The language used by the characters is incredibly cunning and clever. Since the age was incapable of experiencing tragic emotions at their full intensity, witty and light-hearted dramatic materials worked for them far more. The shallowness and vulgarity of the period are effectively exposed. Drama was written predominantly in prose form as it represented the age of commerce and money.

- Jeremy Collier's response to restoration drama

In reaction to restoration drama, Jeremy Collier released his controversial work *A Short View of the Immorality and Profaneness of the English Stage* (1698), critiquing William Wycherley, John Dryden, William Congreve, John Vanbrugh, and Thomas D'Urfey denouncing them for indecency, profane language, abusing the clergy, and undermining public morality through the sympathetical portrayal of vice. A subsequent pamphlet war continued intermittently until 1726.

- Revival of Comedy of Manners

The genre of Comedy of Manners continued its presence even in the subsequent century through works like Richard Brinsley Sheridan's *The School for Scandal*. Sheridan's wittiest comedy, notably from the second half of the 18th century, is *The School for Scandal* first performed in 1777 and published in 1780. The restoration comedies, which had a significant impact in Dryden's time, were revived. The Comedy of Manners is another name for the restoration comedy. Sheridan's plays give us insightful glimpses into the upper class lifestyle of the time and confirms his reputation as the best dramatist of his generation. In the play, various facets of that society are satirised. It consists of satirical depictions of gossip, hypocrisy, love intrigues, excess, which result in significant debt, and an obsession with fashion. Along with making fun of the lifestyle of the upper class, Sheridan makes fun of the greedy money lenders of the day.

Summarised Overview

From around 1660 to 1700, there was a flourishing period for restoration comedy, composed and performed following the restoration of the Stuart monarchy. The people, including King Charles, revolted against the Puritan values in opposition to Cromwell's rule. The Restoration plays, which seem

to exalt in immorality, are blatant manifestations of this revolt. Some of the important playwrights who wrote and circulated such plays are William Wycherley, George Etherege, Aphra Behn, John Vanbrugh and William Congreve.

Assignments

1. Discuss the political contexts of writing Comedy of Manners.
2. Define Comedy of Manners and discuss its features.
3. Flourishing of comedies during the restoration.
4. Trace the features of Comedy of Manners in Richard Brinsley Sheridan's *The School for Scandal.*

Suggested Reading

1. Fisk, Deborah Payne. The Cambridge Companion to English Restoration Theatre. Cambridge UP, 2000.
2. Owen, Susan J. *A Companion to Restoration Drama*. John Wiley & Sons, 2002.
3. Womersley, David. *Restoration Drama: An Anthology*. Wiley, 2000.

Reference

1. Nicoll, Allardyce. *A History of Restoration Drama 1660-1700*. U P, 1923.
2. Wann, Louis B. *The Oriental in Restoration Drama*. Wentworth P, 2016.

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Unit 4

Periodical Essays

Learning Outcomes

Upon completion of the unit, the learner will be able to:

- understand the beginning of periodical essay and its evolution
- be familiar with the historical context of the origin of periodical essays
- be acquainted with multiple topics dealt in the periodical essays

Background

The periodical essay, in comparison to most literary genres, is firmly associated with particular changes in politics, the law, and publishing practices. As a result, it is more historically specific than most literary forms. A gradual progression could be seen in the emergence of periodical essays in the eighteenth century from the pamphlets, news sheets, and book catalogues. The social climate during Queen Anne's reign was particularly conducive to the growth of this democratic literary style.

Keywords

Periodical Essay, Coffee House, Middle Class, Trade

Discussion

- Launching periodical essays

On April 12, 1709, the day he introduced his *The Tatler*, Richard Steele essentially launched the periodical essay. There had been essays and periodicals before *The Tatler*, but there had never been a periodical essay. Many writers of the eighteenth century followed *The Tatler's* lead up to its very end, when the monthly essay and many other accomplishments vanished with the shift in sensibility. The Periodical essay remained a prominent and widely read literary form.

- Addressing various reader communities

For a variety of reasons, the periodic essay received a remarkable reception in the eighteenth century. Fundamentally, this new genre was in total accordance with the spirit of the time. In this regard, R. Humphrey notes: "If any literary form is the particular creation and the particular mirror of the Augustan Age in England, it is the periodical essay". It successfully integrated the reading preferences of the various reader classes, appealing to all readers—but especially the middle classes that were on the rise. A spectacular increase in literacy occurred in the eighteenth century, greatly widening the readership. They appreciated periodical essays because they were "light" reading.

- Addison's contribution to *The Tatler*

As mentioned, *The Tatler* debuted in 1709 with its inaugural issue. Joseph Addison, Steele's close friend, was then serving as the secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland. Steele did not inform Addison about his plan, but he was identified after just one month and on May 26, Addison's first essay was published. The impact and contribution of Addison to the *Tatler* was less in comparison to his friend Steele. Out of 271 periodical essays in *The Tatler*, 188 were authored by Steele, 42 by Addison, and 36 by both of them together. Addison gradually surpassed his friend in his contribution to periodical essays. Steele stated that contents of *The Tatler* mainly were derived from conversations that took place in the four popular coffee houses.

- It records the perspectives of Queen Anne's England

Steele abruptly stopped publication of *The Tatler* in 1711 without giving his readers any prior notice. However, two months later *The Spectator* started its historic run from March 1, 1711, to Dec. 6, 1712. *The Spectator* was released daily, except on Sundays, as opposed to *The Tatler* which were released three times a week. *The Spectator* covered almost all areas that *The Tatler* dealt with. The new periodical instantly gained a huge popularity among English people from all social classes. As the most outstanding of all periodical writings, it served as a significant human record of the values, customs, and perspectives of Queen Anne's England.

A really fascinating aspect of *The Spectator* was how it portrayed a club with members from various professions. Among them are Tory Baronet, one of English literature's most enduring characters, and Sir Roger de Coverley, an unusual but utterly lovable character. Sir Roger de Coverley

- Characterisations in *The Spectator*

appears to be a fairly well-developed character; he is much more than a caricature. His backstory is revealed: he suffered from unrequited love for a widow, who ultimately declined his proposal of marriage and plunged him into a deep depression. He was able to bounce back because he is naturally rather stable and enthusiastic.

- Impartial to Whig and Tory

Even though Addison and Steele were both Whigs, they maintained a somewhat neutral political position in *The Spectator* and really made an effort to highlight the flaws in the political fanaticism of both the Tories and Whigs. They ensured the readership of different sections of the society. Some areas of *The Spectator* were intended for and about women, therefore it attracted a considerable female readership. Constituting its own representative in The Spectator Club, *The Spectator* demonstrated a strong interest in commerce, which won the favour of the trading community. However, the humour, irony, and refined and elegant language of *The Spectator* made it more appealing.

- Addison's humour and literary criticism

Steele could accurately portray physical features down to the tiniest detail, but Addison is better at creating portraits that resemble actual living beings. Despite his reserve and 'cold perfection', Addison holds a sense of humour. Along with that, many of Addison's works, like his critical work on *Paradise Lost*, works like *Chevy Chase* and *The Children in the Wood* are concerned with literary criticism. In his critical writings, Addison demonstrates his profound classical knowledge.

- Didactic tone and the seriousness

The periodical essay began to have a propensity in the second half of the eighteenth century. For instance, Dr. Johnson contributed a series of approximately 100 papers titled *The Idler* to the publication *The Universal Chronicler*. Compared to the articles published in *The Rambler*, these papers are lighter and shorter. Twice a week, *The Rambler* showed up. The reason behind its initial failure may have been its overtly didactic tone and the seriousness of its moral conclusions. *The Rambler* is still remarkable despite these flaws because of the strength of its style and the insights of the man who dominated English life and literature to the level where a time period in English literature is referred to as "The Age of Johnson."

Establishing standards of moral conduct is something that Samuel Johnson is even more concerned with. Since a lot of time had passed since *The Tatler* and *The Spectator*

- moral conduct

were published (the first *Rambler* appeared on March 20, 1750), Johnson believed "this form of instruction would, to some degree, have the advantage of novelty."

- Imparting virtue and piety

Johnson says in his final issue that *The Rambler*'s prime objective has been to impart virtue and piety, but he also acknowledges that his readers may seek out more cheerful company due to the severity of his authoritarian instruction. When a reader has had enough of the heavy meal of Johnson's unrelieved seriousness, his friend Oliver Goldsmith is a "more cheerful companion ,"

- Oliver Goldsmith as a periodical essayist

Oliver Goldsmith is probably the most entertaining periodical essayist; while writing rapidly and carelessly, he seems the most relatable to readers now of all the great eighteenth-century periodical writers. Oliver Goldsmith provided contents for ten different publications, including *The Monthly Review*. *The Citizen of the World*, a collection of essays first published in *The Public Ledger* as "Chinese Letters," is considered as the best work of Goldsmith. The personal details, sentimentalism, and honesty in Goldsmith's essays are abundant. His prose is also very appealing; he manages to avoid harshness, coarseness, and verbosity.

- Registers the spirit of the period

The essays written by Goldsmith do have a simple attractiveness that makes them easy to read, and pure, without being excessively sophisticated. Most of the flaws and weaknesses, routines and eccentricities, and lack of thinking in eighteenth-century London are disclosed in the pages of journals, giving modern readers a sense of the spirit and life of the period.

- Flourished and perished in the eighteenth century

The form of the periodical essay was upheld for a century due to the pleasure of the audience reading what was discussed in the drawing rooms and coffee-houses. It was only towards the end of the century that people required something more appealing than 'little moral essays', 'didactic tales' and 'the imaginary characters'. It was the context in which the genre of periodical essay met with its extinction. The periodical essays as a literary form flourished and perished in the eighteenth century, establishing a close connection with the culture that gave rise to it.

Summarised Overview

The periodical essay is a form that existed only for fifty years between 1709 and 1759, despite having profound literary roots and a broad influence. It reached its peak in 1709–11 with the contributions of Addison and Steele to *The Tatler*, and its demise was announced by 24 November 1759 with the publication of the final issue of Goldsmith's short-lived *Bee*. Between these two points, the genre achieved its peak through the writings of Addison and Steele in *The Spectator* (1711–12), and with the writings of Johnson in *The Rambler* (1750–2), it took on its most enduring form.

Assignments

1. Addisons' contributions to *The Tatler*.
2. How was the character of Sir Roger de Coverley caricatured?
3. What was the fascinating aspect of *The Spectator*?
4. What is the reason behind the initial failure of *The Rambler* ?
5. What was the speciality of Oliver Goldsmith's writing compared to that of Johnson?

Suggested Reading

1. Carver, George. *Periodical Essays of the Eighteenth Century*. Books for Libraries P, 1970.
2. Humphreys, Arthur Raleigh. *Steele, Addison and Their Periodical Essays*. Liverpool U Press, 2005.

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1. Carver, George.Periodical Essays of the Eighteenth Century. Libraries Press, 1970.
2. M. G, Segar.,ed. *Essays from Eighteenth-Century Periodicals*. Redux Books, 1947.

Self Assessment Questions and Answers

1. Who authored The School for Scandal?

ANSWER: Richard Brinsley Sheridan

2. Which diary gives an intimate account of Restoration society?

ANSWER: Samuel Pepys's Diary

3. Which act in 1707 unified England and Scotland?

ANSWER: The Act of Union

4. Which poem by Pope is considered a mock-epic?

ANSWER: The Rape of the Lock

5. Who became James I of England in 1603, uniting the crowns of Scotland and England?

ANSWER: James VI of Scotland

6. Which essay periodical shaped 18th-century public opinion?

ANSWER: The Spectator

7. Which epic by Milton aimed to 'justify the ways of God to men'?

ANSWER: Paradise Lost

8. Which satirical allegory did Dryden write based on a biblical revolt?

ANSWER: Absalom and Achitophel

9. Who was the first Hanoverian monarch of Britain?

ANSWER: George I

10. In which year was Charles I executed?

ANSWER: 1649

11. Which two political parties emerged during the Exclusion Crisis?

ANSWER: Whigs and Tories

12. Who were known as Cavalier poets?

ANSWER: Robert Herrick, Thomas Carew, Richard Lovelace, John Suckling

13. Which act formalised Parliamentary supremacy after 1688?

ANSWER: The Bill of Rights (1689)

14. Which poet wrote "To His Coy Mistress"?

ANSWER: Andrew Marvell

15. Which poet's The Temple celebrates Christian life?

ANSWER: George Herbert

16. Which Enlightenment thinker proposed utilitarianism?

ANSWER: Jeremy Bentham

17. Which 1605 conspiracy aimed to blow up Parliament during James I's reign?

ANSWER: The Gunpowder Plot

18. Which Dryden satire mocked Thomas Shadwell?

ANSWER: Mac Flecknoe

19. Which two disasters struck London during Charles II's reign?

ANSWER: The Great Plague (1665) and the Great Fire of London (1666)

20. What was the Instrument of Government under Cromwell?

ANSWER: The constitutional framework for the Protectorate (1653)

21. Which periodicals were founded by Addison and Steele?

ANSWER: The Tatler and The Spectator

22. Who wrote The Rape of the Lock?

ANSWER: Alexander Pope

23. What was John Locke's idea of the mind?

ANSWER: A tabula rasa (blank slate)

24. Which Enlightenment thinker described natural rights and government by consent?

ANSWER: John Locke

25. What does a heroic couplet consist of?

ANSWER: Two rhymed iambic pentameters

26. Who wrote Leviathan in 1651?

ANSWER: Thomas Hobbes

27. Which monarch's reign saw the loss of American colonies?

ANSWER: George III

28. Which philosopher stated "Cogito, ergo sum"?

ANSWER: René Descartes

29. Who among Romantic precursors wrote Pindaric odes?

ANSWER: Thomas Gray

30. Which masque by Milton focused on temptation?

ANSWER: Comus

31. Who wrote "My Love is like a Red Red Rose"?

ANSWER: Robert Burns

32. Which poet is remembered for Ode to Evening?

ANSWER: William Collins

33. Which poet is known for The Task and On the Receipt of My Mother's Picture?

ANSWER: William Cowper

34. Which Act of 1701 secured Protestant succession in Britain?

ANSWER: The Act of Settlement

35. Who was known as the 'Merry Monarch'?

ANSWER: Charles II

36. Which elegy by Milton mourned Edward King?

ANSWER: Lycidas

37. Which satire by Pope attacked the "tribe of dullness"?

ANSWER: The Dunciad

38. Who is regarded as the greatest prose satirist of the 18th century?

ANSWER: Jonathan Swift

39. Which voyage in Gulliver's Travels satirised philosophers?

ANSWER: The voyage to Laputa

40. Which poem by Gray is regarded as the supreme expression of his genius?

ANSWER: Elegy Written in a Country Churchyard

41. Who was Milton's Puritan tutor during childhood?

ANSWER: Thomas Young

42. Which biblical theme dominates Milton's Samson Agonistes?

ANSWER: Blindness, captivity, and spiritual strength

43. Which Enlightenment thinker extended scepticism to religion and morality?

ANSWER: David Hume

44. Which gothic writer authored The Mysteries of Udolpho?

ANSWER: Ann Radcliffe

45. Who wrote The Age of Reason?

ANSWER: Thomas Paine

46. Which act marked the union of the parliaments of England and Scotland?

ANSWER: The Act of Union (1707)

47. Which poet's Songs of Innocence and Experience anticipated Wordsworth?

ANSWER: William Blake

48. Who wrote the satire The Battle of the Books?

ANSWER: Jonathan Swift

49. Which poet's works include Epistle to Dr Arbuthnot and Essay on Man?

ANSWER: Alexander Pope

50. Who wrote Absalom and Achitophel and Mac Flecknoe?

ANSWER: John Dryden

Space for Learner Engagement for Objective Questions

Learners are encouraged to develop objective questions based on the content in the paragraph as a sign of their comprehension of the content. The Learners may reflect on the recap bullets and relate their understanding with the narrative in order to frame objective questions from the given text. The University expects that 1 - 2 questions are developed for each paragraph. The space given below can be used for listing the questions.

1.

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QP CODE: ……

SET-1

Reg. No : …….....
Name : ……...

FIRST SEMESTER MA English Language and Literature
DISCIPLINE CORE - **M21EG03DC MILTON TO THE PRE-ROMANTICS**
(CBCS - PG)
2022-23 - Admission Onwards

Time: 3 Hours Max Marks: 70

Section A

Answer any five of the following questions in two or three sentences each. Each question carries 2 marks.

1. Define the term "Grand Style" in John Milton's poetry.
2. What was the political significance of the Glorious Revolution ?
3. Name two poets from the Caroline Lyricists
4. What is the main theme of Sheridan's *The School for Scandal*?
5. Who wrote *Pamela* and what literary form does it represent?
6. Mention the role of coffeehouses in 18th-century literary culture
7. What is the rhyme scheme used in Alexander Pope's *Rape of the Lock*?
8. Briefly describe the character of Joseph Surface in Sheridan's play

(2×5=10)

Section B

Answer any six of the following questions in half a page each. Each question carries 5 marks.

9. Discuss the characteristics and themes of the Augustan Age in poetry with reference to Pope.
10. Analyse the use of satire and mock-epic style in John Dryden's poetry.
11. Explain the significance of Steele's *The Spectator Club.*
12. Describe the major themes in William Blake's poems *The Lamb* and *The Tyger*
13. Examine the role of Restoration comedy in reflecting 18th-century English society.
14. Analyse the narrative style and themes in Daniel Defoe's *Robinson Crusoe*.

15. Explain how Samuel Johnson's essay "On Procrastination"addresses human psychology and morality.

16. Outline the characteristics of sentimental comedy and contrast it with Sheridan's anti-sentimental approach

17. In Swift's "The Battle of the Books," how does the portrayal of ancient and modern authors reflect Enlightenment debates?

18. Briefly explain the Age of Sensibility and its impact on poetry

(5×6=30)

Section C

Answer any two of the following questions in four pages each. Each question carries 15 marks.

19. Critically examine the major literary elements Shakespeare employs in his tragedies "Paradise Lost justifies the ways of God to men." Discuss Milton's theological and poetic methods in support of this statement

20. Discuss the social satire present in Sheridan's *The School for Scandal*

21. Discuss the rise and transformation of the English novel in the eighteenth century.

22. Evaluate Crusoe's interactions with indigenous peoples in *Robinson Crusoe* and their reflection of colonial ideology.

(15×2=30)

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SREENARAYANAGURU OPEN UNIVERSITY

SET-2

QP CODE: ……

Reg. No : …….....
Name : ……...

FIRST SEMESTER MA English Language and Literature
DISCIPLINE CORE - **M21EG03DC MILTON TO THE PRE-ROMANTICS**
(CBCS - PG)
2022-23 - Admission Onwards

Time: 3 Hours Max Marks: 70

Section A

Answer any five of the following questions in two or three sentences each. Each question carries 2 marks.

1. What is the significance of the Puritan Movement in 17th-century England?
2. Define heroic couplet and name a poet associated with it.
3. Mention two dramatists associated with Restoration comedy.
4. What are the major themes of Robert Burns' poetry?
5. Identify Jonathan Swift's *Battle of the Books* as a satire.
6. Briefly explain the role of clubs in 18th-century literary culture
7. Who is Sir Roger de Coverley in The Spectator Club essays, and what does he represent?
8. Describe the central conflict in Richardson's *Pamela*.

(2×5=10)

Section B

Answer any six of the following questions in half a page each. Each question carries 5 marks.

9. Analyse the influence of the Enlightenment on literary forms and themes in the 18th century.
10. Discuss the grand style and epic elements in Milton's poetry.
11. Explain the thematic contrast in William Blake's *Songs of Innocence and Experience.*
12. Describe the features of sentimental comedy with examples.
13. Discuss the socio-cultural relevance of Addison and Steele's periodicals.
14. Evaluate the treatment of individualism and faith in *Robinson Crusoe*.

15. Outline the narrative techniques used by Samuel Richardson in *Pamela*.

16. How does Addison's essay "Sir Roger at Home" use domestic detail to comment on national character ?

17. Examine the use of irony and social criticism in Sheridan's *The School for Scandal*

18. Critically evaluate the impact of coffeehouse culture on literature and society

(5×6=30)

Section C

Answer any two of the following questions in four pages each. Each question carries 15 marks.

19. Critically analyse the satire in John Dryden's *Mac Fleckoe* with particular reference to its use of the mock-heroic form and its critique of Thomas Shadwell's poetic abilities

20. Discuss the innovations and themes in Pre-Romantic poetry focusing on poets like Blake and Burns.

21. Discuss Richardson's *Pamela* as an epistolary novel.

22. Describe the composition of The Spectator Club and explain how its members represent different facets of English society in the early eighteenth century.

(15×2=30)

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സർവ്വകലാശാലാഗീതം

വിദ്യയാൽ സ്വതന്ത്രരാകണം
വിശ്വപൗരരായി മാറണം
ഗ്രഹപ്രസാദമായ് വിളങ്ങണം
ഗുരുപ്രകാശമേ നയിക്കണേ

കൂരിരുട്ടിൽ നിന്നു ഞങ്ങളെ
സൂര്യവീഥിയിൽ തെളിക്കണം
സ്നേഹദീപ്തിയായ്വിളങ്ങണം
നീതിവൈജയന്തി പാറണം

ശാസ്ത്രവ്യാപ്തിയെന്നുമേകണം
ജാതിഭേദമാകെ മാറണം
ബോധരശ്മിയിൽ തിളങ്ങുവാൻ
ജ്ഞാനകേന്ദ്രമേ ജ്വലിക്കണേ

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DON'T LET IT BE TOO LATE

SAY NO TO DRUGS

LOVE YOURSELF AND ALWAYS BE HEALTHY

SREENARAYANAGURU OPEN UNIVERSITY

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The State University for Education, Training and Research in Blended Format, Kerala

MILTON TO THE PRE-ROMANTICS

COURSE CODE : M21EG03DC

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