SREENARAYANAGURU
OPEN UNIVERSITY

Milton to the Pre-Romantics

Postgraduate Programme in English Language & Literature



SELF LEARNING MATERIAL

COURSE CODE: M21EG03DC

SREENARAYANAGURU OPEN UNIVERSITY

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

Vision

To increase access of potential learners of all categories to higher education, research and training, and ensure equity through delivery of high quality processes and outcomes fostering inclusive educational empowerment for social advancement.

Mission

To be benchmarked as a model for conservation and dissemination of knowledge and skill on blended and virtual mode in education, training and research for normal, continuing, and adult learners.

Pathway

Access and Quality define Equity.

Milton to the Pre-Romantics

Course Code: M21EG03DC

Semester-I

Master of Arts
English Language and Literature
Self Learning Material

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Documentation

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Message from Vice Chancellor

Dear

I greet all of you with deep delight and great excitement. I welcome you to the Sreenarayanaguru Open University.

Sreenarayanaguru Open University was established in September 2020 as a state initiative for fostering higher education in open and distance mode. We shaped our dreams through a pathway defined by a dictum 'access and quality define equity'. It provides all reasons to us for the celebration of quality in the process of education. I am overwhelmed to let you know that we have resolved not to become ourselves a reason or cause a reason for the dissemination of inferior education. It sets the pace as well as the destination. The name of the University centres around the aura of Sreenarayanaguru, the great renaissance thinker of modern India.

Sreenarayanaguru Open University rests on the practical framework of the popularly known ''blended format''. Learner on distance mode obviously has limitations in getting exposed to the full potential of classroom learning experience. Our pedagogical basket has three entities viz Self Learning Material, Classroom Counselling and Virtual Modes. This combination is expected to provide high voltage in learning as well as teaching experiences. Care has been taken to ensure quality endeavours across all the entities. The PG programme in English Language and Literature is benchmarked with similar programmes of other state universities in Kerala. We assure you that the university student support services will closely stay with you for the redressal of your grievances during your studentship.

The University is committed to provide you stimulating learning experience. The Self Learning Materials have been drawn up with a very clear prescription. It recognizes the autonomy of an adult learner and a journey through the treasures of the curriculum structured with provisions for interactive learning, interrogative reflections on the content and didactic discussion through illustrative scenarios. The University takes a strong position that the learner is to be engaged in a dialogue with the content and the materials are shaped to elicit reflections in the form of questions. The questions of the learner are considered to be the vital milestones in the pedagogy of the system of the University as well as the trajectory of the learner's progression. I would like to request you to bestow your personal attention in generating questions after having an intense dialogue with the content, as it has connection with the internal assessment.

Feel free to write to us about anything that seems relevant regarding the academic programme.

Wish you the best.



Regards,

Dr. P.M. Mubarak Pasha

21.11.2022

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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

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

- gain insight into the political, social and cultural history of England from the age of Milton to the Pre-Romantics
- become familiar with the literature of the period
- study the new genres and their literary features
- become conversant with the conflicts, new trends and values in the socio-political affairs that led to the fall of the monarchy

Background

The Stuart Age of British history lasted from 1603 to 1714 during the dynasty of the House of Stuarts. The Stuart kings of England are James VI (1566-1625), Charles I (1600-1649), Charles II (1660-1685), James II (1685-1688), William III (1689-1702), Mary (1689-1694) and Anne (1702-1714). From 1603 to 1714, the Stuart dynasty ruled over England and Scotland. During this time, the Court culture flourished, but there was also significant upheaval and instability due to plague, fire, and war. Radical politics and heated religious discourse dominated the period.

Keywords

English Civil Wars, Restoration, Enlightenment, French Revolution

Discussion

1.1.1 James VI

- Accession of James 1

James VI of Scotland became James I of England in 1603. He firmly believed in the Divine Right of Kings. The accession of James brought two blessings to England- the end of the Elizabethan war with Spain and the union of the kingdoms of England and Scotland.

- Publication of the Authorised Version of the Bible

The rise of Protestantism was a significant issue in the seventeenth century. The Anglican settlement made by Queen Elizabeth had endured a long way. The position of Puritans within the Church of England and the Roman Catholics outside it gave rise to conflicts. However, King James appointed a committee to make a new translation of the Bible. In 1611, the Authorised Version of the Bible was published.

- Gun-Powder plot

James I alienated the Puritans. He refused to give livelihood to three hundred Puritan clergy. Seeing that the number of Catholics was more significant than supposed, the King, ordered all Catholic priests to quit the country. The Catholics rebelled and the famous Gun-Powder plot was hatched. Robert Catesby, a Midland squire, was the originator of the Gunpowder plot. Their aim was to blow up the houses of the parliament. The council suspected the use of gunpowder. Guy Fawkes, the sentinel who was kept to watch over the barrels of gunpowder, was caught and hanged, and Catesby was slain. This led to the impression that every Catholic was a traitor and every Jesuit a murderer.

- Signs of revolution

The reign of James I did not witness a revolution. However, the period was noted for the slackening of the bonds between the ruler and the ruled, which is often the precursor of revolutions.

1.1.2 Charles I (1625-1649)

- Strife between the Crown and the Parliament

The great struggle between the Crown and the Parliament began during the reign of his father, James I, and it ended in the reign of Charles I. Like James I, Charles I also believed in the Divine Right of Kings. He also showed hostility to the Puritans. He dissolved the Parliament in 1626 and began to rule without the help of the Parliament. William Laud became the advisor of the king. He controlled Puritan conventicles with a firm hand. He kept a close watch

on the press and imposed fines on many Puritan speakers and authors. During 1629-1640, thousands of Puritans emigrated to America.

With the meeting of the Long Parliament in November 1640, the great days of the English monarchy ended. Among the number of acts passed by Parliament, one act was that the parliament could not be dissolved without its own consent. Moreover, the ship money and other arbitrary forms of taxation issued by the King were declared illegal by the Parliament. These abolitions and changes brought in 1641 were the constructive bases of the Puritan Revolution.

- End of English monarchy

In 1642, there was a series of civil wars between Parliamentarians and Royalists or Cavaliers. The first English Civil War between Royalists and Parliamentarians was fought over the issue of governance and religious strife, and it occurred between 1642 and 1646. In 1647, Oliver Cromwell placed a treaty known as Heads of the Proposals before the King. By this treaty, Charles was to be dethroned as the head of the Government. Thus, the Second Civil War broke out with the significant involvement of the Scots.

- The breakout of Civil Wars

The second civil war extended from 1648 to 1649, and Charles fled from the city of London. The first civil war ended with a complete victory for the Parliament. Charles was put on trial, found guilty and sentenced to death on 30th January 1649 at Whitehall.

- Death of Charles 1

1.1.2.1 The Commonwealth Period 1649-1660 / The Puritan Interregnum

The new government was set up in 1649 and it consisted of a Council of State and the Parliament. The new Council of State comprised 41 members of which 30 members were from the Parliament.

- Formation of the new government

Before the end of the Anglo-Dutch war fought between the Dutch Republic and England in the 17th and 18th centuries, the Army had demanded the dismissal of the Rump Parliament and the election of a new Parliament. A nominal Parliament took the place of the Rump. The Army officers, then, decided to make a new scheme for the government. They drew up the instrument of government which set up a new monarchy, with Oliver Cromwell as the monarch, in 1653. Cromwell took up the title Lord Protector, and power was divided among the Lord Protector, the Council and the Parliament.

- Division of power between Lord Protector, the Council and the Parliament

- Third Civil War and formation of Protectorate Parliament

The Roundhead victory in 1648, followed by the killing of the King, caused a revulsion of feeling against the Puritans. Scotland refused to recognise the new regime and prepared to welcome Charles II from Holland. This revulsion led to the third Civil War in England (1649-51) between the supporters of Charles II and the Rump Parliament. But the Puritan parliamentary rule continued for a few years despite the opposition put forward by the Royalists. Cromwell's position was unique in English history. He divided England into twelve districts, each ruled by one of his Major Generals. The Protectorate Parliament included members from England, Scotland and Ireland, offering the British Isles the initial steps of unity for the first time in history.

- Reformations by the Protector

The Protector introduced reforms on national morals and manners. He issued ordinances against drunkenness, duelling, cock-fighting, bear baiting, and even horse racing. The Long Parliament closed the theatres and enforced the puritan sabbath by law. The state Church admitted clergy of the three main puritan sects- Presbyterian, Independent and Baptist.

- Steps to form a new parliament

Richard, the son of Oliver Cromwell, became the new successor in 1658. By 1659, the country was dangerously nearing monarchy. There was a general demand for a new parliament; hence the Long Parliament held from 1640 was finally dissolved.

- Charles II and the Declaration of Breda

Elections were held, and a new parliament known as the Convention was assembled. The Convention parliament voted for the return of the old constitution - King, Lords, the Commons and the old laws. Charles II signed the Declaration of Breda and agreed to return and assume the throne. Thus, Charles II assumed the throne in 1660.

- New ruling nature of the monarchy

Yet the Puritans had left their mark on England forever. Though the monarchy was restored, the arbitrary spirit of the old monarchy perished with Charles I. Cromwell believed, as Erasmus and Thomas More have taught, that the rulers have a responsibility towards their subjects.

Declaration of Breda was a proclamation by Charles II to offer a general pardon for the crimes committed during the English Civil war by those who recognise him as the lawful king.

1.1.3 Charles II (1660-1685): The Age of Restoration

- The rule of Charles II

Charles II was a foreigner in his appearance and manners. The noticeable fact to be mentioned about his rule is that his reign led to the restoration of the English monarchy after the Commonwealth period. Also, the Anglo-Dutch war occurred during the period.

- The marriage of William of Orange and its aftermath

The marriage of William of Orange and Mary was in 1677. This marriage was destined to change the course of English history, and it paved the way for the Dutch William to succeed to the throne. The last ten years of the reign of Charles II was one of the most complicated periods in the political history of England as it was then the two great political parties, Whigs and Tories, were formed. Charles II died a natural death in 1685.

1.1.4 James II

- Accession of James II and reinstating of the Roman Catholic Church

James, the Duke of York, succeeded to the throne as James II. James tried to reinstate the Roman Catholic church in England. He appointed Catholics in all key positions. By 1687, James alarmed the Whigs and the Tories. Hence, the circumstances arose for the possibility of deposing James in favour of his elder daughter Mary. Mary was herself a Protestant and the wife of the great Protestant leader in Europe - William of Orange.

- Sovereignty of William and Mary

In May 1688, James reissued his Declaration of Indulgence and gave orders that it should be read in all churches. In July, Mary of Madonna, James's Second wife, gave birth to a son. Then arose the need to summon the aid of the Prince of Orange. The invitation to William was signed by the leaders of the Whig and Tory. In November 1688, William set sail from Holland. James II fled to France. The Council of Peers assumed the government. They invited William to cooperate with them in calling a free parliament. The Convention met in January 1689, William and Mary were proclaimed King and Queen and were given joint sovereignty. It was later called the Glorious Revolution.

- Impacts of Glorious Revolution

The Glorious Revolution has, thus, been an accomplishment without bloodshed and it heralded a new era in English history. It ended the Divine Right rule of the Kings in England and the new rulers had to promise to rule with the advice of the Parliament.

- Failure of the rule of James I

Thus, the long struggle, which began when James I met his Puritan opponents in Parliament and Hampton court, ended when James II was driven from the throne. His failure was due to an ill-judged attempt to rule England by neglecting the wishes of the subjects and subverting the laws and religious practices of the country.

1.1.5 Queen Anne

- End of Protestant Stuart rule

The Catholic side of the House of Stuart continued to press their claims to the throne. The Stuart sympathisers became known as the Jacobites. In 1694, Queen Mary died childless and the throne was occupied by William III. Mary's sister, Anne, became the last remaining Protestant Stuart. Anne was unable to produce an heir. William died in 1702.

- The Act of Settlement bill

In 1701, the Parliament passed the Act of Settlement, so that the English monarchy would pass to the family of Sophia, Duchess of Hanover (Germany), provided the descendant was Protestant and not married to a Catholic. In 1702, Anne became the queen of England.

- Events that led to the formation of Great Britain

Sophia's succession led to another conflict between the kingdoms. In 1703, Scotland declared its own right to name its monarch, and it preferred the name of James Francis Edward Stuart, son of James III. But, several years of parliamentary negotiations, bribery and even some massing of troops on the English-Scottish border resulted in the Act of Union (1707), whereby England and Scotland merged parliaments, with the Scottish to be represented from London. It is this new combination (union) of England, Wales and Scotland that made Britain known as Great Britain.

- Reign of George

In 1714, Queen Anne died and George, Prince of Hanover and the son of Sophia, was crowned king of Great Britain and Ireland. He was 57 in the line genealogically and spoke only German. The Tories led a demonstration against George's arrival.

- End of Restoration period

In 1745, Charles Stuart arrived in Scotland to mount another Jacobite rebellion. But it failed and the voice of Jacobites was lost permanently. The question of the English monarchy had finally been settled. The period of Restoration ended with the accession of Charles II. The Stuart rule in England ended with Queen Anne.

1.1.6 Social and Cultural History

- The Flourishing of Great Britain

Great Britain became a well-organised nation, and it developed commercially in Europe. The combination of modern science and consumer culture contributed to a wide range of material benefits for the nation.

- Influence of the period of Augustus in 18th century England

The early decades of the eighteenth century belong to Augustan Age as it facilitated comparison between 18th-century England and the early Roman Empire when authors such as Horace, Ovid and Virgil wrote some of Rome's important works under the rule of Augustus.

- Modernity and Urbanisation of England

The circulation of information in periodicals and in public spaces such as the coffee houses gave 18th century England a representative face of modernity. England became increasingly urban during the period. Agriculture declined, tenant farming increased and people began to move to the urban areas. Between 1700 and 1800, England's population nearly doubled. The country became increasingly urbanised, the cities also increased in size and became more closely connected by transportation system as well.

- Modern institutions and constructions

With urbanisation came other institutions of modernity like libraries, hospitals, schools and museums. The British Museum was established during the reign of William and Mary. There were grand constructions that rivalled the grandness and aesthetics of the best Grecian architecture.

- Setting of libraries, clubs and coffee houses

With the development of trade and commerce in England, the number of wealthy people increased. With the rise of the middle class, there was a gradual increase in the educated number of people. With the rise of schools and libraries, the reading public also increased. This also caused the development of Clubs and Coffee Houses in England in the 18th century. The interest of people in politics and the popularity of the periodical essays spoke about the moral temperament of the age. Clubs and coffee houses were the centres of political discussion and debates.

1.1.7 The Enlightenment

- Intellectual and philosophical movement of the age

The age of Enlightenment saw intellectual and philosophical movements that dominated the world of ideas in Europe in the 17th and 18th centuries. Historians place the age between the Glorious Revolution and the French Revolution. It witnessed reforms and the possibility

of a better world. The ideas concerning God, reason, nature and humanity were synthesised into a worldview that gained wide assent in the west. The age instigated revolutionary developments in art, philosophy and politics.

- The spread of knowledge, freedom and happiness

The Enlightenment age celebrated reason. The concept of rational humanity of the age encouraged the spread of knowledge, freedom and happiness. Human reason can be used to combat ignorance, superstition and tyranny and to build a better world. The principal targets of the age were religion and the domination of society by a hereditary aristocracy.

- Contributions of Thomas Aquinas

Though the intellectual movement is usually associated with the 18th century, its roots go further. It can be traced back to the 13th century with the revival of Aristotelian logic by Thomas Aquinas. He was the greatest of scholastic philosophers. He produced a comprehensive synthesis of Christian philosophy and Aristotelian philosophy that influenced Roman Catholic doctrine for centuries. But unfortunately, for the Catholic church, the tools of logic could not be confined to the uses it preferred.

- Rise of humanism and the exercise of intellectual powers

The roots can be further located in the idea of humanism spread during the Renaissance with its emphasis on the study of classical literature. Humanists were a group of thinkers that emerged in Italy and France during the 14th and 15th centuries, and they were practising Catholics. Humanists argued that the proper worship of God is the worship of his creation. They celebrated the human race and its capacities and believed that humans are like God having creative powers. According to humanists, the exercise of intellectual powers of the painter, architect, musician and scholar is part of fulfilling divine purposes. Europeans believed that tradition should be used to promote change. By cleaning and sharpening the tools of antiquity, they could reshape their own time.

- Flourishing of experimental science and mathematical reasoning

Humanism bred the experimental science of Francis Bacon, Nicholas Copernicus and Galileo, and the mathematical investigations of Rene Descartes, Gottfried Wilhelm Leibniz and Isaac Newton. They seemingly proved that only mathematical reasoning was needed to establish truth.

The Protestant Reformation and its antipathy towards religious dogmas led to religious enlightenment. The

- Religious enlightenment and Rene Descartes' contributions

important developments of the age were the rational and empirical methods of discovering the truth introduced by the scientific revolution. Rene Descartes attempted to use reason much more rigorously in the 17th century. He tried to begin with a blank slate or the bare minimum knowledge, that is, the knowledge of one's own existence: "I think; therefore I am."

- John Locke and his conceiving of the human mind as a *tabula rasa*

The enlightenment in Great Britain was fostered by the thinkers like John Locke, David Hume, Thomas Lodge, Jeremy Bentham and others. Locke conceived the human mind as a *tabula rasa*, a blank state in which experiences are instilled gradually by moulding the character of an individual in accordance with his or her own experience. He also claims that the supposed innate elements of one's character, such as goodness and evil, have no base or reality.

- Thomas Hobbes and his ideas about human being

Thomas Hobbes portrayed humans as rational creatures and their progress depended on their experience of either pleasure or pain. The idea of humans as neither good nor bad but who are solely interested in the maximisation of their own pleasure is a radical statement which triggered political thoughts.

- The Enlightenment and its reflections

David Hume was a Scottish philosopher. He is known for his philosophical empiricism and naturalism. Jeremy Bentham is the founder of modern utilitarianism. The Enlightenment in America was led by figures like Thomas Jefferson, George Washington and Thomas Paine. In Germany, it was boosted by Emanuel Kant. His intellectual teachings enlightened the people and helped awaken them from serfdom and intellectual bondage that had chained them for centuries. Enlightenment was a historical movement that swept Europe during the 18th century and its ideas and concepts led to revolutionary thoughts and notions of human rights across the world.

1.1.8 French Revolution

- The Age of the Enlightened Despots

The 18th century is sometimes referred to as the Age of the Enlightened Despots as it witnessed the despotic rule of the Tsars of Russia and the French monarchy under Louis XIV.

There were great social inequalities in France during the 18th century. The nobles had lost all political powers but

they enjoyed social privileges. The peasants were taxed heavily. It was not the miseries of the peasants alone that led to the revolution, but the bourgeoisie which included the tradesmen, lawyers, doctors and all reading men of the community who definitely yearned for a change. Voltaire, a revolutionary, spoke against the monstrous laws imposed by the Government and attacked the Catholic church for persecuting men in the name of religion. Voltaire's writings and the work of Jean Jacques Rousseau helped awaken social consciousness. In Rousseau's book *The Social Contract*, he pinpointed that rulers have a duty towards their subjects. Their writings influenced many to support the revolution.

- Social inequalities in France and Voltaire's and Rousseau's resistance

The financial position of France was not stable. The Maritime war with Britain crippled the financial stability of the country. So, in order to overcome the financial difficulties, and to impose a heavy tax upon the nobles, Louis XVI summoned the States Generals after 175 years.

- Rise of financial instability

The Tiers of the realm insisted on a new government and it ended with the storming of the Bastille prison in 1789. The French drew upon the Declaration of the Rights of Man in August 1789. In the Revolution of 1792, Louis XVI surrendered and the monarchy was finally abolished. The watchwords of the revolution - Liberty, Equality and Fraternity inspired the French. A new Government named the Directory, which included five Directors and two Assemblies, ruled France for five years.

- Formation of Directory

1.1.8.1 Impact of the French Revolution in England

In England, many people were delighted by the news of the French Revolution. The writers of the age were influenced by the revolution. Burke's reflections on the French Revolution struck a different note as he warned of military despotism in France. Tom Paine's *Rights of Man* was a reply to the work of Burke and he was a strong supporter of the American and French revolutions.

- Burke's warning and Tom Paine's reply

1.1.9 Age of Sensibility

The period between 1745 and 1785 is referred to as the Age of Sensibility or the Age of Dr Johnson. The age was noted for the works of Dr Johnson and his intellectual circle. His works were influenced by neoclassicism and enlightenment.

- Dr Johnson's contributions to the Age of Sensibility

Summarised Overview

Stuart's rule started with James VI in 1566. He firmly believed in the Divine Rights of Kings. Some major events of this age were the translation of the Authorised Version of the Bible and the Gunpowder plot. Charles I (1600-1649) believed in the Divine right rule of Kings and he showed hostility towards Puritans. The age also witnessed the three Civil wars and the Puritan Interregnum. Oliver Cromwell became the Lord Protector. The restoration of the English monarchy occurred during the rule of Charles II (1660-1685). The age also witnessed the Act of Union in 1707 and the crowning of the Prince of Hanover as the King of Great Britain and Ireland. There was the rise of Clubs and Coffee houses and the spread of Enlightenment ideals during the age.

Assignments

1. What are the major features of the social and cultural history of English in the 18th century?
2. What are the characteristics of the Enlightenment in England?
3. Explain the French Revolution and its impact on England.
4. Narrate the incidents that led to three Civil Wars in England.

Suggested Readings

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4. Tim Harris. "Revisiting the Causes of the English Civil War." *Huntington Library Quarterly*, vol. 78, no. 4, 2015, pp. 615–35. *JSTOR*, http://www.jstor.org/stable/10.1525/hlq.2015.78.4.615.

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2. Choudhury, Bibhash. *English Social and Cultural History: An Introductory Guide and Glossary*. PHI, 2005.
3. Laprade, William Thomas. *England and the French Revolution 1789-1797*. Wentworth, 1909.
4. Pikó, Lauren. *Milton Keynes in British Culture: Imagining England*. Taylor, 2019.

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.

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.

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1.

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.

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.

- Gay's *The Beggar's Opera*

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.*

- Key figures in Restoration drama

1.3.4 Sentimental Comedy

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*

- Sentimental comedies and their plots.

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.

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1.

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.

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.

- Reasons for the wide acceptance of periodicals.

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 contributions

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.

- Steel's prose style

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.

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.

- Satirical tone in Swift's essays

1.4.6 Dr Johnson and his Circle

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.

- Dr johnson's circle of prominent historians.

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 Watural 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. 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.

▶ Key figures of the 18th century English novels

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 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.

▶ Realism in Fielding's novels

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 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.

- Laurence's sentimental and impressionist tones

▶ 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

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.

▶ Key women writers of the period

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.

▶ Haywood's stand for women's rights

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.

▶ Heywood's key fictional works

- 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 Readings

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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.

1.

Poetry and Drama

BLOCK-02

Block Content

Unit 1 Poetry (Detailed)
Unit 2 Drama (Detailed)
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

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

The Puritans were aided in establishing the Commonwealth by the Civil War. During the Protectorate, Oliver Cromwell was able to organize a military dictatorship that lasted until 1660, when the monarchy was restored. The Parliamentarians were victorious in 1651, bringing the war to a close. While Charles I was put to death, his son, Charles II, fled to France. Under Oliver Cromwell's personal rule, monarchical rule was replaced first with the Commonwealth of England (1649–53) and then with a Protectorate (1653-59). For the Puritans, the establishment of a Protectorate under Cromwell was a victory. The Puritans, according to WH Hudson, had "strict rules regarding life and conduct" and an "uncompromising spirit" that sought to "confine literature within the circumscribed field of its own particular interests."

▶ Oliver Cromwell as Lord Protector

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

2.4.1 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 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.

- Metaphysical poetry: full of conceits, exaggerations, quibbling

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

2.4.2 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.

2.4.3 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

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.

- Poems are sublime and grand

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*.

- Admired beauty in all its forms

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

- Milton's poetry contains strong Puritanism.

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.

Definition & Etymology of Epic

The word 'Epic' is derived from the Greek word *epikos*, which means "word, song, or speech." An epic is a long poem written in verse that explores a significant theme in the most elegant style and language possible about the deeds of a traditional or historical hero or heroes; like the *Iliad* or the *Odyssey*. An epic is very similar to a ballad in almost every way, but the length is the only thing that distinguishes epic from a ballad. A ballad is a short story told in verse, whereas an epic is a long story told in verse. The sweep and magnitude of an epic is its first and most distinguishing feature. Every single epic is usually broken down into multiple books. Homer's epics, for example, are divided into twenty-four books. In the same way, John Milton's *Paradise Lost* is divided into twelve parts. Another essential feature of an epic is that it focuses on the accomplishments of a historical or traditional hero, as well as a national or international figure. Every epic extols the bravery, deeds, character, and personality of a person with extraordinary physical

and mental abilities. An epic's use of exaggeration is also crucial. The poet employs hyperbole to highlight a hero's abilities. Every epic must include supernatural elements, to inspire awe and wonder. Every epic contains gods, demons, angels, fairies, and supernatural forces. The supernatural is prevalent in Milton's *Paradise Lost*, Homer's *Iliad*, *Beowulf*, and Spenser's *The Faerie Queene.*

▶ Elegant style

An epic's morality is one of its most important characteristics. The poet's primary goal in writing an epic is to teach his readers a moral lesson. *Paradise Lost* by John Milton, for example, is a perfect example of this. Through the story of Adam, the poet wishes to justify God's ways to man. This is the epic's most didactic theme. Each epic has a sublime, elegant, and universally significant theme. It is concerned with the entire human race. Another important aspect of an epic is its invocation to the Muse. At the start of the epic, the poet asks the Muse for assistance in writing his epic. Every epic has a lofty, grand, and elegant diction. No common, or colloquial language is used. The poet tries to describe the events in sublime words. Another feature of an epic is the use of epic simile. A far-fetched comparison between two objects that runs through many lines to describe the hero's valour, bravery, and gigantic stature is known as an epic simile. It's also known as the Homeric simile.

▶ Use of an epic simile

2.4.5 Types of Epics

Folk Epic

A folk epic is an ancient epic that was told orally. With the passage of time, one author or a group of authors attempted to record them in writing. As a result, the exact authorship of the folk epics is unknown. The folk epic is primarily spoken, whereas the literary epic is written. The author of the literary epic is a well-known personality, while the author of the folk epic may be a common man.

▶ Folk epic- told orally

Literary Epic

The Literary epic is a written version of a folk epic that follows the same rules as the folk epic. Unlike the folk epics, which were passed down through oral tradition, literary epics were written. When compared to folk epics, literary epics are more polished, coherent, and compact

- Polished and condensed style

in structure and style. Literary epics are the result of a poet's brilliance. That is why, from a literary standpoint, they are extremely important.

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.

- The scientific and astronomical undertones

Paradise Lost Summary and Analysis

OF Mans First Disobedience, and the Fruit
Of that Forbidden Tree, whose mortal tast
Brought Death into the World, and all our woe,
With loss of Eden, till one greater Man
Restore us, and regain the blissful Seat,
Sing Heav'nly Muse, that on the secret top

Of Oreb, or of Sinai, didst inspire
That Shepherd, who first taught the chosen Seed,
In the Beginning how the Heav'ns and Earth
Rose out of Chaos: or if Sion Hill
Delight thee more, and Siloa's brook that flow'd
Fast by the Oracle of God; I thence
Invoke thy aid to my adventrous Song,
That with no middle flight intends to soar
Above th' Aonian Mount, while it pursues
Things unattempted yet in Prose or Rhime.
And chiefly Thou, O Spirit, that dost prefer
Before all Temples th' upright heart and pure,
Instruct me, for Thou know'st; Thou from the first
Wast present, and with mighty wings outspread
Dove-like satst brooding on the vast Abyss
And mad'st it pregnant: What in me is dark
Illumin, what is low raise and support;
That to the highth of this great Argument
I may assert Eternal Providence,
And justifie the wayes of God to men.

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

▶ Invocation to the muse

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 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.

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

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.

Lines 27-83

- Battle between God, Satan and evil.

Say first, for Heav'n hides nothing from thy view
Nor the deep Tract of Hell, say first what cause
Mov'd our Grand Parents in that happy State,
Favour'd of Heav'n so highly, to fall off
From thir Creator, and transgress his Will
For one restraint, Lords of the World besides?
Who first seduc'd them to that foul revolt?
Th' infernal Serpent; he it was, whose guile
Stird up with Envy and Revenge, deceiv'd
The Mother of Mankind, what time his Pride
Had cast him out from Heav'n, with all his Host
Of Rebel Angels, by whose aid aspiring
To set himself in Glory above his Peers,
He trusted to have equal'd the most High,
If he oppos'd; and with ambitious aim
Against the Throne and Monarchy of God
Rais'd impious War in Heav'n and Battel proud
With vain attempt. Him the Almighty Power
Hurld headlong flaming from th' Ethereal Skie
With hideous ruine and combustion down
To bottomless perdition, there to dwell
In Adamantine Chains and penal Fire,
Who durst defie th' Omnipotent to Arms.
Nine times the Space that measures Day and Night
To mortal men, he with his horrid crew
Lay vanquisht, rowling in the fiery Gulfe
Confounded though immortal: But his doom

Reserv'd him to more wrath; for now the thought
Both of lost happiness and lasting pain
Torments him; round he throws his baleful eyes
That witness'd huge affliction and dismay
Mixt with obdurate pride and stedfast hate:
At once as far as Angels kenn he views
The dismal Situation waste and wilde,
A Dungeon horrible, on all sides round
As one great Furnace flam'd, yet from those flames
No light, but rather darkness visible
Serv'd onely to discover sights of woe,
Regions of sorrow, doleful shades, where peace
And rest can never dwell, hope never comes
That comes to all; but torture without end
Still urges, and a fiery Deluge, fed
With ever-burning Sulphur unconsum'd:
Such place Eternal Justice had prepar'd
For those rebellious, here thir prison ordained
In utter darkness, and thir portion set
As far remov'd from God and light of Heav'n
As from the Center thrice to th' utmost Pole.
O how unlike the place from whence they fell!
There the companions of his fall, o'rewhelm'd
With Floods and Whirlwinds of tempestuous fire,
He soon discerns, and welding by his side
One next himself in power, and next in crime,
Long after known in Palestine, and nam'd
Beelzebub. To whom th' Arch-Enemy,
And thence in Heav'n call'd Satan, with bold words
Breaking the horrid silence thus began. (83)

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 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

- Satan deceived Eve to eat the forbidden fruit

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.

- Lucifer's fall to hell

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, 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

- Satan and his fellow angels lay defeated

"If thou beest he--but O how fallen! how changed
From him who, in the happy realms of light
Clothed with transcendent brightness, didst outshine
Myriads11, though bright!--if he whom mutual league,
United thoughts and counsels, equal hope
And hazard in the glorious enterprise
Joined with me once, now misery hath joined
In equal ruin; into what pit thou seest
From what height fallen: so much the stronger proved
He with his thunder; and till then who knew
The force of those dire arms? Yet not for those,
Nor what the potent Victor in his rage
Can else inflict, do I repent, or change,
Though changed in outward lustre, that fixed mind,
And high disdain from sense of injured merit,
That with the Mightiest raised me to contend,
And to the fierce contentions brought along
Innumerable force of Spirits armed,
That durst dislike his reign, and, me preferring,
His utmost power with adverse power opposed
In dubious battle on the plains of Heaven,
And shook his throne. What though the field be lost?
All is not lost--the unconquerable will,
And study of revenge, immortal hate,
And courage never to submit or yield:
And what is else not to be overcome?
That glory never shall his wrath or might
Extort from me. To bow and sue for grace
With suppliant knee, and deify his power
Who, from the terror of this arm, so late
Doubted his empire--that were low indeed;
That were an ignominy and shame beneath

This downfall; since, by fate, the strength of Gods,
And this empyreal substance, cannot fail;
Since, through experience of this great event,
In arms not worse, in foresight much advanced,
We may with more successful hope resolve
To wage by force or guile eternal war,
Irreconcilable to our grand Foe,
Who now triumphs, and in th' excess of joy
Sole reigning holds the tyranny of Heaven."

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 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.

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

So spake the' Apostate Angel, though in pain,
Vaunting aloud, but rackt with deep despair:
And thus soon his bold Compeer.
O Prince, O Chief of many Throned Powers,
That led the' embattled Seraphim to Warr
Under thy conduct, and in dreadful deeds
Fearless, endangered Heav'ns perpetual King;
And put to proof his high Supremacy,
Whether upheld by strength, or Chance, or Fate,
Too well I see and rue the dire event,
That with sad overthrow and foul defeat
Hath lost us Heav'n, and all this mighty Host
In horrible destruction laid thus low,
As far as Gods and Heav'nly Essences
Can perish: for the mind and spirit remains
Invincible, and vigor soon returns,
Though all our Glory extinct, and happy state
Here swallowed up in endless misery.
But what if he our Conqueror, (whom I now
Of force believe Almighty, since no less
Then such could have overpowered such force as ours)
Have left us this our spirit and strength intire
Strongly to suffer and support our pains,
That we may so suffice his vengeful ire,
Or do him mightier service as his thralls
By right of Warr, what we're his business be
Here in the heart of Hell to work in Fire,
Or do his Errands in the gloomy Deep;
What can it then avail though yet we feel
Strength undiminished, or eternal being
To undergo eternal punishment?
Whereto with speedy words the' Arch-fiend reply'd.

Lines 125-155

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

- Satan speaks to Beelzebub

Whereto with speedy words th' Arch-fiend reply'd.
Fall'n Cherube, to be weak is miserable
Doing or Suffering: but of this be sure,
To do ought good never will be our task,
But ever to do ill our sole delight, [160]
As being the contrary to his high will
Whom we resist. If then his Providence
Out of our evil seek to bring forth good,
Our labour must be to pervert that end,
And out of good still to find means of evil; [165]
Which oft times may succeed, so as perhaps
Shall grieve him, if I fail not, and disturb
His inmost counsels from thir destind aim.
But see the angry Victor hath recall'd
His Ministers of vengeance and pursuit [170]
Back to the Gates of Heav'n: The Sulphurous Hail
Shot after us in storm, oreblown hath laid
The fiery Surge, that from the Precipice
Of Heav'n receiv'd us falling, and the Thunder,
Wing'd with red Lightning and impetuous rage, [175]
Perhaps hath spent his shafts, and ceases now
To bellow through the vast and boundless Deep.
Let us not slip th' occasion, whether scorn,
Or satiate fury yield it from our Foe.
Seest thou yon dreary Plain, forlorn and wilde, [180]
The seat of desolation, voyd of light,
Save what the glimmering of these livid flames
Casts pale and dreadful? Thither let us tend
From off the tossing of these fiery waves,
There rest, if any rest can harbour there, [185]
And reassembling our afflicted Powers,
Consult how we may henceforth most offend

Our Enemy, our own loss how repair,
How overcome this dire Calamity,
What reinforcement we may gain from Hope, [190]
If not what resolution from despair.

Lines 156-191

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.

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

If not what resolution from despare.
Thus Satan talking to his neerest Mate
With Head up-lift above the wave, and Eyes
That sparkling blaz'd, his other Parts besides
Prone on the Flood, extended long and large [195]
Lay floating many a rood, in bulk as huge
As whom the Fables name of monstrous size,
Titanian, or Earth-born, that warr'd on Jove,
Briareos or Typhon, whom the Den
By ancient Tarsus held, or that Sea-beast [200]
Leviathan, which God of all his works
Created hugest that swim th' Ocean stream:
Him haply slumbring on the Norway foam
The Pilot of some small night-founder'd Skiff,

Deeming some Island, oft, as Sea-men tell, [205]
With fixed Anchor in his skaly rind
Moors by his side under the Lee, while Night
Invests the Sea, and wished Morn delayes:
So stretcht out huge in length the Arch-fiend lay
Chain'd on the burning Lake, nor ever thence [210]
Had ris'n or heav'd his head, but that the will
And high permission of all-ruling Heaven
Left him at large to his own dark designs,
That with reiterated crimes he might
Heap on himself damnation, while he sought [215]
Evil to others, and enrag'd might see
How all his malice serv'd but to bring forth
Infinite goodness, grace and mercy shewn
On Man by him seduc't, but on himself
Treble confusion, wrath and vengeance pour'd. [220]
Forthwith upright he rears from off the Pool
His mighty Stature; on each hand the flames
Drivn backward slope thir pointing spires, and rowld
In billows, leave i'th' midst a horrid Vale.
Then with expanded wings he stears his flight [225]
Aloft, incumbent on the dusky Air
That felt unusual weight, till on dry Land
He lights, if it were Land that ever burn'd
With solid, as the Lake with liquid fire;
And such appear'd in hue, as when the force [230]
Of subterranean wind transports a Hill
Torn from Pelorus, or the shatter'd side
Of thundring Ætna, whose combustible
And fewel'd entrals thence conceiving Fire,
Sublim'd with Mineral fury, aid the Winds, [235]
And leave a singed bottom all involv'd
With stench and smoak: Such resting found the sole
Of unblest feet. Him followed his next Mate,
Both glorying to have scap't the Stygian flood
As Gods, and by thir own recover'd strength, [240]
Not by the sufferance of supernal Power.

Lines-192 - 241

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

- Satan and Beelzebub fly to the dry land

Is this the Region, this the Soil, the Clime,
Said then the lost Arch-Angel, this the seat
That we must change for Heav'n, this mournful gloom
For that celestial light? Be it so, since he [245]
Who now is Sovran can dispose and bid
What shall be right: fardest from him is best
Whom reason hath equald, force hath made supreme
Above his equals. Farewell happy Fields
Where Joy for ever dwells: Hail horrours, hail [250]
Infernal world, and thou profoundest Hell
Receive thy new Possessor: One who brings
A mind not to be chang'd by Place or Time.
The mind is its own place, and in it self
Can make a Heav'n of Hell, a Hell of Heav'n. [255]
What matter where, if I be still the same,
And what I should be, all but less then he
Whom Thunder hath made greater? Here at least
We shall be free; th' Almighty hath not built
Here for his envy, will not drive us hence: [260]
Here we may reign secure, and in my choyce
To reign is worth ambition though in Hell:
Better to reign in Hell, then serve in Heav'n.
But wherefore let we then our faithful friends,

Th' associates and co partners of our loss [265]
Lye thus astonished on the' oblivious Pool,
And call them not to share with us their part
In this unhappy Mansion, or once more
With rallied Arms to try what may be yet
Regaind in Heav'n, or what more lost in Hell? [270]
So Satan spake, and him Beelzebub
Thus answer'd. Leader of those Armies bright,
Which but the' Omnipotent none could have foiled,
If once they hear that voyce, thir liveliest pledge
Of hope in fears and dangers, heard so oft [275]
In worst extremes, and on the perilous edge
Of battle when it rag'd, in all assaults
Thir surest signal, they will soon resume
New courage and revive, though now they lye
Groveling and prostrate on yon Lake of Fire, [280]
As we erewhile, astounded and amaz'd,
No wonder, fall'n such a pernicious highth.
He scarce had ceased when the superiour Fiend
Was moving toward the shoar; his ponderous shield
Ethereal temper, massy, large and round, [285]
Behind him cast; the broad circumference
Hung on his shoulders like the Moon, whose Orb
Through Optic Glass the Tuscan Artist views
At Evening from the top of Fesole,
Or in Valdarno, to descry new Lands, [290]
Rivers or Mountains in her spotty Globe.
His Spear, to equal which the tallest Pine
Hewn on Norwegian hills, to be the Mast
Of some great Ammiral, were but a wand,
He walks with to support uneasy steps [295]
Over the burning Marle, not like those steps
On Heavens Azure, and the torrid Clime
Smote on him sore besides, vaulted with Fire;
Nathless he so endur'd, till on the Beach
Of that inflamed Sea, he stood and call'd [300]

Lines 242-300

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.

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

Lines 300-391

His Legions, Angel Forms, who lay intrans't
Thick as Autumnal Leaves that strow the Brooks
In Vallombrosa, where th' Etrurian shades
High overarch't imbowr; or scatterd sedge
Afloat, when with fierce Winds Orion arm'd [305]
Hath vext the Red-Sea Coast, whose waves orethrew
Busiris and his Memphian Chivalry,
While with perfidious hatred they pursu'd
The Sojourners of Goshen, who beheld
From the safe shore thir floating Carkases [310]
And broken Chariot Wheels, so thick bestrown
Abject and lost lay these, covering the Flood,

Under amazement of thir hideous change.
He call'd so loud, that all the hollow Deep
Of Hell resounded. Princes, Potentates, [315]
Warriers, the Flowr of Heav'n, once yours, now lost,
If such astonishment as this can sieze
Eternal spirits; or have ye chos'n this place
After the toyl of Battel to repose
Your wearied vertue, for the ease you find [320]
To slumber here, as in the Vales of Heav'n?
Or in this abject posture have ye sworn
To adore the Conquerour? who now beholds
Cherube and Seraph rowling in the Flood
With scatter'd Arms and Ensigns, till anon [325]
His swift pursuers from Heav'n Gates discern
Th' advantage, and descending tread us down
Thus drooping, or with linked Thunderbolts
Transfix us to the bottom of this Gulfe.
Awake, arise, or be for ever fall'n. [330]
They heard, and were abasht, and up they sprung
Upon the wing, as when men wont to watch
On duty, sleeping found by whom they dread,
Rouse and bestir themselves ere well awake.
Nor did they not perceave the evil plight [335]
In which they were, or the fierce pains not feel;
Yet to thir Generals Voyce they soon obeyd
Innumerable. As when the potent Rod
Of Amrams Son in Egypts evill day
Wav'd round the Coast, up call'd a pitchy cloud [340]
Of Locusts, warping on the Eastern Wind,
That ore the Realm of impious Pharaoh hung
Like Night, and darken'd all the Land of Nile:
So numberless were those bad Angels seen
Hovering on wing under the Cope of Hell [345]
'Twixt upper, nether, and surrounding Fires;
Till, as a signal giv'n, th' uplifted Spear
Of thir great Sultan waving to direct
Thir course, in even ballance down they light
On the firm brimstone, and fill all the Plain; [350]
A multitude, like which the populous North
Pour'd never from her frozen loyns, to pass
Rhene or the Danaw, when her barbarous Sons

Came like a Deluge on the South, and spread
Beneath Gibralter to the Lybian sands. [355]
Forthwith from every Squadron and each Band
The Heads and Leaders thither hast where stood
Thir great Commander; Godlike shapes and forms
Excelling human, Princely Dignities,
And Powers that earst in Heaven sat on Thrones; [360]
Though of thir Names in heav'nly Records now
Be no memorial blotted out and ras'd
By thir Rebellion, from the Books of Life.
Nor had they yet among the Sons of Eve
Got them new Names, till wandring ore the Earth, [365]
Through Gods high sufferance for the tryal of man,
By falsities and lyes the greatest part
Of Mankind they corrupted to forsake
God thir Creator, and th' invisible
Glory of him that made them, to transform [370]
Oft to the Image of a Brute, adorn'd
With gay Religions full of Pomp and Gold,
And Devils to adore for Deities:
Then were they known to men by various Names,
And various Idols through the Heathen World. [375]
Say, Muse, thir Names then known, who first, who last,
Rous'd from the slumber, on that fiery Couch,
At thir great Emperors call, as next in worth
Came singly where he stood on the bare strand,
While the promiscuous croud stood yet aloof? [380]
The chief were those who from the Pit of Hell
Roaming to seek thir prey on earth, durst fix
Thir Seats long after next the Seat of God,
Thir Altars by his Altar, Gods ador'd
Among the Nations round, and durst abide [385]
Jehovah thundring out of Sion, thron'd
Between the Cherubim; yea, often plac'd
Within his Sanctuary it self thir Shrines,
Abominations; and with cursed things
His holy Rites, and solemn Feasts profan'd, [390]
And with thir darkness durst affront his light.

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. 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 392-466

First Moloch, horrid King besmear'd with blood
Of human sacrifice, and parents tears,
Though for the noyse of Drums and Timbrels loud
Thir childrens cries unheard, that past through fire [395]
To his grim Idol. Him the Ammonite
Worshipt in Rabba and her watry Plain,
In Argob and in Basan, to the stream
Of utmost Arnon. Nor content with such
Audacious neighbourhood, the wisest heart [400]
Of Solomon he led by fraud to build
His Temple right against the Temple of God
On that opprobrious Hill, and made his Grove
The pleasant Vally of Hinnom, Tophet thence
And black Gehenna call'd, the Type of Hell. [405]
Next Chemos, th' obscene dread of Moabs Sons,
From Aroar to Nebo, and the wild
Of Southmost Abarim; in Hesebon
And Horonaim, Seons Realm, beyond
The flowry Dale of Sibma clad with Vines, [410]
And Eleale to th' Asphaltick Pool.
Peor his other Name, when he entic'd
Israel in Sittim on thir march from Nile
To do him wanton rites, which cost them woe.
Yet thence his lustful Orgies he enlarg'd [415]
Even to that Hill of scandal, by the Grove
Of Moloch homicide, lust hard by hate;
Till good Josiah drove them thence to Hell.
With these came they, who from the bordring flood
Of old Euphrates to the Brook that parts [420]
Egypt from Syrian ground, had general Names
Of Baalim and Ashtaroth, those male,
These Feminine. For Spirits when they please
Can either Sex assume, or both; so soft
And uncompounded is thir Essence pure, [425]
Not ti'd or manacl'd with joynt or limb,

Nor founded on the brittle strength of bones,
Like cumbrous flesh; but in what shape they choose
Dilated or condens't, bright or obscure,
Can execute thir aerie purposes, [430]
And works of love or enmity fulfill.
For those the Race of Israel oft forsook
Thir living strength, and unfrequented left
His righteous Altar, bowing lowly down
To bestial Gods; for which thir heads as low [435]
Bow'd down in Battel, sunk before the Spear
Of despicable foes. With these in troop
Came Astoreth, whom the Phoenicians call'd
Astarte, Queen of Heav'n, with crescent Horns;
To whose bright Image nightly by the Moon [440]
Sidonian Virgins paid thir Vows and Songs,
In Sion also not unsung, where stood
Her Temple on th' offensive Mountain, built
By that uxorious King, whose heart though large,
Beguil'd by fair Idolatresses, fell [445]
To Idols foul. Thammuz came next behind,
Whose annual wound in Lebanon allur'd
The Syrian Damsels to lament his fate
In amorous dittyes all a Summers day,
While smooth Adonis from his native Rock [450]
Ran purple to the Sea, suppos'd with blood
Of Thammuz yearly wounded: the Love-tale
Infected Sions daughters with like heat,
Whose wanton passions in the sacred Porch
Ezekiel saw, when by the Vision led [455]
His eye survay'd the dark Idolatries
Of alienated Judah. Next came one
Who mourn'd in earnest, when the Captive Ark
Maim'd his brute Image, head and hands lopt off
In his own Temple, on the grunsel edge, [460]
Where he fell flat, and sham'd his Worshipers:
Dagon his Name, Sea Monster, upward Man
And downward Fish: yet had his Temple high
Rear'd in Azotus, dreaded through the Coast
Of Palestine, in Gath and Ascalon [465]
And Accaron and Gaza's frontier bounds.
Him followed Rimmon, whose delightful seat

Was fair Damascus, on the fertile banks
Of Abbana and Pharphar, lucid streams.
He also against the house of God was bold:
A leper once he lost, and gained a king--
Ahaz, his sottish conqueror, whom he drew
God's altar to disparage and displace
For one of Syrian mode, whereon to burn
His odious offerings, and adore the gods
Whom he had vanquished. After these appeared
A crew who, under names of old renown--
Osiris, Isis, Orus, and their train--
With monstrous shapes and sorceries abused
Fanatic Egypt and her priests to seek
Their wandering gods disguised in brutish forms
Rather than human. Nor did Israel scape
Th' infection, when their borrowed gold composed
The calf in Oreb; and the rebel king

Doubled that sin in Bethel and in Dan,
Likening his Maker to the grazèd ox--
Jehovah, who, in one night, when he passed
From Egypt marching, equalled with one stroke
Both her first-born and all her bleating gods.
Belial came last; than whom a Spirit more lewd
Fell not from Heaven, or more gross to love
Vice for itself. To him no temple stood
Or altar smoked; yet who more oft than he
In temples and at altars, when the priest
Turns atheist, as did Eli's sons, who filled
With lust and violence the house of God?
In courts and palaces he also reigns,
And in luxurious cities, where the noise
Of riot ascends above their loftiest towers,
And injury and outrage; and, when night
Darkens the streets, then wander forth the sons
Of Belial, flown with insolence and wine.
Witness the streets of Sodom, and that night
In Gibeah, when th' hospitable door
Exposed a matron, to avoid worse rape.
These were the prime in order and in might:

The rest were long to tell; though far renowned
Th' Ionian gods--of Javan's issue held
Gods, yet confessed later than Heaven and Earth,
Their boasted parents;--Titan, Heaven's first-born,
With his enormous brood, and birthright seized
By younger Saturn: he from mightier Jove,
His own and Rhea's son, like measure found;
So Jove usurping reigned. These, first in Crete
And Ida known, thence on the snowy top
Of cold Olympus ruled the middle air,
Their highest heaven; or on the Delphian cliff,
Or in Dodona, and through all the bounds
Of Doric land; or who with Saturn old
Fled over Adria to th' Hesperian fields,
And o'er the Celtic roamed the utmost Isles.

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.

▶ Leaders of the Fallen Angels

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 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.

- Unmarried girls offer their prayers

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 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.

- Catalogue of leaders of fallen angels is mentioned

Lines 522- 589

All these and more came flocking; but with looks
Downcast and damp; yet such wherein appeared
Obscure some glimpse of joy to have found their Chief
Not in despair, to have found themselves not lost
In loss itself; which on his countenance cast
Like doubtful hue. But he, his wonted pride
Soon recollecting, with high words, that bore
Semblance of worth, not substance, gently raised
Their fainting courage, and dispelled their fears.
Then straight commands that, at the warlike sound
Of trumpets loud and clarions, be upreared
His mighty standard. That proud honour claimed
Azazel as his right, a Cherub tall:
Who forthwith from the glittering staff unfurled
Th' imperial ensign; which, full high advanced,
Shone like a meteor streaming to the wind,
With gems and golden lustre rich emblazed,
Seraphic arms and trophies; all the while
Sonorous metal blowing martial sounds:
At which the universal host up-sent
A shout that tore Hell's concave, and beyond
Frighted the reign of Chaos and old Night.
All in a moment through the gloom were seen
Ten thousand banners rise into the air,
With orient colours waving: with them rose
A forest huge of spears; and thronging helms
Appeared, and serried shields in thick array
Of depth immeasurable. Anon they move
In perfect phalanx to the Dorian mood
Of flutes and soft recorders--such as raised
To height of noblest temper heroes old
Arming to battle, and instead of rage
Deliberate valour breathed, firm, and unmoved
With dread of death to flight or foul retreat;
Nor wanting power to mitigate and swage
With solemn touches troubled thoughts, and chase

Anguish and doubt and fear and sorrow and pain
From mortal or immortal minds. Thus they,
Breathing united force with fixèd thought,
Moved on in silence to soft pipes that charmed
Their painful steps o'er the burnt soil. And now
Advanced in view they stand--a horrid front
Of dreadful length and dazzling arms, in guise
Of warriors old, with ordered spear and shield,
Awaiting what command their mighty Chief
Had to impose. He through the armèd files
Darts his experienced eye, and soon traverse
The whole battalion views--their order due,
Their visages and stature as of gods;
Their number last he sums. And now his heart
Distends with pride, and, hardening in his strength,
Glories: for never, since created Man,
Met such embodied force as, named with these,
Could merit more than that small infantry
Warred on by cranes--though all the giant brood
Of Phlegrawith th' heroic race were joined
That fought at Thebes and Ilium, on each side
Mixed with auxiliar gods; and what resounds
In fable or romance of Uther's son,
Begirt with British and Armoric knights;
And all who since, baptized or infidel,
Jousted in Aspramont, or Montalban
Damasco, or Marocco, or Trebisond
Or whom Biserta sent from Afric shore
When Charlemain with all his peerage fell
By Fontarabbia. Thus far these beyond
Compare of mortal prowess, yet observed
Their dread Commander.

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 orders the flag to be hoisted

Lines 590- 649

He, above the rest
In shape and gesture proudly eminent,
Stood like a tower. His form had yet not lost
All her original brightness, nor appeared
Less than Archangel ruined, and th' excess
Of glory obscured: as when the sun new-risen
Looks through the horizontal misty air
Shorn of his beams, or, from behind the moon,
In dim eclipse, disastrous twilight sheds
On half the nations, and with fear of change
Perplexes monarchs. Darkened so, yet shone
Above them all th' Archangel: but his face
Deep scars of thunder had intrenched, and care
Sat on his faded cheek, but under brows
Of dauntless courage, and considerate pride
Waiting revenge. Cruel his eye, but cast
Signs of remorse and passion, to behold
The fellows of his crime, the followers rather
(Far other once beheld in bliss), condemned
For ever now to have their lot in pain--
Millions of Spirits for his fault amerced
Of Heaven, and from eternal splendours flung
For his revolt--yet faithful how they stood,
Their glory withered; as, when heaven's fire
Hath scathed the forest oaks or mountain pines,
With singèd top their stately growth, though bare,
Stands on the blasted heath. He now prepared
To speak; whereat their doubled ranks they bend
From wing to wing, and half enclose him round

With all his peers: attention held them mute.
Thrice he assayed, and thrice, in spite of scorn,
Tears, such as Angels weep, burst forth: at last
Words interwove with sighs found out their way:--
"O myriads of immortal Spirits! O Powers
Matchless, but with th' Almighty!--and that strife
Was not inglorious, though th' event was dire,
As this place testifies, and this dire change,
Hateful to utter. But what power of mind,
Forseeing or presaging, from the depth
Of knowledge past or present, could have feared
How such united force of gods, how such
As stood like these, could ever know repulse?
For who can yet believe, though after loss,
That all these puissant legions, whose exile
Hath emptied Heaven, shall fail to re-ascend,
Self-raised, and repossess their native seat?
For me, be witness all the host of Heaven,
If counsels different, or danger shunned
By me, have lost our hopes. But he who reigns
Monarch in Heaven till then as one secure
Sat on his throne, upheld by old repute,
Consent or custom, and his regal state
Put forth at full, but still his strength concealed--
Which tempted our attempt, and wrought our fall.
Henceforth his might we know, and know our own,
So as not either to provoke, or dread
New war provoked: our better part remains
To work in close design, by fraud or guile,
What force effected not; that he no less
At length from us may find, who overcomes
By force hath overcome but half his foe.

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.

- Satan with his unflinching pride advises the fallen angels

Lines 650-731

Space may produce new Worlds; whereof so rife
There went a fame in Heaven that he ere long
Intended to create, and therein plant
A generation whom his choice regard
Should favour equal to the Sons of Heaven.
Thither, if but to pry, shall be perhaps
Our first eruption--thither, or elsewhere;
For this infernal pit shall never hold
Celestial Spirits in bondage, nor th' Abyss
Long under darkness cover. But these thoughts
Full counsel must mature. Peace is despaired;
For who can think submission? War, then, war
Open or understood, must be resolved."
He spake; and, to confirm his words, outflew
Millions of flaming swords, drawn from the thighs
Of mighty Cherubim ; the sudden blaze
Far round illumined Hell. Highly they raged
Against the Highest, and fierce with graspèd arms
Clashed on their sounding shields the din of war,
Hurling defiance toward the vault of Heaven.
670 There stood a hill not far, whose grisly top
Belched fire and rolling smoke; the rest entire
Shone with a glossy scurf--undoubted sign

That in his womb was hid metallic ore,
The work of sulphur. Thither, winged with speed,
A numerous brigade hastened: as when bands
Of pioneers, with spade and pickaxe armed,
Forerun the royal camp, to trench a field,
Or cast a rampart. Mammon led them on--
Mammon, the least erected Spirit that fell
From Heaven; for even in Heaven his looks and
thoughts
Were always downward bent, admiring more
The riches of heaven's pavement, trodden gold,
Than aught divine or holy else enjoyed
In vision beatific. By him first
Men also, and by his suggestion taught,
Ransacked the centre, and with impious hands
Rifled the bowels of their mother Earth
For treasures better hid. Soon had his crew
Opened into the hill a spacious wound,
And digged out ribs of gold. Let none admire
That riches grow in Hell; that soil may best
Deserve the precious bane. And here let those
Who boast in mortal things, and wondering tell
Of Babel, and the works of Memphian kings,
Learn how their greatest monuments of fame
And strength, and art, are easily outdone
By Spirits reprobate, and in an hour
What in an age they, with incessant toil
And hands innumerable, scarce perform.
Nigh on the plain, in many cells prepared,
That underneath had veins of liquid fire
Sluiced from the lake, a second multitude
With wondrous art founded the massy ore,
Severing each kind, and scummed the bullion-dross.
A third as soon had formed within the ground
A various mould, and from the boiling cells
By strange conveyance filled each hollow nook;
As in an organ, from one blast of wind,
To many a row of pipes the sound-board breathes.
Anon out of the earth a fabric huge
Rose like an exhalation, with the sound

Of dulcet symphonies and voices sweet--
Built like a temple, where pilasters146 round
Were set, and Doric pillars overlaid
With golden architrave ; nor did there want
Cornice or frieze, with bossy sculptures graven;
The roof was fretted gold. Not Babylon
Nor great Alcairo such magnificence
Equalled in all their glories, to enshrine
Belus or Serapis their gods, or seat
Their kings, when Egypt with Assyria strove
In wealth and luxury. Th' ascending pile
Stood fixed her stately height, and straight the doors,
Opening their brazen folds, discover, wide
Within, her ample spaces o'er the smooth
And level pavement: from the arched roof,
Pendent by subtle magic, many a row
Of starry lamps and blazing cressets, fed
With naptha and asphaltus, yielded light
As from a sky.

Lines 731-798

The hasty multitude
Admiring entered; and the work some praise,
And some the architect. His hand was known
In Heaven by many a towered structure high,
Where sceptred Angels held their residence,
And sat as Princes, whom the supreme King
Exalted to such power, and gave to rule,
Each in his Hierarchy, the Orders bright.
Nor was his name unheard or unadored
In ancient Greece; and in Ausonian land
Men called him Mulciber; and how he fell
From Heaven they fabled, thrown by angry Jove
Sheer o'er the crystal battlements: from morn
To noon he fell, from noon to dewy eve,
A summer's day, and with the setting sun
Dropt from the zenith, like a falling star,
On Lemnos, th' Aegaean isle. Thus they relate,
Erring; for he with this rebellious rout
Fell long before; nor aught aviled him now

To have built in Heaven high towers; nor did he scape
By all his engines, but was headlong sent,
With his industrious crew, to build in Hell.
Meanwhile the wingèd Heralds, by command
Of sovereign power, with awful ceremony
And trumpet's sound, throughout the host proclaim
A solemn council forthwith to be held
At Pandemonium, the high capital
Of Satan and his peers. Their summons called
From every band and squarèd regiment
By place or choice the worthiest: they anon
With hundreds and with thousands trooping came
Attended. All access was thronged; the gates
And porches wide, but chief the spacious hall
(Though like a covered field, where champions bold
Wont ride in armed, and at the Soldan's chair
Defied the best of Paynim chivalry
To mortal combat, or career with lance),
Thick swarmed, both on the ground and in the air,
Brushed with the hiss of rustling wings. As bees
In spring-time, when the Sun with Taurus rides,
Pour forth their populous youth about the hive
In clusters; they among fresh dews and flowers
Fly to and fro, or on the smoothèd plank,
The suburb of their straw-built citadel,
New rubbed with balm, expatiate, and confer
Their state-affairs: so thick the airy crowd
Swarmed and were straitened; till, the signal given
Behold a wonder! They but now who seemed
In bigness to surpass Earth's giant sons,
Now less than smallest dwarfs, in narrow room
Throng numberless--like that pygmean race
Beyond the Indian mount; or faery elves,
Whose midnight revels, by a forest-side
Or fountain, some belated peasant sees,
Or dreams he sees, while overhead the Moon
Sits arbitress, and nearer to the Earth
Wheels her pale course: they, on their mirth and dance
Intent, with jocund music charm his ear;

At once with joy and fear his heart rebounds.
Thus incorporeal Spirits to smallest forms
Reduced their shapes immense, and were at large,
Though without number still, amidst the hall
Of that infernal court. But far within,
And in their own dimensions like themselves,
The great Seraphic Lords and Cherubim
In close recess and secret conclave sat,
A thousand demi-gods on golden seats,
Frequent and full. After short silence then,
And summons read, the great consult began.

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

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 Readings

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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

2.3.1 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 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.

▶ Dryden as a satirist and critic

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.

▶ Mock-heroic satire

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 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.

▶ Restoration period as an age of satire

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 imployed 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.

▶ Shadwell is depicted by Dryden as a poetaster.

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 lan-

guage that becomes humorous when simplified.

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

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

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

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

the younger poet Shadwell, causing him to be twice as dull as his father, Flecknoe.

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 Readings

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.

References

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.

1.

Unit 2

The School for Scandal

Richard Brinsley Sheridan

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

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

The play *The School for Scandal*, which was written and produced in 1777, is widely regarded as the greatest Comedy of Manners. A prime example of Restoration literature, the play was written by Irish playwright Richard Brinsley Sheridan and it enjoyed almost immediate success. The play features humorous situations and is loaded with sexual allusions. The play shows corrupt people who enjoy gossiping and only think about themselves, as opposed to portraying a perfect society as in Puritan literature. The play's title makes clear what its main theme is. The entire play is a satirical portrayal of 18th-century British society and the lengths people will go to in order to achieve their goals. Some of the characters' names directly describe them by referring to their most significant "flaw." The play was first produced as a British silent film in 1923, and has since undergone numerous film adaptations.

- Humorous situations

2.6.1 Summary

Two prologues that introduce the themes of scandal, rumours, and public appearance serve as the play's introduction. David Garrick, an actor, playwright, producer, and theater manager, wrote the prologue in rhymed couplets. According to the prologue, society is overrun with gossip and rumour-mongering, so it is debatable whether anyone needs any instruction in it. People in society read the newspaper gossip-columns about each other and laugh at their friends while getting angry when the gossip is about them. The playwright is unlikely to succeed in this battle, but this play will then attempt to attack scandal in the same way a warrior attempts to defeat a monster. In the world of wealthy Londoners, gossip is introduced in the play's prologue as a nearly universal issue. People are offended when rumours about them are spread, but they still enjoy hearing rumours about their friends and acquaintances. The play criticizes this practice as immoral and labels it as a vice.

- The play starts with two pro-logues

Act I opens with Lady Sneerwell, a wealthy widow, and her servant Snake engaging in their customary gossiping. As someone had damaged Lady Sneerwell's reputation in the past, she spreads rumours. Snake learns why Lady Sneerwell is so involved in issues involving Sir Peter Teazle, his ward Maria, and the young brothers Charles and Joseph Surface: Maria and Charles are both in love, and Lady Sneerwell herself also loves Charles. By spreading the rumour that Charles and Sir Peter's wife, Teazle, are having an affair, Lady Sneerwell and Joseph hope to cause Maria and Charles to move apart. Snake will be dispatched to carry out this plan by Lady Sneerwell. Joseph enters after Lady Sneerwell has finished speaking. After Snake departs, Joseph informs Lady Sneerwell that he believes Snake may not have been entirely loyal to them and their secret plan because he has heard from Rowley, his father's steward, while Snake was gone.

- Lady Sneerwell, and Snake engage in their customary gossiping

Maria now enters after making an attempt to get away from Sir Benjamin Backbite, another man vying for her affection, and his uncle Crabtree. She complains that she did not want to stay with Backbite and his uncle because they were speaking poorly of other people. Maria is followed by Mrs. Candour, Sir Benjamin Backbite, and

his uncle Crabtree, who start making predictions about the return of the wealthy uncle of the Surface brothers' to England from the East Indies. Crabtree also praises Sir Benjamin's poetic sensibilities. They start talking about Charles' financial situation, and Maria decides to leave. Mrs. Candour, Crabtree, and Benjamin all attempt to help her. Scene II begins with Sir Peter's soliloquy about his wife's spending habits. When Rowley shows up, the two talk about how Maria seemed to like Charles but rejected Joseph. Rowley tells Sir Peter that Sir Oliver has arrived from the East Indies after standing up for Charles. The reunion of a friend after sixteen years makes Sir Peter happy, but he is concerned that Sir Oliver will make fun of him for getting married. They discuss Lady Sneerwell's propensity for tarnishing reputations and contrast her methods with those of Mrs. Clackitt, whose rumour-mongering methods they claim have been used to end marriages and force couples to elope to preserve their reputations, and cause sons to forfeit their inheritance. According to Snake, Lady Sneerwell is a more skilled rumour-monger who conjures up stories with greater plausibility. Lady Sneerwell appreciates the compliment. She asserts that she enjoys stirring up controversy for others because when she was younger, controversy destroyed her own reputation.

- Sir Peter's soliloquy about his wife's spending habits

Snake then requests an explanation from Lady Sneerwell regarding the purpose behind a specific rumour she has asked him to spread. The two Surface brothers, who were also Sir Peter's wards for a while after their father's passing, a young woman named Maria, her guardian Sir Peter Teazle, and this rumour are all involved. While Lady Sneerwell and Mr. Joseph Surface, who has a good reputation, are also known to be in love, Snake claims that he knows that Maria and Charles, the younger Surface brother, who has a reputation for being an extravagant spender and good for nothing, are in love. Even those she hires to help her spread rumours occasionally fail to comprehend Lady Sneerwell's motives because she is a master at hiding her own. Lady Sneerwell has made it known that she loves Joseph, so it makes no sense for her to stir up a scandal in the case of Maria and Charles, who will become her in-laws if she marries Joseph. Once she became a member of the Surface family as Joseph's wife, if this story hurt their reputations, it would also hurt hers.

- Lady Sneerwell loves Joseph

Lady Sneerwell explains that she really loves Charles, not Joseph, the bankrupt big spender. Meanwhile, Joseph is plotting with Lady Sneerwell to separate Maria and Charles because he wants to marry his brother's beloved Maria (even though it's only because she's a wealthy heiress) Joseph's reputation for morality, according to Lady Sneerwell, is undeserved because he is avaricious and self-centered, which explains why he is content to conspire with her. Lady Sneerwell adds that Sir Peter is prejudiced against Charles and opposes the idea of allowing Maria and Charles to get married, and Snake remarks that Sir Peter is totally convinced of Joseph's goodness. Lady Sneerwell is cynical enough to think that by spreading untrue information about Charles, she can force him to wed her. She recognises Joseph's hypocrisy and realizes how little regard he has for his family's honor, to the point where he is prepared to ruin his brother's reputation and happiness in order to enrich himself. This goes against the prevailing wisdom of the day, which held that the bad of the member of a family reputation affected the family name as a whole.

- Lady Sneerwell spreads rumours about Charles

He is informed by Lady Sneerwell that she has told Snake about their plans and that they can rely on Snake to keep their plans a secret. Snake's dependability is praised by Joseph. Lady Sneerwell inquires about Charles and Maria. Although Joseph claims he hasn't seen either of them, he reports that Maria has stopped seeing him after hearing some of Lady Sneerwell's rumours. Charles, meanwhile, is in so much debt that creditors are coming to seize his belongings. Instead of building a reputation for goodness, Lady Sneerwell concentrates on damaging the reputations of others. She does not believe it is necessary to completely hide her personality from other con artists. On the contrarily, Joseph is known for flattering everyone he meets. Joseph begins to say that he only wishes he could do something to assist his brother, but Lady Sneerwell interrupts him and tells him not to act pity for his brother in front of her and Snake. While acknowledging that she is correct, Joseph adds that by ending the relationship of Maria and Charles, he will actually be doing good. He claims that only a woman like Lady Sneerwell could control Charles. Even when he is with fellow conspirators, Joseph finds it difficult to give up his pretense of morality because he is so accustomed to doing so. Even after Lady Sneerwell orders him to stop,

- Lady Sneerwell concentrates on damaging the reputations of others

he goes on to flatter her and offer justifications to show that what they are doing is right and proper.

Snake departs, and Joseph informs Lady Sneerwell that she erred in believing in him because he witnessed Snake conversing with Mr. Rowley, the steward of Joseph's late father who dislikes him. Joseph responds that Snake is too much of a villain to be expected to be loyal to one evil deed over another when Lady Sneerwell asks him if he believes Snake will reveal their plans to Rowley. The shrewd Rowley, who has known Joseph his entire life, is aware of his true nature. Lady Sneerwell is vindictive but not hypocritical, so she does not see the risk in disclosing her intentions to Snake. Snake has no loyalty to any cause and would betray anyone, as Joseph understands.

- Snake has no loyalty to anyone

Maria walks in, appearing upset. She claims to have sneeked out of Sir Peter's home because Sir Benjamin Backbite and his uncle Crabtree were there and she detests hearing them talk bad about their friends. She tells Lady Sneerwell this. Joseph concurs, claiming that they talk about people they don't even know because they gossip so much. Lady Sneerwell argues in favor of Sir Benjamin, claiming that he is clever and a poet, but Maria counters that she dislikes malicious wit. Joseph responds positively when she asks his opinion. When Lady Sneerwell says that cruelty is necessary for wit, she asks Joseph if he agrees. Joseph responds that he does. Maria is a morally upright individual. Maria sees only the cruelty of the rumours and criticism she hears. Contrary to some who claim that engaging in gossip is justifiable, Joseph agrees with both Maria and Lady Sneerwell, although their ideas contradict one another. He tries to flatter any person he is talking to, even if he has just heard him speak untruths.

- Maria is a morally upright individual

The arrival of Mrs. Candour's carriage is announced by a servant. Maria enjoys Mrs. Candour, according to Lady Sneerwell, who is known for being amiable. Maria, however, claims that this is a fabrication because Mrs. Candour hurts people's reputations even more than Crabtree does. According to Joseph, being Mrs. Candour's defender is the worst thing that can happen to someone's reputation. Mrs. Candour walks in. Joseph is questioned about recent events by the woman, who claims that only scandal is being discussed. Then Mrs. Candour inquires

about Maria and Charles and claims that all that is being discussed in the community is his extravagant spending. Maria asserts that she believes people should engage in better activities. Mrs. Candour claims that there isn't anyway to keep people from talking, and that she has also heard that Sir Peter and Lady Teazle have not been getting along.

- Mrs. Candour damages people's reputation

Like Joseph, Mrs. Candour hypocritically tries to downplay her part in spreading rumours. She accomplishes this by pretending to defend the subject of a rumour or bemoaning the fact that people cannot find more productive ways to spend their time than gossiping, all the while attempting to establish her own social authority by showcasing how much she is aware of what is happening with other people in a larger social circle. Mrs. Candour frequently criticizes gossip while also asserting that it is impossible to stop people from spreading rumours. She does this to give the impression that she is not a key player in the rumour, but rather an outside observer of it. Maria is furious, but Mrs. Candour keeps talking gossip. Maria responds that repeating lies is just as bad as making them up and that it is amazing what stories people will make up. Mrs. Candour concurs, but adds that since people will talk, nothing can be done. She continues to spread rumours about couples running away, a woman who is not married allegedly giving birth, and a duel between two men. Joseph commends her restraint after she says that she would never spread such rumours. Mrs. Candour is blatantly hypocritical in her criticism of gossip while engaging in her own. Her attempt to mask her true self is transparent, making her appear foolish and lacking in self-awareness. Joseph simultaneously demonstrates his appreciation for Mrs. Candour's discretion While showing that he also is a dissembler who does not say what he means.

- Mrs Candour is a hypocrite like other gossip mongers

Mrs. Candour asks Joseph if it's true that his brother Charles is bankrupt after stating that she detests it when people are attacked behind their backs. Joseph claims that his brother's financial situation is terrible, and Mrs. Candour lists four other men who are in a similar situation. She advises Charles to take comfort in the fact that he won't be the only member of his social circle in this situation. Joseph concurs. The hypocrisy of Mrs. Candour is still on full display. She appears to enjoy

not only spreading rumours but also doing so about as many people as she can. Sir Benjamin Backbite and his uncle Crabtree enter. Crabtree boasts that his nephew is a fantastic poet who creates amusing rhymes about his friends. Lady Sneerwell asks Sir Benjamin why he never publishes his verse. Sir Benjamin explains that because his work typically makes fun of people, if he gives it to the friends of the people he is making fun of, it spreads quickly around town. As a result, he asks them to not show it to anyone. But he says, pointing to Maria, "I'd like to publish some love poems about a certain lady." Some of the gossipers feel that their actions are justified because they display their wit and creativity in their gossip, whether it be by spreading rumours in the form of brief poems or by coining funny one-liners as they are gossiping. The poet's talent, not society's interest in gossip, is what they choose to believe when a poem filled with rumours makes its way around town.

▶ Hypocrisy of Mrs. Candour

Then Crabtree and Sir Benjamin start a conversation with a friend named Miss Nicely, who they claim has a child outside of marriage and intends to wed her footman. Mrs. Candour finds it difficult to believe this because Miss Nicely is a very cautious person. Sir Benjamin responds that this indicates Miss Nicely had something to hide. According to Mrs. Candour, people with a bad reputation do seem to survive more scandals than people who don't have any rumours spread about them. One common explanation for hypocritical gossip mongers is the notion that those who appear to be blameless are the ones with the most to conceal. A reputation can only be destroyed once in these social circles. Crabtree responds that this is true and continues by telling the tale of Miss Letitia Piper after Mrs. Candour suggests that perhaps the incident involving Miss Nicely was just an error. Someone mentioned Miss Piper's twin-bearing sheep at a gathering where the difficulty of breeding sheep was being discussed. The story that Miss Piper had given birth to twins out of wedlock quickly spread after an elderly deaf woman misheard it. People were even speculating about the father. The slanderers demonstrate how little they care about those whose reputations are damaged.

▶ Little the slanderers care about those whose reputations are damaged.

Crabtree asks Joseph if it's true that Sir Oliver, his uncle, is on his way back from the East Indies. Joseph claims

he is unaware of this. Joseph expresses his hope that no one has spoken to Sir Oliver to prejudice him against his brother. Crabtree claims that Sir Oliver will be saddened to see how poorly Charles has grown up. Charles, at least, has a stellar reputation among Jewish moneylenders, Crabtree responds. Sir Benjamin claims that Charles continues to throw extravagant parties for his friends despite his financial difficulties and the creditors who try to extort money from him. When they discuss his brother in front of him, Joseph claims they are being insensitive. The wealthy uncle of the Surface brothers has sent large sums earned in the East Indies. Sir Oliver sought to use his nephews to display his wealth at home in England as he became prosperous abroad, and Charles's extravagant spending patterns do give the impression that the Surface family is very wealthy to the general public. Charles has made it unclear whether his uncle will help him out of debt by spending more money than his uncle sends him and taking out loans from lenders who charge exorbitant interest rates.

- Wealthy uncle of the Surface brothers has sent large sums of money

Maria finds it difficult to listen to this criticisms of Charles. She exits claiming to be sick. Mrs. Candour is sent by Lady Sneerwell to follow Maria and make sure she is well. Lady Sneerwell claims that it is obvious that Maria still harbors feelings for Charles despite no longer seeing him. Sir Benjamin concurs, but Crabtree urges his nephew to follow Maria and recite his love poems to her, which Sir Benjamin accepts. Sir Benjamin apologizes to Joseph for upsetting him, but he knows that his brother is bankrupt and had to sell everything, with the exception of the family portraits, which, according to Sir Benjamin, are probably framed in the walls. Lady Sneerwell intends to make Maria feel worse while feigning concern for her. Sir Benjamin gives an apology for gossiping about Charles that contains even more detail about the gossip.

- Maria leaves unable to bear the gossiping

Sir Benjamin and Crabtree depart while continuing to make comments about Charles. They are eager to carry on gossiping, which makes Lady Sneerwell laugh. According to Joseph, Lady Sneerwell must have found it difficult to hear about Charles' struggles as well. The Teazles and Maria will be paying a visit that evening, allowing them to observe their emotions, but Lady Sneerwell expresses her concern that Maria may be too much in love with Charles to change her mind. Lady Sneerwell believes

she is superior to other gossipers who engage in gossip for amusement and display rather than to influence others for their own gain. Because she doesn't care about Charles' reputation—only about her own—she doesn't find it difficult to hear about his financial situation. In fact, Charles will need to wed a wealthy woman like Sneerwell in order to avoid going to jail if he is financially destroyed and abandoned by his uncle and Maria. By portraying himself as a "man of sentiment" and acting on feelings based on high morals, Joseph is able to impress and manipulate people, as demonstrated by this use of the word "sentiment."

- Joseph as a manipulator

2.6.2 Analysis

Beginning with a prologue was fairly commonplace at the time of Sheridan's writing. These prologues are used to directly address the audience and set up some of the themes or issues of the play. Sometimes, these prologues were not even written by the playwright, much like the foreward of a book. In this play, the audience first sees a "portrait" written by the playwright, Richard Brinsley Sheridan, followed by a prologue written by a man named Mr. Garric. From the beginning of the play, characters' names are important for understanding characters' personalities and Sheridan's sense of humor and irony. In the first scene, Lady Sneerwell talks to Snake openly about their plot to spread a nasty, false rumour about Charles Surface and Lady Sneerwell has personal reasons for enjoying creating scandal. Lady Sneerwell's name combines her social status (Lady) with her major character trait of judging others (Sneerwell). Snake's name is slightly more metaphorical, evoking ideas of venomousness. This is the reason why Lady Sneerwell chooses him to do her bidding.

- Names are important for understanding characters' personalities

Many of the play's key characters and relationships are introduced in Act I. When Maria is first introduced, the attitudes and beliefs of other characters are immediately in contrast to her own. In the play, Maria says in her second line that Benjamin Backbite is a gossip, just like Lady Sneerwell, which is why she shied away from talking to him. Maria serves as a representation of purity and innocence throughout the play. The affection that Joseph, Charles, and Benjamin all share for her could be interpreted as either a sign that morality was still valued

in society despite the scandal and gossip that the majority of people engaged in, or that women in particular were expected to be moral and pure. One of the key problems raised in Act I is the relation between mean gossip and wit. Maria suggests that she loses respect for wit when wit is used to hurt or spread gossip about another. Lady Sneerwell responds that the two ideas are connected inextricably. The most prominent and malicious gossip in town is spread by Lady Sneerwell. As she's resentful that untrue rumours were spread about her, she makes up stories about other people and even pays someone to do it for her. However, in the play, gossip is not only an indication of cruelty, but also a means of demonstrating intelligence. Lady Sneerwell is such a skilled liar that she is aware of which specifics to divulge and to whom in order to spread her untrue rumours.

- Relation between mean gossip and wit

2.6.3 Summary

In Sir Peter's home, the action starts. Sir Peter sits by himself and bemoans the difficulties in his relationship with Lady Teazle. After spending many years as a bachelor, he married later in life and claims he should have anticipated problems. He believed that by marrying a woman who had grown up in poverty, he would be spared from having to pay a large sum of money for his wife's fashionable purchases. But even though Lady Teazle was raised in a rural area, she now presents herslef as a refined woman of fashion. Their union is the subject of social commentary and newspaper rumours. She not only spends all of his money but also constantly contradicts him. He claims that he would never put up with all of this except that he really does love her. He promises, though, that he won't tell her. Sir Peter is struggling to get used to being married and the effect his wife has on his well-being, wealth, and reputation. He appears to have believed that by marrying a rural young woman, he would be able to control her, but instead, she expects him to support her luxurious lifestyle. The fact that he wed a young woman after making a vow to never get married attracted gossipers who wanted to make fun of him. In an effort to regain the control he feels he should have always had, Sir Peter tries to hide his true emotions from his wife while feeling vulnerable.

- Sir Peter's struggling married life

As Rowley enters, he asks Sir Peter how he is doing.

As long as he is married to Lady Teazle, Sir Peter claims he will never be well. Rowley claims that despite their disagreements, he is aware that Sir Peter loves his wife. Because he is so sweet to his wife and abhors any form of teasing, Sir Peter claims that it is all her fault. Furthermore, the social elite who frequent Lady Sneerwell's home encourage Lady Teazle to be perverse and engage in conflict with him. Sir Peter's monologue made it clear that prior to his marriage, he had many unfounded expectations about Lady Teazle. Sir Peter claims he is also upset because his ward Maria is adamant about marrying his extravagant brother rather than agreeing to wed the man he chooses. Rowley claims that regarding Charles and Joseph, he disagrees with Sir Peter. According to Rowley, the father of the Surface brothers was a bad boy as a young man before becoming a beloved figure for his goodness. Rowley believes Charles will make amends in the same manner.

- Sneerwell encourages Lady Teazle's conflict with her husband

Since he looked after the two men until their uncle Sir Oliver gave them fortunes, Sir Peter claims he has had the ideal opportunity to evaluate them. Joseph is "a man of sentiment," he continues, who speaks and behaves morally. Meanwhile, Charles has wasted all of his money and probably every innate virtue he possessed. Sir Oliver, in Sir Peter's opinion, will be dissatisfied to learn how the money he sent to Charles was wasted. Rowley is a good judge of character because he has already recognised Joseph's pretense of hypocrisy. His confidence in Charles suggests that Charles has an unjustified reputation for badness similar to Joseph's reputation for goodness. His opinion matters. At the same time, it is clear that Sir Peter frequently makes poor decisions regarding what is best for his family and the people who report to him. He wants Maria to wed Joseph because he thinks Joseph is genuinely motivated by all the wonderful emotions he beautifully describes in his conversations. Sir Peter thinks he is a great judge of character, but he is easily fooled by hypocrites.

- Sir Peter to judge the two men- Charles and Joseph

Rowley expresses regret at learning that Sir Peter has a negative opinion of Charles because Sir Oliver's return to England will soon determine the young man's fate. Having not seen his old friend in sixteen years, Sir Peter is shocked and ecstatic. However, Rowley claims that Sir

Oliver has asked them to keep his arrival a secret. Oliver intends to test his nephews, who won't recognise him, to see which one is deserving of being the next in line. Instead of dividing the fortune into two smaller portions, Sir Oliver wants to leave a sizable sum to the nephew he thinks will continue the family's legacy in the future. He is aware that if his nephews knew he was coming, they would do everything in their power to impress him and thereby hide their true selves from him. Rowley is informed by Sir Peter that Sir Oliver will make fun of him for getting married because they used to make fun of married men and Sir Oliver stayed true to his vow to never get married. Sir Peter asks Rowley not to inform Sir Oliver that he and Lady Teazle have ever fought, but he insists that he must get ready for Sir Oliver's arrival right away. Rowley promises to keep quiet, but Lady Teazle and Sir Peter will need to keep their disagreements to themselves if they want to avoid embarrassing Sir Oliver. Sir Peter says Rowley is right, but that this is clearly impossible. Once more, Sir Peter tries to hide the truth from Sir Oliver; this time, he wants to hide his marital regrets. Sir Peter thinks he can conceal things from others, but he can see through their intentions and personalities.

- Sir Oliver has arrived back in England

Act II begins with a dispute between Sir Peter and his wife over how much money she spends. She was raised in the country and isn't accustomed to the opulent lifestyle of London, they keep saying, but now she wants money for all kinds of frivolous things, like flowers in the winter. The discussion then shifts to who Lady Teazle hangs out with. Sir Peter consents to join them later as Lady Teazle departs for Lady Sneerwell's home. Sir Peter acknowledges in a soliloquy after his wife has left that his wife is particularly lovely when she is angry. A group of socialites are pressuring Benjamin Backbite to share his writing at Lady Sneerwell once more. He reads a short poem he composed while on horseback. Lady Teazle informs Lady Sneerwell that her husband will arrive later when she and Maria arrive at her residence. Everyone starts talking rudely about those who aren't there in the group. Maria declines to participate in their gossip, which focuses primarily on makeup. Sir Peter shows up; he doesn't like the gossip either, but it keeps going. Sir Peter remarks that he would prefer laws governing gossip in order to help protect people's reputations as the topic of

wit and good humor generally. Sir Benjamin suggests to Lady Teazle that he could spread rumours about Sir Peter after he departs.

- Sir Peter and Maria dislike gossiping

Everyone leaves the stage except Joseph and Maria. Even as he kneels in front of her, Maria continues to turn down Joseph's advances. When Lady Teazle returns, she sees Joseph bowing before Maria. He makes a quick decision and then poses as if he had begged Maria not to tell Sir Peter about the possible romantic connection between Joseph and Lady Teazle. He asks this while kneeling, which Lady Teazle finds odd, but eventually she seems to accept his explanation. In order to avoid raising suspicion, Joseph, Maria, and Lady Teazle must not re-enter the party together. Instead, they will rejoin the group as a whole. Lady Teazle leaves first, and Joseph delivers a soliloquy about how to spend more time with her in order to solicit her support for his advances on Maria, he has now grown too deeply enamored of her. As he waits for his friend to return home, Sir Oliver begins discussing Sir Peter's marriage with Rowley. When Sir Oliver and Sir Peter meet, they discuss Joseph and Charles. Sir Oliver is not so quick to believe everything Sir Peter says because, despite Sir Peter's praise for Joseph, Sir Oliver believes that Joseph might be a hypocrite.

- Sir Oliver believes that Joseph might be a hypocrite

2.6.4 Analysis

At home, Sir Peter and Lady Teazle are arguing as usual. Lady Teazle asserts that she ought to make her own decisions in every situation and that she is aware that fashionable London women answer to no one. She responds that if he wanted authority, he should have adopted her since he was old enough, when Sir Peter questions whether it is appropriate for him to have some authority over her. He claims that despite the fact that cruel comments like that one might upset him, he will still not permit her to blow all of his money carelessly. She claims that she only spends what is reasonable for a woman of fashion. Sir Peter is used to having complete control over how his money is spent because he has never had a family. When they got married, he thought he would be able to control his wife's interests and activities, but now that she is married to a wealthy Londoner, Lady Teazle wants to blend in with the other members of London high society. She argues that society expects her

- Sir Peter's and Lady Teazle's quarrel

to spend extravagantly and that Sir Peter should adjust his standards accordingly.

She must have forgotten how she was raised if she made such demands, according to Sir Peter. However, Lady Teazle claims she has vivid memories of the tedious tasks she had to complete before she wed him. She should now require fewer ostentatious possessions, according to Sir Peter, who is pleased that she remembers her simple life. She also claims that he should want his wife to be a spendthrift because this is what a fashionable, tasteful woman must do. Lady Teazle quips that she obviously cannot claim to have good taste since she married him, whereas Sir Peter claims she was not a woman of taste when he first met her. Lady Teazle's sparring with Sir Peter is witty but abrasive, reflecting the influence of the gossipy crowd she has been meeting as well as her own intelligence and self-assurance. She keeps insisting that the expensive items she wants to buy are as much for Sir Peter's reputation as they are for her own, but he does not seem to understand it. Lady Teazle will probably be her husband's main heir, and since he is much older than she is, the question of her inheriting his fortune in the future hangs over their financial discussions.

- Ladies Teazle is influenced by the gossipy gang

After that, Lady Teazle declares that she is going to Lady Sneerwell's home. Sir Peter claims that he finds it improper for his wife to be with a group of gossipers. Lady Teazle responds that those in Lady Sneerwell's social circle are well-off and of high social standing. She claims to have picked up their ways, but she only makes light of people when doing so. She also expresses hope that others won't maliciously spread rumours about her. Due to her interactions with members of high society, Lady Teazle continues to defend her decisions. She imagines herself as a student learning to laugh at other people's flaws and errors in this "school for scandal." However, she is not malicious or driven to spread falsehoods about anyone, and she naively believes that her new friends are also motivated by goodwill. Sir Peter was promised a visit by Lady Sneerwell as well, Lady Teazle explains as she leaves. When left alone, Sir Peter claims that he has been unable to exert any sort of control over his wife, but he admits that he enjoys arguing with her. Even though he can't make her fall in love with him, he finds her endearing and alluring when she belittles and teases

- Sir Peter claims that he enjoys arguing with his wife

him. Even though Sir Peter has bemoaned how Lady Teazle's demands have evolved since their marriage, it is obvious that he admires her for being able to hold her own against him and finds her playful antics endearing.

At Lady Sneerwell's residence, tea is being consumed by Lady Sneerwell, Mrs. Candour, Crabtree, Sir Benjamin Backbite, and Joseph Surface. Lady Sneerwell instructs Maria to play cards with Joseph when Maria and Lady Teazle arrive. Maria claims she dislikes playing cards, but she will follow Lady Sneerwell's instructions. Lady Teazle is taken aback that Joseph does not speak to her before her husband arrives at the party. In an effort to help Joseph win Maria over, Lady Sneerwell wants to give him some alone time. Lady Teazle's shock that Joseph chose to spend time with Maria rather than her suggests that she is unaware of his desire to marry Maria and that she also believes he is attracted to her. Lady Teazle joins the group's conversation. Lady Teazle suggests that the claims of Miss Vermilion, friend of Mrs. Candour that she is attractive are unfounded. Mrs. Evergreen, the sister of Miss Vermilion, "is, or was, very handsome," according to Mrs. Candour. The others start making fun of her, saying that while another acquaintance's face looked young even though her body looked older, she was only fifty-six and wore so much makeup that you couldn't see her face. The group is then asked what they think of Miss Simper by Mrs. Candour. She has nice teeth, according to Sir Benjamin, and Lady Teazle, who believes this is the reason she never stops talking. Miss Simper is compared by Lady Teazle to Mrs. Prim, who has no teeth and covers her mouth when speaking to conceal this.

- Lady Teazle's surprise at Joseph's decision to spend time with Maria

Except for Maria and Joseph, everyone leaves the room. Maria claims that she never enjoys witnessing people laugh at other people's flaws and misfortunes and that Joseph can tell when she is not having fun. She claims that she would prefer to be dull if that is wit. According to Joseph, the gossips appear cruller than they actually are and do not mean to be so. This, according to Maria, makes their behavior even worse. Joseph concurs that spreading rumours for no reason is worse than doing so to exact revenge. Maria finds it unacceptable when people act cruelly or immorally. Joseph condemns immoral behavior as he plays the role of the "man of sentiment," but because he lacks firm convictions, he often contradicts his own

- Spreading rumours for no reason

eloquent pronouncements immediately after he makes them.

According to Joseph, Maria is only concerned about his feelings. She says she wishes he would stop pursuing her once more. Joseph responds that if she weren't still in love with Charles, she wouldn't be so resistant to his proposal and against Sir Peter's wishes. Maria claims that despite her feelings for Charles, she won't be able to let go of him if she realizes that Joseph is no longer interested in him. Maria interprets Joseph's efforts to win her over as a betrayal of his brother Charles. She implies that she believes Charles would be more devoted to Joseph than she is, but she does not tell him directly that she believes this behavior betrays a lack of the fine feelings associated with the "man of sentiment." When Lady Teazle walks in, Joseph kneels in front of Maria and begs her not to leave him on such a bad note. Maria, whom Lady Teazle sends into the other room, is confused by Joseph's abrupt changes in what he is saying. Lady Teazle questions Joseph about his relationship with Maria. Maria has threatened to tell Sir Peter about Joseph's relationship with Lady Teazle, according to Joseph. Lady Teazle, suspicious, inquires if Joseph always kneels when attempting to be convincing. With this dramatic pose, Joseph claims he was trying to dazzle Maria before changing the subject.

- Joseph kneels in front of Maria to beg her not to leave him.

By making a dramatic gesture of passion and sentiment by bending to his knees, Joseph wants to demonstrate to Maria the sincerity of his feelings for her. Lady Teazle, whom he has also been pursuing and who is unaware of his pursuit of Maria, interrupts him. Then, Joseph makes an effort to keep Maria's courtship a secret from Lady Teazle, but this definitely undermines the impression he was trying to give Maria. Lady Teazle has promised to visit Joseph's library, so Joseph asks if she will do so. She responds that she won't go and labels him a "cicisbeo"—a man who poses as a married woman's lover but isn't necessarily having sex with her. Lady Teazle leaves the room first so that no one will see them together and suspect their intimacy before they decide to rejoin the rest of the group. When Joseph is left alone, he muses on how he only intended to win Lady Teazle's support for his courtship of Maria, but instead wound up winning her affections. He claims that in order to maintain his good character, he has had to deceive and manipulate so many people that he

now worries he will soon be exposed. Joseph fears that his entire false persona as a "man of sentiment" could come crashing down as a result of his habit of flattering everyone he meets and hiding his true thoughts about them. Despite the potential issues this will cause for his courtship of Maria, Joseph still hopes to seduce Lady Teazle, despite the fact that he has no genuine passion for her. This demonstrates that he is intrigued by trickery and manipulation in and of themselves, rather than just as a means to an end.

- Joseph fears his entire false persona

2.6.5 Analysis

The tense marriage of newlyweds Sir Peter and Lady Teazle, who have contrasting personalities and life experiences that keep them fighting constantly now that their courtship is over, is the first problem introduced in Act II. The play's gender theme—which first surfaced in Act I and will remain a major theme throughout—is highlighted by one of Lady Teazle's most biting comments in this act. "If you wanted authority over me, you should have adopted me and not married me," Lady Teazle tells her husband. "I am sure you were old enough" (p.47). This remark not only makes fun of Sir Peter's advanced age, which he already feels self-conscious about because of the age gap between him and his wife. Act II's debate between Lady Teazle and Sir Peter shows that the issue is not just one of power and gender but also one of wealth and social class. By bringing Lady Teazle from the country to London, Sir Peter undoubtedly felt as though he was doing her a favour. He was also drawn to Lady Teazle's modest lifestyle and demeanour. However, Lady Teazle is acutely aware of the pressures upper-class London society places on her, including the need to spend money on things like clothing and home furnishings and the requirement to spread rumours in order to maintain one's place as a member of the in-group of wealthy society. She is reprimanded by Sir Peter for these actions, but he is more resistant to them.

- Relationship between Sir Peter and Lady Teazle

The audience witnesses yet another instance of vicious gossip when Lady Teazle attends a gathering at Lady Sneerwell's home. The focus of this discussion is primarily on the physical characteristics and makeup choices made by a few characters from the play. There are more significant names that Sheridan uses to emphasize particulars about characters' traits or social roles during

this lively and humorous conversation. The play's themes of the need to hide one's true self in public and the significance of beauty and age to one's social status are furthered by the emphasis on appearance, particularly makeup.Satires are political by nature, attempting to convey a particular message about a social issue that the author believes needs to be changed or given more consideration and understanding. The play's central themes of gossip and scandal are intertwined with the political theme. According to Sheridan, slander has the power to ruin people's reputations and cause unrest in society as a whole. However, it appears that there were no laws in place at the time to protect people from false rumours. The play's morally upright characters, Sir Peter and Mrs. Candour, may be the only ones who share Sir Peter's belief that punishment should be meted out to both the rumour's original authors and those who spread it.

- The play's central themes of gossip and scandal are intertwined with the political theme

Summary

Waiting for Sir Peter to enter his home are Sir Oliver and Rowley. Sir Oliver makes fun of Sir Peter for getting married to a country girl after making a vow to never get married. He then asks Rowley about Sir Peter's animosity towards Charles. Rowley explains that Sir Peter's animosity toward Charles stems in part from rumours that were spread by snoops that Charles and Lady Teazle were having an affair. If Lady Teazle has feelings for one of the brothers, Rowley thinks it is Joseph and not Charles. Sir Oliver claims he will make his own decisions and not allow rumours about Charles to colour his judgment. Rowley asserts that he thinks Sir Oliver will respect Charles' integrity and good nature. As young men, Sir Oliver and his brother were wild, but they developed into good men. Rowley believes Charles will experience the same thing. Sir Peter still believes the rumours he hears despite his contempt for gossipers. He is aware that there are rumours that his wife and he do not get along, which is accurate, as well as rumours that Charles spends extravagantly and has a lot of debt, which is also accurate. He's come to the conclusion that the rumours regarding his wife and Charles might also be accurate. Rowley is a better character judge than Sir Peter, and he cares just as much about the prosperity and happiness of the Surface and Teazle families. He hopes that Sir Oliver will see

- Sir Oliver makes fun of Sir Peter for getting married to a country girl

through the gossip to understand the Surface brothers' true characters.

Sir Oliver inquires about Charles, and Sir Peter responds that Charles is a hopeless case; however, Joseph is exactly the kind of young man who ought to be and is highly regarded by everyone. Sir Oliver asserts that he believes that anyone who has no enemies must not be trustworthy. When Sir Oliver meets Joseph, who eloquently discusses sentiment and morality, Sir Peter says Sir Oliver will see. Sir Oliver claims he dislikes moralizing, but he also does not mean to defend Charles from all of his errors. Instead, he wants to put the two brothers to the test to uncover their true selves. According to Sir Peter, Joseph's moral acumen and reputation for morality speak volumes about his moral character. According to Sir Oliver, a person's statements and the opinions of others are sufficient evidence of their moral character. A flawless reputation and extraordinary eloquence, in Sir Oliver's opinion, may be a sign that something is being kept hidden.

- Sir Oliver plans to test the two brothers and learn their real characters

Act III Scene I resumes with Rowley, Sir Oliver, and Sir Peter. Rowley informs them of Mr. Stanley, a man who is related to Charles and Joseph through their mother. Charles has made an effort to assist Mr. Stanley, who has financial difficulties, but Joseph has only made empty promises and hasn't actually provided anything. Rowley also informs them that they will be meeting with Mr. Moses, a "friendly Jew" (p. 83) who has recently been helping Charles with his financial situation. In addition to informing them that he has information from Snake regarding the rumours Sir Peter has heard about Charles and Lady, Rowley claims that Mr. Moses has an incentive to cooperate with him because Charles owes him money. Sir Oliver welcomes Mr. Moses and they speak. Mr. Moses informs Sir Oliver of Charles' extraordinary spending tendencies and his significant debt. He promises to bring a city resident that evening to lend Charles money. Sir Oliver makes it clear that Charles has never met Mr. Premium, and Sir Peter concocts the idea that Sir Oliver might visit Charles while posing as Mr. Premium in order to get a better idea of who Charles really is. This idea appeals to Sir Oliver, and he considers visiting Joseph while pretending to be Mr. Stanley. Sir Oliver leaves with Mr. Moses after the men joke about how to get him ready for the role of Mr. Premium.

- Sir Oliver disguised as Mr. Premium to find out what Charles is really like

To hear what he knows about the rumours involving Lady Teazle and Charles, Rowley orders Sir Peter to go get Snake. He wants to speak to Maria when he sees her coming in the interim. Maria comes in after Rowley leaves. Maria and Sir Peter discuss how despite her continued love for Charles, he wants her to adore Joseph. He reprimands her for disregarding his advice and for possibly loving Charles despite his flaws. Sir Peter laments how frequently he fights with both his wife and his ward as Maria leaves angrily. The couple tries to be amicable with one another as Lady Teazle approaches. They maintain the act for a brief period of time, but they soon revert to fighting and decide that it might be better for them to separate.

- Lady Teazle and Sir Peter decide to separate

At Charles' home in the opening of Scene II are Sir Oliver, Mr. Moses, and a servant. Sir Oliver finds it odd that the servant wants to conduct business with Mr. Moses personally. Trip gives them a brief overview of Charles' extravagant lifestyle. They arrive at Charles and his friends' hangout after a journey. In Scene III, Charles and his friends are seen drinking while discussing some gentlemen's recent refusal to consume alcohol. Charles brings up Maria during their discussion of love. They perform a song about adoring all females. Trip walks in and informs Charles that his guests have arrived. Trip leaves and then returns with Mr. Moses and Sir Oliver. As soon as they become bored, Charles' friends depart and enter the next room to play dice. Charles even tells Sir Oliver about his wealthy uncle who intends to leave him everything as Sir Oliver tells him his rehearsed story. Sir Oliver inquires about additional ways Charles might generate income from the house's sales but discovers that Charles has already sold those items. Charles makes the offer to sell his family's collection of paintings. This suggestion shocks Sir Oliver, but he pursues it by requesting to see the portraits. In order to play auctioneer in the room where the portraits are kept, Charles' friend Careless is drawn into the action. Sir Oliver makes a promise to himself that he will never forgive Charles for this as they all exit the stage to view the portraits.

- Charles tells Sir Oliver about his wealthy uncle

Analysis

Moses and Sir Oliver make their way to Charles' home while posing as "Mr. Premium." Sir Oliver notices that the

house once belonged to his brother as Charles's butler Trip is informing Charles that he has a visitor. Moses informs him that Sir Peter believed Charles' sale of the house and all of its contents to Joseph was an extravagant gesture. Sir Oliver claims that Joseph's decision to sell the house and other heirlooms was even more disgraceful. Sir Oliver is looking for indications that his nephews value their family's heritage. Joseph would have sold his father's house even if he didn't need the cash, which suggests greed or disregard for the past and reputation of the family. But despite having a limited budget, Charles managed to purchase his father's home from his brother. Charles has asked them to wait, Trip reports upon his return. Trip is questioned by Sir Oliver, who is posing as "Mr. Premium," about whether he enjoys working for Charles. Trip claims he does, taking his master's leftover clothing even though he frequently receives his pay late. Trip seeks Moses' advice regarding obtaining a loan from him and makes the offer to use clothing that he anticipates obtaining from Charles in the future as security. Sir Oliver is astounded that a servant would think it proper to request a loan in the same manner as an upper-class person. According to Sir Oliver, there ought to be a significant distinction between members of high society like himself and those of the lower classes. He thinks that Charles's servant's behavior shows that Charles is not enforcing these distinctions.

- Sir Oliver realises that his nephews value their family's heritage

Analysis

Many Jews were involved in money lending in Sheridan's day and earlier; unlike Christianity, Judaism did not forbid this occupation. However, the play presents a stereotypical character—a Jewish moneylender who is willing to engage in dishonesty and who was probably made up and dressed in order to conform to a stereotypical Jewish appearance. Productions since Sheridan's time, particularly modern ones, have had to choose between performing the play exactly as it was written and giving the audience pertinent historical context, or editing out these references to Judaism entirely. Sir Peter seems to have the most plausible reasons for wanting Maria to marry Joseph. Sir Peter appears to only want what he believes is best for the ward for whom he has recently taken responsibility, in contrast to Lady Sneerwell, who wants to see Maria with Joseph because she loves

Charles. Maria and Sir Peter talk about what a father should be like, and she says that while she has complied with his wishes by not communicating with Charles, she cannot regard him as a father if he forces her to wed Joseph, "compell[ing] her] to be miserable" (p.93). Maria provides yet another illustration of a strong female character who will challenge the dynamics of gender and power within the play, despite Lady Teazle having earlier advised Sir Peter that if he wanted to control her, he should have adopted her rather than married her.

- Maria is a strong female character

Summary

A group of young men are joking and drinking in another room of Charles Surface's home. Charles drinks and encourages others to do the same, claiming that when he does so, he never loses at cards or, more precisely, never cares that he is losing. A man can drink twelve glasses of wine to toast twelve different women, and whichever one he thinks of once he is drunk is the woman he loves, according to him. When Charles's friend Careless inquires about his true love, he replies, "Maria," but declines to reveal her last name. A song honoring women in all of their diversity is sung by the group of men. Charles has only been mentioned by other characters up to this point, despite being one of the play's main characters. He carouses with other young men in his first performance on stage, as he is rumoured to do. He jokes around when talking about losing money and meeting different women. But in the end, he declares his love for just one woman and, out of respect for her, refrains from mentioning her name to his drinking companions.

- Charles declares his love for Maria

When Trip walks in, Charles excuses himself to speak to a broker and a Jew who have come to see him. He is urged by the others to let the guests in. Careless suggests that the moneylenders might become more moral if they drank wine, but Charles cautions that wine will only accentuate their inherent flaws. Moses and Sir Oliver, who is impersonating Mr. Premium, are led inside by Trip. Charles advises his friends not to treat these strangers badly when Careless and the other men in the party try to make the moneylenders drink a lot of wine. Charles is left with the moneylenders while the gentlemen go play dice in the adjacent room. By making the moneylenders drunk and mistreating them, Charles' friends want to have fun

at their expense. They view Jewish moneylenders as an easy target for mockery because they make money in a way that their society deems dishonorable—but Charles stops them. This may be a result of Charles's general good nature and belief that everyone deserves respect when they are guests in someone's home, or it may be due to the fact that Charles is in need of money and cannot afford to develop a bad reputation for mistreating those who lend to him.

▶ Sir Oliver visits Charles in disguise

Charles interrupts Moses as he starts to give "Mr. Premium" an elaborate introduction. He quickly sums up the situation: Mr. Premium is a man with money to lend and will attempt to get double his money interest. He is an extravagant young man who is willing to pay fifty percent interest if he can borrow money. Charles acknowledges that he "is not a man of many compliments," as Mr. Premium observes. Mr. Premium claims that as a result, he likes him more. Sir Oliver appreciates how Charles presents the facts clearly without making excuses or attempting to influence the moneylender for better terms. Oliver views this as an act of integrity that is consistent with the family name. Additionally, it makes him think that Charles' true nature is not hidden but rather outwardly displayed. Charles is asked what assets he has that he can use as collateral by "Mr. Premium." Charles has already sold all of his property and livestock, he discovers. Charles says that he expects to inherit everything from Sir Oliver and asks Mr. Premium if he is aware of his wealthy uncle. If Mr. Premium lends him money, according to Charles, he will be able to collect it when Sir Oliver passes away and leaves Charles his fortune. However, Charles continues, he would be saddened to learn that anything had happened to his kind uncle.

▶ Charles' real character is revealed

Sir Oliver is developing a strong impression of Charles' personality. Charles is a transparent man. Sir Oliver has given him enormous sums of money, and he is now attempting to raise even more cash by mentioning his uncle's likely intention to leave him his fortune. It is uncertain whether Sir Oliver will view Charles's direct demeanor as arrogant or as well-deserved pride in his family ties. These are not favorable terms, according to Mr. Premium. Mr. Premium expresses concern that Sir Oliver will live too long. Charles inquires about this

and assures Mr. Premium that his uncle is ill. At this, Mr. Premium starts to tremble while laughing. He enquires about additional heirlooms Charles might be able to sell, such as silver plates or a priceless library. Charles offers to sell his family portraits after claiming that everything has long since passed away. Sir Oliver almost forgets to pretend to be Mr. Premium after hearing this proposition, which horrifies him. To assist with the sale of the numerous portraits of his ancestors, Charles summons Careless. Charles notices that Mr. Premium appears upset and tenderly inquires as to his well-being. Charles is reassured by Sir Oliver, who laughs and declares that he finds it hilarious "to sell one's family by auction."

- Sir Oliver is getting a very good sense of Charles's character

Sir Oliver struggles to maintain the persona he has adopted as Mr. Premium while hiding his true emotions. Despite the fact that Charles's prediction that he won't live for much longer makes him uncomfortable, he finds it challenging to act as though he wants to pass away quickly, even though doing so would be advantageous to Mr. Premium. Even more upsetting to him is Charles's offer to sell him the family photos. But Charles further demonstrates his good nature by observing Mr. Premium's discomfort and enquiring after him. With the exception of a portrait of Sir Oliver, Charles sells every painting of his ancestors. Charles still won't sell it, even after "Mr. Premium" (really Sir Oliver) offers to buy it for a sizable sum of money. Despite Rowley's objections, Charles sends money to Mr. Stanley after the deal is completed for his relief. When Rowley arrives with the money Charles sent for Mr. Stanley, Sir Oliver reflects on Charles' actions. Sir Oliver then makes the decision to go see Joseph while posing as Mr. Stanley in order to observe his behavior.

- Sir Oliver then makes the decision to go see Joseph posing as Mr. Stanley

Lady Teazle is visiting Joseph in the interim. Lady Teazle hides behind a screen as a servant announces that Sir Peter has also arrived to visit Joseph. Sir Peter informs Joseph of the alleged romance between his wife and Charles and encourages him to wed Maria, much to Joseph's chagrin since he had just been trying to persuade Lady Teazle to have an extramarital affair with him. Sir Peter chooses to remain hidden behind the screen as well after Charles is announced. Behind the screen, Sir Peter notices a woman, but Joseph persuades him it's just some random French milliner. Instead, Sir Peter retreats to a closet. When Charles enters, they begin discussing Lady

- Lady Teazle is visiting Joseph and hides behind a screen upon seeing sir peter

Teazle and how Charles believes that Joseph and she are dating. Charles does not understand Joseph's attempts to divert his attention, so Joseph quietly informs him that Sir Peter is hiding in space. Sir Peter apologizes for thinking there was a problem between his wife and him as soon as Charles allows him to leave.

When Lady Sneerwell is introduced, Joseph adjourns to block her entrance. Sir Peter pulls down the screen, thinking it will be a good joke to reveal a woman hiding in the room to Joseph's own brother, only to discover his wife there. She admits that she originally intended to have an affair with Joseph, but changed her mind when she learned that Sir Peter wanted to give her a sizable sum of money. Joseph tries to explain to Sir Peter why Lady Teazle was in the room before she departs. They argue as they exit the stage together after Sir Peter rejects his advice. Moses tells Sir Oliver in the parlour of Charles's house that it is unfortunate that Charles is so extravagant, but Sir Oliver only cares that Charles refused to sell his portrait. Rowley walks in and announces that he has money that Charles wanted to send to old Stanley but that really needs to be used to pay off his debts. Sir Oliver advises using the funds to settle Charles' debt. Before pulling Moses aside to discuss getting a loan from him, Trip enters and apologizes for not showing them out. Sir Oliver and Rowley are in awe of how things have changed because a servant would never have attempted to raise money in this manner in earlier times.

- Sir Peter pulls down the screen to find his wife behind it

Two examples of Charles' true character have been provided to Sir Oliver. He first sees Charles' self-awareness in his nephew's refusal to have his portrait sold. Second, he discovers Charles's generosity in choosing to send money directly to Mr. Stanley in order to help out his less fortunate relatives. These two deeds demonstrate Charles' loyalty to those who assist him and those who require his assistance, as well as his sense of responsibility to assist family members. Lady Teazle is late, so Joseph Surface is waiting for her in the home's library. Sir Peter does not believe that Joseph is having an affair with his wife, but Joseph thinks to himself that he hopes Maria will not be lost as a result of this liaison with Lady Teazle. After informing him that Lady Teazle has arrived, the servant goes to open the door for her. Joseph considers that he must wait until he feels more in control of and in

love with Maria before telling Lady Teazle that he intends to marry her. Since Joseph is accustomed to hiding his true identity, he does not think to end his liaison with Lady Teazle and admit his desire to wed Maria. Instead, he makes a supposition that, after they have engaged in sexual intimacy, he might be better able to control Lady Teazle, reflecting his general cynicism about romance and relationships.

- Charles' true character have been revealed to Sir Oliver

Lady Teazle walks in and notices Joseph looking thoughtful. She bemoans the rudeness and Charles-jealousness of Sir Peter. She claims that if Sir Peter would only permit Maria and Charles to wed, he wouldn't continue to believe that Lady Teazle and Charles were having an illicit relationship at that time. If Maria and Charles got married, Lady Teazle would stop suspecting Joseph of having any interest in Maria, Joseph says to himself, adding that he hopes this doesn't happen but that he agrees with Lady Teazle out loud. Lady Teazle claims to have faith in him. Lady Teazle continues to believe Joseph's lies, and he keeps Maria's impending marriage a secret. Because she believes it would be disloyal for Joseph to try to marry a woman who loves his brother and whom his brother loves, Lady Teazle, who is unaware of Joseph's true nature, is likely to accept his explanations for the scene she saw between him and Maria.

- Lady Teazle continues to believe Joseph's lies

Sir Peter becomes even more uneasy as Lady Teazle starts to complain that her friend Lady Sneerwell is slandering her. She claims that the worst part is that she is completely innocent and doesn't deserve any of it. Sir Peter suspects Lady Teazle of betraying him without cause, according to Joseph, and the only way to fix the situation is for her to actually do so. She is "dying from too much health," he continues, so she is careless about making sure nothing she does could raise suspicion because she knows she is innocent. Lady Teazle remarks that this is a very strange doctrine, to which Joseph responds that she only objects because she is still not used to London high society. She claims that Sir Peter's rude treatment of her rather than Joseph's reasoning would be more persuasive to begin an affair. For as long as it allowed her to use her wit and intelligence, Lady Teazle has enjoyed participating in the rumour mill, but now she is starting to dislike its cruelty and impact on her marriage. Joseph presents his arguments in eloquent terms that lend them

- Joseph begins to expose his own true character to her

a moral tone. But now that he encourages Lady Teazle to commit adultery, she notices how his language and speech differ from one another. Joseph starts to reveal his own true self by urging Lady Teazle to sleep with him, doing something she will need to lie about and hide.

Sir Peter informs Joseph that he thinks Lady Teazle and Charles are in a relationship. Sir Peter responds that Joseph's morality might make it difficult for him to imagine other people acting badly because Joseph expresses disbelief. Joseph concurs, but adds that he doesn't believe Lady Teazle would be unfaithful. Sir Peter asserts that she might have been drawn to the attractive, vivacious Charles and that their age gap might make it difficult for Lady Teazle to fall in love with him. If it turns out that Lady Teazle is having an affair, he claims that everyone will make fun of him for marrying a much younger woman. If Joseph finds evidence of his brother having an affair with Lady Teazle, he vows to disown him. Joseph's feelings are praised by Sir Peter. Sir Peter constantly fears becoming the punchline of jokes. He should be aware of how many rumours are untrue, but he still takes them seriously. He has come to the conclusion that it is true that Lady Teazle does not love him because of their age disparity based on jokes she tells and rumours he is aware are rife. While Lady Teazle and Charles are having an affair, Joseph hypocritically expresses shock and disbelief while displaying no signs of discomfort.

- Joseph's hypocrisy is revealed

Sir Peter says to Joseph that he wishes to make sure that he gives Lady Teazle no cause to be upset with him. He shows Joseph two drafts of the financial arrangements he is making for Lady Teazle. He had decided to give her eight hundred pounds a year and most of his money upon his death. Joseph tells Sir Peter that this is very generous, but says to himself that he hopes this will not decrease his own influence over Lady Teazle. Sir Peter has come to realize that Lady Teazle is right about her claim on his money. He may have lived more prudently as a bachelor, but a rich man's wife is expected to be able to live in luxury. Joseph thinks that hearing this will likely change Lady Teazle's feelings about her husband, thus diminishing his own potential to seduce her. Sir Peter begins to talk about Joseph's hope to marry Maria. Joseph tries to stop Sir Peter, saying that he does not want to selfishly talk about himself when Sir Peter's happiness

in his marriage is at stake. Sir Peter continues, though, saying that he wishes Joseph would allow him to tell Lady Teazle about Joseph's hope to marry Maria, because he thinks she would help them to arrange it. To keep his own secret, Joseph pretends to care only about Sir Peter, but he cannot keep Lady Teazle from overhearing the truth that Joseph is pursuing Maria and her simultaneously. She also hears how he uses his lofty sentimental speeches to try to keep Sir Peter from revealing this secret in her hearing.

- Joseph wanted Lady Teazle to be jealous of him marrying Maria

Charles walks in. He claims to have heard that Sir Peter was with Joseph and inquires as to his whereabouts. According to Joseph, Sir Peter avoided him because he thinks Lady Teazle and Charles are having an extramarital relationship. This idea makes Charles laugh, as it seems as though Sir Peter has experienced what it's like to have a young wife. Charles responds that he has never thought about pursuing Lady Teazle when Joseph tells him to be serious. He claims that at one point he thought she might be interested in him, but he is emotionally attached to Maria. If a beautiful woman with a husband who is old enough to be her father were to throw herself at Charles, he claims that he would never do anything dishonorable on purpose. Beginning with Charles, Joseph criticizes him for acting in such a way that Sir Peter and other honorable people avoid him in a tone of moral superiority. Charles answers jocularly, exactly as if he has nothing to conceal.

- Charles laughs off the gossip with Lady Teazle

Because Charles thought Lady Teazle preferred Joseph, he claims he is surprised that Joseph would think he and Lady Teazle are having an affair. Joseph makes an effort to silence Charles, but Charles reveals that he has seen Lady Teazle and Joseph exchange passionate looks and even found them alone together. Sir Peter has heard everything they have been saying, Joseph frightenedly whispers to Charles. Charles then takes Sir Peter out of the closet despite Joseph's protests. Charles receives a handshake from Sir Peter, who claims he no longer suspects him. He also advises Charles not to be enraged with Joseph for taking part in Sir Peter's spying plot. Sir Peter thinks Charles was joking when he suggested that Lady Teazle and Joseph might be in a relationship. There is a chance that Joseph's actions toward Lady Teazle while in the company of others will be revealed to Sir Peter even if he is unaware of Lady Teazle. Charles, like Rowley,

- Lady Teazle and Joseph are in a relationship

is a good judge of character and knows that Joseph is a hypocrite because he does not listen to rumours and instead trusts his own impressions.

The servant notifies Joseph that a visitor has arrived once he is inside. Charles chooses to spend some time alone with Sir Peter instead of accepting Joseph's invitation to go downstairs with him. Joseph says he will go send this visitor away while whispering to Sir Peter not to tell Charles about the hidden French girl. Peter gives a commitment. When Charles and his brother are left alone, Sir Peter advises him to emulate his brother. Charles claims that Joseph is too traditional to serve as a role model. Charles is told by Sir Peter, who cannot contain his amusement, that Joseph has a lover who is concealed in the room behind the screen. Just as Joseph re-enters the room, Charles lowers the screen to reveal Lady Teazle. He now demands to know who is behind the screen because he hates concealment, just as Charles forced Sir Peter out of the closet. He is open and honest about his own shortcomings, so the consequences of this exposure don't bother him. While Sir Peter would have complied with Joseph's request to leave the person behind the screen alone, Sir Peter is used to concealing his true thoughts and intentions from others, especially from his wife.

- Lady Teazle and Sir Oliver are revealed

Sir Peter and Charles both exclaim in surprise. No one responds when Charles queries Joseph, Sir Peter, or Lady Teazle about the situation. After reprimanding Joseph for causing Sir Peter to worry and repeating Sir Peter's statement that "there is nothing in the world so noble as a man of sentiment!" Back to him, Charles then departs. Charles had no intention of revealing his brother's immorality, but now that he has, he cannot help but revel in the knowledge that the brother whose moral example he has been told to follow has been dishonestly concealing his true behavior all along. Joseph fumbles that he can explain everything after an awkward pause. He is advised to do so by Sir Peter. In his rambling justification, Joseph claims that Lady Teazle visited his home so he could tell her that he wanted to wed Maria without making Sir Peter envious. This is a clear explanation, Sir Peter mocks, before asking Lady Teazle to attest to it. Lady Teazle calls Joseph a hypocrite and claims that nothing he said was true. She explains to Sir Peter that she came

to watch Joseph try to seduce her even though she had not yet made up her mind. It would have been considered evidence that Lady Teazle is alone with Joseph in his home without her husband's knowledge. Despite being caught in the act, Joseph will not admit his guilt. Despite how obvious it is that he has committed a wrong, he never comes clean about it. Although Lady Teazle's justification is sincere, it is uncertain whether her husband will accept it and grant her forgiveness.

- Joseph's character as a liar and a hypocrite

Lady Teazle continues despite Joseph's protests. She claims that even though she can no longer count on Sir Peter to have her back, she was deeply moved by the kind words he spoke to Joseph about her, and even if she had not been found, she would have treated him differently going forward. She ends by calling Joseph a despicable person for trying to marry his ward (Maria) and seducing his too-trusting friend's wife at the same time. She then exits the room. Joseph makes another attempt to object by making a morality speech, but Sir Peter ignores him. Lady Teazle tells her husband that although she was caught in the act of considering adultery, she also learned the truth about his feelings for her when she overheard him discuss the suffering their arguments cause him and his desire to provide for her financially. Her behavior has completely changed; she no longer makes fun of him and believes he should be treated with more respect.

- Lady Teazle's behavior has completely changed towards Sir Oliver

Analysis

Two key scenes in this act contain dramatic irony. First, Sir Oliver finishes his second covert visit to see his nephew. A number of scenes make up this visit, which is quite dynamic. Sir Oliver makes a promise to himself and the audience at the end of Act III that he will never forgive his nephew for selling the family portraits, but by the end of Act IV he has completely forgotten about it because Charles refused to sell the portrait of Sir Oliver at any price. Since Charles sends money after his relative Mr. Stanley as soon as he has some to spare, he has even come to believe that Charles is perhaps more moral than his brother. Sir Oliver does a poor job of playing the part or hiding his emotional reactions, and yet Charles seems to be none the wiser, even when talking directly about Sir Oliver, making the scenes between Charles and Sir Oliver while Sir Oliver is posing as Mr. Premium full of

dramatic irony and humor. The act's repeated instances of people hiding in Joseph's rooms before they are discovered contain the second instance of dramatic irony. The number of people involved in the scene, who are all entangled in a complex web of love triangles and rumours, directly correlates with the increasing action and building suspense. Ironically, the attempt by Sir Peter to humiliate his friend in front of the town by tearing down the screen that, in his mind, is concealing a simple woman from the town, leads to the play's climax. The audience may also feel that Charles Surface is a refreshing presence for his unwillingness to play social games, especially those of disguise and deceit. This can be seen in his action of pulling Sir Peter out of hiding as soon as he finds out the situation. This type of quick, almost abrasive honesty has perhaps only been seen so far in Act I Scene I when Lady Sneerwell laid out her intentions for Snake, but even that was a more private situation than this public act of openness.

▶ Use of Dramatic irony

Summary

"Mr. Stanley" stops by Joseph's library, where Joseph grouses to himself that he is not in the mood to hear about other people's problems after being discovered with Lady Teazle by Sir Peter. He is confident that he will no longer be able to propose to Maria. Joseph exits the room as Sir Oliver and Rowley walk in. Joseph appears to be avoiding them, which offends Sir Oliver. Rowley claims that although Joseph talks about being charitable, he has never actually demonstrated that trait. Rowley departs so that Sir Oliver can continue to pose as Mr. Stanley unhindered, but he promises that as soon as he sees "Mr. Stanley" go, he will return right away to tell Joseph that Sir Oliver has returned from the Indies, and that they will then meet at Sir Peter's. Sir Oliver wants to see for himself whether Joseph's good reputation is justified by dressing up as a needy relative in need of charity. In an effort to calm down after being discovered with Lady Teazle, conceal his anger and disappointment, and put himself in the right frame of mind to play the moral man he is supposed to be, Joseph slinks out of the room.

▶ Sir Oliver checking on Joseph

Joseph enters and makes exaggeratedly polite excuses for keeping Mr. Stanley waiting. Mr. Stanley says he has decided to come to ask Joseph and Charles for money

because he fears that his poverty may discredit the family's reputation for wealth. Joseph denies that he is wealthy. Mr. Stanley says that he is sure that if Sir Oliver were here, he would help him. Joseph tells Mr. Stanley that contrary to public opinion, his uncle has given him almost nothing, so he cannot help him. Under his breath, Sir Oliver angrily remarks at this ingratitude. Joseph pretends to want to help his poor relative out of deep feelings of generosity, but to be unable to give him anything because he has nothing to give. Sir Oliver not only sees through this lie, he sees it as a discredit to the Surface family name and an act of ingratitude for all that he has given Joseph in the past. Joseph is neither generous nor concerned with the family reputation. Joseph goes on to say how much money he has given to help his brother with his debts. Sir Oliver does not believe this. "Mr. Stanley" says that he sees that Joseph cannot help him, and they say goodbye to one another with elaborate shows of politeness. Sir Oliver whispers to himself that Charles will be his heir, and leaves. Joseph says to himself that a reputation for charity has the unfortunate effect of drawing those who need charity, but he uses sentimental speeches instead of real money in these situations.

- Sir Oliver decides that Charles will be his heir

Joseph now pretends that he is only unable to help Mr. Stanley because he has been so personally generous to his wasteful, extravagant brother. This lie only further hurts the Surface family reputation by referring to Charles's debts. Rowley then enters and gives Joseph a note saying that Sir Oliver has arrived in London. Joseph asks his servant to stop Mr. Stanley if he has not yet gone, but Rowley says that Mr. Stanley is out of reach. Rowley tells Joseph that he will bring Sir Oliver and Charles to his house in fifteen minutes, and then departs. Joseph curses his bad luck that Sir Oliver should arrive at this moment. Joseph fears that "Mr. Stanley" will reveal to Sir Oliver Joseph's claim that it was a mere rumour that his uncle had sent him great sums of money. Realizing his reputation with his rich uncle might be at stake, he now wants to give Stanley as much money as he needs. Sir Oliver, along with Rowley, goes to visit Joseph, who is not pleased with the timing of the visit. Sir Oliver is disguised as Mr. Stanley, Joseph's poor relative. Joseph refuses to help Stanley financially, claiming that he has no money, even though Sir Oliver sent him a large sum of money from India. Sir Oliver is angered by this and declares,

"Charles! You are my heir" (p.193) as he exits. After "Mr. Stanley" leaves, Rowley returns and tells Joseph that his uncle has arrived in town. Joseph asks Rowley to stop Mr. Stanley, but Rowley says he thinks it won't be possible. Joseph is still upset that all this business is happening at such an inopportune time, but he is excited to see his uncle.

- Sir Oliver now realizes Joseph's true nature

Sir Peter's home is the setting for Scene II. The rumours surrounding Lady Teazle are discussed by Lady Sneerwell, Mrs. Candour, Sir Benjamin, and eventually Crabtree. As they gossip about Charles and Sir Peter allegedly engaging in a sword or gun duel, the rumours are exaggerated. Lady Sneerwell leaves the group as they continue to discuss the rumour, somewhat concealing her involvement in the situation. Sir Oliver shows up at the residence not long after Lady Sneerwell departs. They think he's the doctor, here to take care of Sir Peter's injury from the alleged duel. In order to draw attention to the discrepancies in the accounts he is hearing — the parties are still unable to agree on whether the wound was caused by a sword or a bullet — Sir Oliver informs them that he is not a doctor. When Sir Peter finally shows up, everyone starts to fuss over the fact that he wasn't actually hurt. He tells the group he doesn't want their jokes or their sympathy and kicks them out of his house after they make fun of him. Finally, Rowley comes back, leaving only Sir Oliver. Sir Oliver updates Sir Peter on his encounters with his two nephews. In addition, Sir Oliver claims to have heard the tale of Sir Peter, Lady Teazle, Joseph, and Charles. He then mocks his friend. Sir Peter bemoans the continued spread of the rumours through the media without feeling it much as they all join in on the laughter.

- Sir Oliver updates Sir Peter on his encounters with his two nephews

In order for Sir Peter to make amends with his wife, Sir Oliver departs. Rowley and Sir Peter talk about how upset Lady Teazle is about what happened, and Sir Peter suggests that perhaps he should let her feel bad for a while rather than approaching her. Sir Peter agrees to go make up with her after Rowley reprimands him. Joseph and Lady Sneerwell have a meeting to decide whether Sir Peter will now forgive Charles and permit him to wed Maria. He is chastised by Lady Sneerwell for derailing the plan. If Snake is still loyal to them, Joseph says it might still be possible. Joseph believes his uncle will be calling

when they hear a knock at the door, so Lady Sneerwell answers. At Sir Peter's door, Mrs. Candour is pleading with the maid to let her in so she can see Lady Teazle, who she claims must be very upset and in need of moral support. Mrs. Candour laments to herself after the maid departs that she is unsure of the details of what occurred but wants to have it reported in the gossip sections. When Sir Benjamin arrives, they start discussing the scandal. Sir Benjamin thinks that Sir Peter found out that Lady Teazle was having an affair with Joseph Surface, but Mrs. Candour is adamant that it was Charles. When Lady Sneerwell arrives, she first expresses sympathy for Lady Teazle before going into detail about all of her flaws. . Like Sir Benjamin, Lady Sneerwell thinks Lady Teazle was found with Joseph, so when she learns from Mrs. Candour that she was found with Charles, she is alarmed.

- Charles is involved in affair with Lady Teazle

Lady Sneerwell had spread the rumour that Lady Teazle and Charles were in a relationship, but she was unaware that Joseph was also after Lady Teazle while he was after Maria. She is shocked to learn that Charles, whom she loves, may have a romantic relationship with Lady Teazle. Although Sir Benjamin is unsure of which brother was directly responsible, he does express hope for Sir Peter's recovery. The two women were unaware that a duel had occurred. They learn from Sir Benjamin that Sir Peter engaged in a sword duel with one of the Surface brothers. When Crabtree enters, he corrects his nephew by asserting that the duel was actually fought with pistols. Sir Benjamin and Crabtree disagree about how Sir Peter was hurt. It turns out that Crabtree and Mrs. Candour think Lady Teazle was discovered with Charles and not Joseph. Crabtree gives a very thorough account of what transpired and how Sir Peter was hurt during their argument. After realizing that they don't really know what happened, Lady Sneerwell departs in an effort to learn the truth. These members of high society can demonstrate that they have a large social network with knowledgeable friends by knowing the specifics of the most recent scandal. The gossips even make up easily refutable details, like a duel, to support their claims of knowledge. The gossips argue inanely with one another about fictitious events as they each cling to their own version of the story. They appear confused and insecure about their place in the world as they attempt to establish their social standing by making up stories, rather than

- Gossips made the characters insecure of their life and truths

superior to the people they cruelly mock.

Sir Oliver instructs him to proceed to Joseph's where he will reveal his true identity to the Surface brothers. Sir Peter and Rowley make a commitment to meet him there. Lady Teazle is sobbing when Sir Peter investigates the adjacent room. He is urged by Rowley to visit her. When people learn that Sir Peter has absolved her, he claims they will laugh at him even more. Sir Peter concurs with Rowley's advice to use happiness as retaliation against narcissists. The lessons learned about themselves and each other from their experience with Joseph must now be applied to Lady Teazle and Sir Peter's marriage. Sir Peter discovers a new side of the witty, mocking Lady Teazle when he observes how upset his wife is at having hurt and embarrassed him. Lady Teazle realized that she had underestimated her husband's love for her. The "scandal" that might have split them up instead knits them together. Sir Oliver is indeed at the door, but Joseph misidentifies him as Mr. Stanley due to Sir Oliver's disguise. Sir Oliver continues to pose as Mr. Stanley while claiming that he also wants to meet with Sir Oliver in order to get some financial assistance. Mr. Stanley is being pushed out the door by Joseph, who does not want this. Charles mistakenly believes Sir Oliver is Mr. Premium. Sir Peter, Lady Teazle, Maria, and Rowley all enter as Charles and Joseph attempt to convince the man to leave. Sir Oliver tells his nephews who he is and why he chose to leave Charles his estate. Maria shows up, but she declines to wed Charles because she has heard rumours linking him to Lady Sneerwell. Maria consents to marry Charles after Snake tells her the truth.

- Sir Oliver reveals his true identity to the Surface brothers

The door is being knocked on. Lady Sneerwell is instructed to wait in the adjacent room by Joseph, who claims that it must be Sir Oliver, his uncle. Joseph responds that he is sure Sir Peter will be too embarrassed to tell Sir Oliver what happened and that he will soon figure out how to manipulate his uncle when Lady Sneerwell advises him to make sure that his uncle doesn't find out his true character. Like himself, Sir Peter, according to Joseph, will never admit to anything that puts him in a bad light and will instead hide his true sentiments and opinions from others. However, Sir Peter has discovered that secrecy can obstruct a happy marriage and other people's objective judgment. Sir Oliver walks in, and

upon seeing him as "Mr. Stanley," Joseph informs him that he needs to leave right away. Sir Oliver hasn't been kind to his nephew, but "Mr. Stanley" claims he has heard that he is on his way and wants to beg for his generosity. When Charles arrives, Joseph is pleading with the housekeeper to drag Mr. Stanley outside because he won't leave. Charles questions Joseph's rough treatment of his broker "Mr. Premium." Before Sir Oliver arrives, the two brothers fight over the man's identity while attempting to forcibly remove him from the house.

- The two brothers fight over Sir Oliver's identity

As the brothers try to get rid of Mr. Stanley/Mr. Premium before their uncle arrives, the wisdom of Sir Oliver's plan to test his nephews' true characters before revealing his own identity becomes apparent. He was right that Joseph and Charles would try to keep him from learning anything negative about them. Joseph wants to prevent Sir Oliver from hearing that he told Mr. Stanley he had not received money from his uncle, while Charles hopes to prevent him from learning that he sold the family portraits. Sir Peter, Lady Teazle, Maria, and Rowley arrive. Sir Peter says he is glad that he arrived in time to save Sir Oliver from being knocked down. Joseph and Charles realize Sir Oliver's identity and are stunned. Sir Oliver says that he has discovered Joseph's true character and finds him an ungrateful, ungenerous liar. Sir Peter and Lady Teazle agree. Charles says to himself that he is sure to be judged harshly for selling the family portraits, especially if his brother gets such treatment. Charles knows that he showed inadequate respect for his family by selling the portraits, and does not know that Sir Oliver has revealed much more serious character flaws in Joseph. Used to having his character judged harshly, especially in comparison to his brother, Charles does not imagine that his uncle will see things any differently.

- Joseph and Charles realize Sir Oliver's identity

Sir Oliver then starts to describe Charles, but Joseph cuts him off and says he needs to explain. Sir Oliver does not take Joseph's explanation seriously and instead asks Charles if he also thinks he can defend his actions. Charles explains to his uncle that he is unable. Sir Oliver laughs at how cheaply Charles sold the heirlooms and claims he cannot be angry with Charles. Sir Oliver says he forgives Charles for his inappropriate behavior after Charles expresses how happy he is to see his uncle. Joseph's sentimental speeches are now transparent to everyone,

and his attempts to defend himself only make him look worse. The last thing going against him is his refusal to acknowledge his wrongdoing and apologize. Charles, on the other hand, demonstrates his awareness that what he did was improper, providing his uncle with the chance to extend forgiveness. Lady Teazle asserts that she thinks Charles wants to reconcile with Maria more than he wants to do so with his uncle. Although she is aware that Charles is in love with someone else, Maria says that she is glad to hear that Charles is happy after initially remaining silent. Sir Peter and Charles exclaim in disbelief, but Maria assures them that Lady Sneerwell and Charles are aware of the truth. Then Joseph lets Lady Sneerwell in by opening the door. Joseph asserts that he can provide evidence to support Maria's belief that Charles and Lady Sneerwell are engaged, despite her claim that Charles has placed her in an awkward situation. Sir Peter asks Mr. Rowley to bring in Snake, speculating that Joseph intends to call on Snake. Lady Sneerwell and Joseph have persuaded Maria that Charles and Lady Sneerwell are engaged, but it is improbable that they will be able to compel Charles to wed Lady Sneerwell simply because he promised to do so in a series of forgeried letters. Joseph, who once believed he could coerce Lady Teazle into helping him marry Maria after they had sex, once more overestimates the power of lies to force people to act as he wants them to.

- Lady Sneerwell and Joseph have persuaded Maria that Charles and Lady Sneerwell are engaged

Snake walks in and apologizes to Lady Sneerwell, explaining that while she paid him well to fabricate letters and lie, Rowley gave him twice as much money to tell the truth. Lady Teazle confronts Lady Sneerwell as she storms out of the room, telling her that she knows Lady Sneerwell started the untrue rumour about her affair with Charles and that she no longer wants anything to do with the group of gossips. Joseph claims he is horrified and outraged to learn that Lady Sneerwell hired Snake to deceive them, but he has to follow her to ensure she won't seek retaliation against Charles. Joseph is yelled at by Sir Oliver to get married to Lady Sneerwell if he can. Snake departs, pleading with them not to let anyone know that he was telling the truth because his livelihood depends on deceit and lying. Joseph still won't acknowledge his own immorality or wrongdoing even after Snake reveals the final element of his and Lady Sneerwell's plot. He realizes that his last chance to increase his wealth is to

- Snake revealed the evil plans of lady Sneerwell

marry Lady Sneerwell, so he decides not to try to justify his actions to his family and instead sets out in search of her. Meanwhile, Lady Teazle is fed up with the rumours.

Maria and Charles are congratulated by everyone for being able to wed at this time. According to Sir Peter, he and Lady Teazle intend for Maria and Charles to live as happily as they do. Rowley says he will feel vindicated if Charles changes his ways, and Charles thanks him for his support. Although Charles says he won't make any guarantees, this is also evidence that he will genuinely make an effort to become a better person, he adds. Charles recites a verse at the play's conclusion. He claims that by marrying Maria, he will be motivated to become a better person. Charles has demonstrated that he is driven by emotions of loyalty, generosity, and love when it matters. He confirms Rowley was correct to see through his deceptive actions and realize that he is actually a moral man. His wealth will significantly increase once he marries Maria and becomes Sir Oliver's heir, but he swears to deserve this investment in his future.

- Maria and Charles on being able to marry now

For the epilogue, Lady Teazle returns to the stage. Rhyming couplets are used, and Lady Teazle bemoans how the play ends for her persona. She claims that she is too young, attractive, and full of life to be forced to move out to the country with her dull, older husband and live a quiet, moral life. She wants to enjoy London, play cards, and socialize while looking stunning. She claims that when she told the play's author this, he made a joke about how she should portray this fate in a tragedy. According to Lady Teazle, the playwright told her that she was fortunate that her plot ended so well and that the curtain fell at a suitable time. Like Charles, Lady Teazle has decided to stop hanging out with gossips and instead treat her husband with kindness and respect. This ensures that she won't further damage her reputation. However, the play does not portray this as a completely happy conclusion and in an unexpected twist at the end it implies that it is a shame to control young people's wild and excessive behaviors before they become adults. The play makes the case that, despite the serious consequences of a damaged reputation, it might be worthwhile to take a chance in order to experience the benefits of high society.

- Lady Teazle recites the epilogue

Act V's disguised visit by Sir Oliver to Joseph is another

instance of dramatic irony in action. Again, Sir Oliver plays the part while making numerous asides to the audience about Joseph's greed. The audience enjoys Joseph's amusement at not being able to identify his own uncle and shares Sir Oliver's shock at Joseph's immoral actions. It is evident that Joseph does not value public honesty and, in contrast to Charles, does not feel a sense of loyalty to his family. Act V also serves as a vehicle for Sheridan to continue parodying the act of rumour-spreading. He accomplishes this primarily through the scene, in which a cast of characters discuss a hypothetical fight between Sir Peter and Joseph, which is depicted in vivid and detailed detail. Sheridan purposefully depicts this rumour and others like it in the play with exaggerated, even minute, detail to demonstrate how rumours can spiral out of control due to the hubris and egotism of those who spread them.

- Dramatic irony when Sir Oliver visits Joseph in disguise

Sheridan demonstrates his views on truth in Act V by giving the story's various plotlines happy conclusions after the truth is revealed. When Sir Peter learns that Lady Teazle has been having an affair, he decides to forgive her and even appears more optimistic about their marriage, according to the plot of Sir Peter and Lady Teazle. Charles and Sir Oliver are both pleased with the revelation of the true nature of the Surface brothers, but Joseph, the avaricious hypocrite, is not. Maria and Charles can at last love one another peacefully after Snake reveals the truth about Lady Sneerwell's plot. It's important to pay attention to Snake in *The School for Scandal*. Even though he only appears in the play's opening and closing scenes, it is he who spreads rumours, having complete faith in no one and loyalty to none, and it is he who, at the conclusion of Act V, fully resolves the play's conflict. Snake ironically asks for forgiveness for his role in the rumour-spreading while also pleading with people not to tell others about his assistance in settling the dispute, claiming that he maintains his friendships "by the badness of [his] character" (p.238). The play concludes with an epilogue, which, like prologues, was a common device to draw the audience's attention to the play's themes and to directly appeal to them to take these themes and morals to heart. The epilogue of *The School for Scandal* is delivered by Lady Teazle, who emphasizes the significance of her role, particularly given that she is a stranger who might

- The play is a harsh criticism of any who engage in gossip

be viewed as having been affected by the pressures of upper-class societal norms in London. Through this epilogue, Sheridan once more implores the audience to view this play as harsh criticism of anyone who engages in gossip—both its creation and its transmission—rather than as simple entertainment.

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. Who is onstage at the beginning of Act 1, Scene 1?
6. How does Lady Sneerwell plan to make Maria not love Charles?
7. Who speaks in the Epilogue?

Suggested Readings

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3. Loftis, John, ed. *Restoration Drama-Modern Essays in Criticism*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1966.
4. Price, C.J.L. *Introduction, The School for Scandal, by Richard Brinsley Sheridan*. Delhi: Oxford U P, 1977.

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 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

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

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

- snipping of the locks of a lady Belinda

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.

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

2.1.1 Summary

The poem's mock-heroic tone is established in the opening. Along with an evocation to the muse and a dedication to the man, John Caryll, who commissioned the poem, Pope introduces the traditional epic subjects of love and war. The second line explicitly states what the first line already implies: the "am'rous causes" the poem describes are not comparable to the majesty of Greek heroes' love, but rather, they stand for a trivialized version of that feeling. The "contests" Pope refers to are card games and sexy scraps rather than the monumental conflicts of epic tradition. Belinda is more of a face that inspires a lot of foppish nonsense than "the face that launched a thousand ships," like Helen of Troy was. The narrative voice opens the poem by reflecting on how great suffering frequently arises from trivial matters and mentions that the story that follows was first communicated to the poet by a "Muse" named "Caryl."

The basic irony of the style supports the substance of the poem's satire, which attacks the misguided values of a society. The poem's mock epic style is established by the opening invocation of the Muse, a goddess of creativity and poetry. This is a common practice in epic poetry. The narrative voice wonders what might motivate a lord to assault a lady and a lady to reject a lord.

- The poem attacks the misguided values of a society

Belinda is still in bed after everyone else has left because her guardian sylph keeps her from waking up. He sends her a dream of a charming young man as she sleeps. He goes on to say that all women's souls return to the four elements from which they originated after death. Coquettes, flirtatious and lighthearted women, turn into sylphs that "flutter" through the air. Fiery women turn into salamanders. "Soft yielding" women turn into water spirits. Pious women's souls sink into the earth and turn into gnomes. These sylphs are in charge of guarding the pleasure and chastity of fresh "belles" joining society. The Sylph uncomfortably echoes Satan in Milton's "*Paradise Lost*," who tempts Eve by "Squat like a Toad, close at the ear of Eve;/ Assaying by his Devilish art to reach/ The Organs of her Fancy," when he whispers in Belinda's ear in this scene. As does the sylph sending Belinda a seductive vision of a handsome young man when he's supposed to be guarding her chastity, these things imply that there is something demonic about sylphs. The way that women's souls are divided into four rudimentary categories — prudes and "coquettes" — that distinguish between attractive and unattractive women — also introduces the pressures that Pope's society places on women to be deemed desirable.

- Bellinda dreams of a handsome young man

The sylph goes on to say that some young women are ruined because evil gnomes, not sylphs, keep watch over them. For Belinda's benefit, the sylphs who are in charge of her will make sure to steer her in the right direction through all of life's ups and downs in social situations and party settings. Sylphs also maintain order in the "toyshop of the heart," ensuring that life for women is glamorous and exciting. The sylphs' ability to treat the human heart like a toy (a "toyshop") and the notion that some women are forced into ruin due to the influence of the gnomes cast doubt on the characters' capacity for free will in the poem. The sylph introduces himself as Ariel and explains

that he has looked to the stars and discovered that some catastrophe is imminent. He cautions Belinda, the "pious maid," to "beware of man" even though he is unsure of the precise form this will take. The reader is led to believe that Ariel is likely to be similarly cunning because he shares a name with the trickster spirit that Shakespeare portrays in The Tempest. His admonition to Belinda emphasizes the value of chastity in her society, which in turn draws attention to the constrictive expectations of female sexuality prevalent in Pope's time.

- Ariel the sylph gives Belinda a warning

Belinda is awakened by the dog Shock after deciding that she has been dozing for too long. Reading some love letters causes her to quickly lose sight of the significance of Ariel's message. Because of her sense of vanity, Belinda is able to quickly forget Ariel's message as she reads her love letters and is content to focus only on the compliments she receives. Belinda starts the laborious process of getting dressed and grooming herself with the assistance of the sylphs and Betty. The dressing table is used as a "altar" for these "sacred rites of pride," with Betty represented as a pagan "priestess" and Belinda acting as the "goddess." The way Belinda describes getting dressed echoes the tradition in epic poetry of having a scene where the hero is wearing his armor. It is made clear that she is not getting ready for battle, but rather for social interaction by changing the armor scene into a dressing scene. The religious imagery also makes a clever moral determination that their underlying vanity is incompatible with Christian principles.

- Belinda begins to dress and groom herself for a party

As she gets ready for the day, Belinda lists a long items of necessities, including "India's glowing gems," "all Arabia," "tortoise" and "elephant" in the form of "combs," as well as "puffs, powders, patches, bibles." The sylphs are essential to plan everything carefully. This passage highlights the absurdity of Belinda's vanity, by demonstrating how many expensive grooming products she requires. Her exotic possessions also reflect a wider pattern during this time of colonialism, which gave the British control over other nations. Pope emphasises the self-importance associated with Belinda's beauty when he refers to a box of Arabian perfumes as "all Arabia," making it seem as though Belinda herself is a great conqueror of these distant lands. Belinda has come to value her self-care routine as significant as her religious

- Pope highlights the self-importance associated with her beauty

obligations, as evidenced by the mention of "bibles" muddled in with a slew of unimportant items like "puffs" and "powders."

2.1.2 Summary and Analysis

Everyone is mesmerized by Belinda's beauty as she sails down the Thames. Even "Jews" and "infidels" would want to kiss the jewel-encrusted cross that she wears because it is so sparkling. She waves to everyone and smiles. She has eyes that are "bright as the sun." Any "female mistakes" that she might make would be instantly forgotten if someone looked at her face because she is so stunning. The fact that Belinda is traveling by boat emphasizes her role as a parody of an epic hero since most epic poems feature a sea voyage. The fact that Belinda's bejeweled cross is so attractive that even "Jews" and "infidels" would be drawn to it suggests that she lacks religious conviction; the cross is more of a lovely ornament than a representation of her faith. The term "female errors" implies that Belinda's actions are judged harsher than they would be if she were a man. It makes sense and seems wise that she cultivates her beauty to avoid unfair moral scrutiny if her beauty makes these "errors" instantly forgotten when looking at her face.

▶ Belinda sails along the river Thames

Belinda has two lovely curls in her hair. These curls are "labyrinths" in which Love "detains" his "slaves," tying men's hearts in "slender chains," because they are so alluring that any man who sees them is overcome with desire for her. One such individual is the Baron, who decides to seize one lock either by force or by trickery. Here, Pope again seems to imply that Belinda's vanity might actually be liberating in some way. Her hair has the ability to turn the men into "slaves" who would otherwise treat her as an inferior person because she is a woman, showing that her beauty somewhat levels the playing field at the patriarchal court. The Baron built a pyre out of various items associated with love, including volumes of French romances, "garters," "gloves," and love letters earlier that day, before the sun rose, and prayed to Love for success in obtaining his "prize." Both the pagan religious tradition and the epic tradition are referenced by the pyre. Pyres are typically used for funerary rituals, but in this instance the Baron is praying to the god of Love using his pyre. Pope continues to mock court life in this way.

This scene also makes one think of Belinda's own pagan altar, which she made out of her dressing table. Men were thought to be morally and intellectually superior to women during Pope's time, but the comparison between the Baron's frivolous pyre and Belinda's dressing table altar suggests that the two were equally frivolous in terms of morality.

- Belinda's hair is the centre of attraction

Ariel is still troubled by the notion that something terrible is about to happen even though everything appears to be going perfectly back on the boat and everyone is content. He calls forth a sylph army. "Ye Sylphs and Sylphids, to your chief give ear, / Fays, Fairies, Genii, Elves, and Daemons, hear," Ariel exhorts them. Then he goes on to list all the different functions that spirits can perform — some guide the planets, others make the weather — and reminds them of the sylph's responsibility to protect the lovely. Pope further muddles the sylphs' hold in this passage. Pope again quotes Milton at this point, but this time he imitates God, who cries out to the angels, "Hear all ye Angels, Progenie of Light, / Thrones, Dominations, Princedoms, Vertues, Powers, / Hear my Decree." The result suggests that Ariel has motivations that fall somewhere between those of an angel and a devil.

- Ariel summons an army of sylphs to protect Belinda

Ariel informs the gathered group that although he is unsure of what it is, he is concerned that it could be anything from Belinda losing her virginity to staining her new dress to losing her heart or a necklace at a ball. This raises new concerns about how much Ariel genuinely values Belinda's virtue. Ariel gives different specific tasks to sylphs in order to protect Belinda. Zephyretta will take care of her fan, Brillante will take care of her earrings, Momentilla will take care of her watch, Crispissa will take care of her hair, and Ariel will take care of her pet dog, Shock. The names of the sylphs are too closely associated with their functions. Zephyretta's name is reminiscent of the word "zephyr," which denotes a breeze, which fits the duty of watching over Belinda's fan. Momentilla is named after the word "moment," which has associations with keeping watch. The word "crisp" in the name Crispissa sounds like a curl. This name-matching emphasizes how ridiculous everything is, giving the impression that everyone is made just for these menial tasks.

- Zephyretta will look after her fan

Belinda's petticoat, which is referred to as the "sevenfold fence" and is "stiff with hoops" and "armed with ribs of whale," will be looked after by fifty sylphs. Ariel ends his speech by warning that failure to care for one's charge will result in harsh punishment. All of them quickly line up and wait for the terrifying situation that Ariel has foreseen. The way Belinda's petticoat is described here mirrors her as a parody of an epic hero while once more emphasizing the importance of chastity in her world. The comparison between Belinda's petticoat and a shield implies that while a hero's shield serves to protect their lives, Belinda's petticoat serves to prevent others from having sexual contact with her.

- Petticoat - the significance of chastity in her world

2.1.3 Summary and Analysis

The boat arrives at Hampton Court, where Queen Anne "occasionally" has tea while seeking legal advice. The ladies and gentlemen split up to indulge in the pleasures of a day at court, including chit-chatting about everything from social engagements to the Queen to the furnishings. In order for their jurors to eat sooner, the "hungry judges" hastily pronounce judgments, and those who are sentenced to death are hanged at the gallows. The triviality of the court world is highlighted in this passage. Pope humorously combines serious business with leisure when he depicts Queen Anne taking both counsel and tea. In his description of the pointless chitchat of the lords and ladies, which still results in the demise of reputations, he also draws attention to this combination. The hasty decision of the judges to sentence people to death so they can eat sooner exposes the darker side of this mixing of personal pleasure and important business, showing that this is a place where personal greed is prioritized above justice or empathy.

- Triviality of the world of the court

Belinda arranges her cards before beginning a game of ombre with two men "to decide their doom." The sylphs descend and alight on the playing cards. As she plays her strongest cards early in the game, Belinda is having a successful time. "Led off two captive trumps and swept the board," read the first card she played, the "Spadillo." She gains the same amount of success with her second card, the "manillo," but less with her third card, the "basto," which only receives one trump card and one "plebian" card. But she then makes a very wise

play by playing the King of Spades. Belinda is winning so far. Epic poetry is known for its spectacular battles, which are typically major conflicts between civilizations involving both gods and humans. A mock imitation of this grand conflict can be found in Pope's description of the card game's "combat."

▶ Belinda is winning so far

Then the Baron begins to dominate the game. However, he plays his Ace and, to his surprise, she plays the King of Hearts, meaning that she wins. The fierce struggle between the Baron and Belinda also foreshadows the later tension between the two, as each struggles to dominate the other. As Belinda celebrates her success, the narrative voice laments how little mortals know of the future and the disaster that is to come on this "victorious day" when Belinda's "honors" will be "snatched away." This parodies the convention in epic poetry of receiving a warning in a moment of pride. Just at that moment, Clarissa pulls out a pair of scissors, and offers them to the Baron like a lady in a courtly romance arming a knight with his weapon. The Baron moves to chop off the lock. Suddenly, all the sylphs hurry to Belinda's neck and attempt to fiddle with her hair and twist her earring three times to get her attention. But each time, the Baron slips away and then comes back again. Here the comparison Pope makes between the Baron and an honourable knight from a romance is that instead of defending ladies, the Baron seeks to steal from and humiliate them.

▶ Clarissa offers the scissors to Baron to snip Belinda's locks

Ariel accesses Belinda's inner thoughts, but—to his shock—finds "An earthly lover lurking there." This resigns him to the loss of the lock. The Baron snips it off. Pope's narration here is a little opaque, but what has happened is that Ariel has discovered that Belinda's thoughts are not as chaste as he would wish, and so he allows the Baron to snip off the lock. It seems that Ariel feels that Belinda either deserves or wishes to be violated, particularly since the snipping of the lock has sexual undertones. This emphasizes the extreme restrictions this world places on female sexuality, where Belinda's private thoughts not even her actions can result in punishment for being too sexual. This also highlights the fickleness of Ariel's character, as in Canto I he tempts her mind with the vision of the young man, but now he judges her for her sexually-charged thoughts and abandons her. A sylph gets caught in the way and gets cut in half by the scissors, but he

quickly recovers as "airy substance soon unites again." Belinda cries out in horror while the Baron shouts out his victory. The narrative voice muses on how little chance the lock had against the scissors. This passage echoes Book VI of Milton's Paradise Lost, in which the archangels battle against Satan. The humorous contrast between the incredibly high-stakes battle and the relatively low-stakes hair snipping emphasizes the triviality of courtly life.

- Ariel abandons Belinda because of her sexually-charged thoughts

2.1.4 Summary and Analysis

Belinda is still quite upset about the loss of her lock, and her frustration and despair are deeper and more consuming than the despair of "ardent lovers robbed of all their bliss". At this moment, the sylphs leave her. The fact that the sylphs, guardians of beautiful virgins, now leave her reinforces the idea that there is a sense in which the Baron has metaphorically sexually violated her, making her no longer a virgin. Umbriel, the gnome, a "dusky melancholy sprite," appears and descends to the subterranean Cave of Spleen. When he first enters, he encounters the personified East wind languishing on a bed, away from the rays of the sun, with a migraine. Many epics include a descent into the underworld, as it could be seen in Homer's *Odyssey* and *Virgil's* Aeneid. As he moves deeper into the Cave, Umbriel sees the Queen of Spleen's two handmaids—Ill-Nature and Affectation. Ill-Nature is a withered old maid in a dress of black and white, with a heart full of spite for others. Affection is youthful and sickly, and has been taught to speak with a lisp and to hang her head to the side. She is richly dressed, languishing on expensive bedding. The Cave of Spleen acts as kind of a dark mirror for the lively court above and offers a grotesque glimpse of what happens to the women who are excluded from court life on account of failing to be youthful and beautiful Ill-Nature is thus depicted as a kind of social outcast, an old and unmarried woman, while Affectation represents the worst excesses of put-on femininity, a belle gone too far, whose unattractive lisping and hanging her head to the side is designed to strike the viewer as helpless.

- Baron's cutting of her hair has metaphorically sexually violated her

Umbriel continues through the Cave. A strange vapour hangs in the air, out of which strange shapes arise. These include women who are "expiring," "glaring fiends," "snakes,""Pale specters,""gaping tombs,""lakes of liquid gold" and "angels in machines." There are also various

bodies warped by the powers of the spleen on all sides, including "living teapots," men who are pregnant, and women who have been transformed into bottles. Umbriel passes along safely, holding a piece of "spleenwort" in his hand. In Pope's time, the spleen, an organ was believed to send up vapors to the brain which induced hysteria and neurosis, as mirrored in the presence of the strange vapor which hangs in the air of the cave. But the effects of spleen were also believed to include various forms of sexual dysfunction. So, fittingly the cave includes women with distinctly unladylike sexual appetites, those who are "expiring" and women transformed into bottles. These, in conjunction with the pregnant men, represent a hellish vision of the utter violation of the gendered rules of the world above.

- The cave as an inversion of rules in the gendered world

Eventually Umbriel reaches the Queen of Spleen herself. He hails her as the ruler of women between the ages of 15 and 50, making the women either hysterical and ill or making them frantically attempt to compose poetry and plays. Umbriel explains that there is a beautiful woman who enjoys herself too much and looks down on the Queen's powers, and he cites his past services for her. He then asks her to touch Belinda with "chagrin," as this one act will create a great deal of discord. The Queen of Spleen grants Umbriel's request and binds together a bag for him containing "the force of female lungs, / Sighs, sobs, and passions, and the war of tongues." She also gives him a vial which holds "fainting fears, / Soft sorrows, melting griefs, and flowing tears." He is overjoyed and speeds back to the world above ground.

- Umbriel betrays Belinda to the Queen

When Umbriel returns, he finds Belinda in the arms of Thalestris, a lady at court, who is lamenting the lock's loss. She asks if it was for this that Belinda took such pains with her hair, doing everything from using "torturing irons" to straining her "tender head" with "fillets." She worries that the Baron will put the lock on display for everyone to see and that Belinda's reputation will be ruined. Thalestris' melodramatic description of all the pains Belinda has taken to perfect her hairdo, including "torturing irons" and "fillets," suggests the absurd importance of beauty at the court. She thinks of Belinda as having bravely and dutifully carried out these painful rituals and attributes that to virtue, rather than vanity. Thalestris goes to her suitor Lord Plume, who is apparently particularly proud

of his expensive snuff box and fashionable cane. He confronts the Baron and demands him to return the lock to Belinda, but the Baron refuses. Lord Plume's name recalls the word "plume," meaning a decorative feather. Coupled with the details of his fancy snuff box and cane, he forms a parodic portrait of a vain male courtier, a counterpart to the vanity of the ladies at court.

- Baron refuses to return the lock

Umbriel is not satisfied, however, and breaks the vial of "sorrows" over Belinda, who appears dejected. She gives a speech about how she wishes she had never tasted the pleasures of court and had stayed at home instead. She insists that the day was full of bad omens, including her dropping her "patch box" three times, "The tottering china shook without a wind," and Shock behaving unusually. She even remembers that a sylph warned her that a disaster was to come, but that she didn't understand until it was too late. She wishes to tear off the remaining lock, feeling that it "tempts once more" the Baron's "sacrilegious hands." Umbriel's pouring the vial of "sorrows" over Belinda means she is not totally responsible for her actions, a recurring problem in the poem, since mortals are influenced by supernatural forces. It is thus difficult to tell if she really means anything she says about wishing she had been more modest and stayed away from the glamorous court. The mention of omens also ties into the mock epic style, trivially parodying the serious warnings of the gods in epic poems with the mention of totally banal events like Belinda's dropping her "patch box" or her china shaking.

- Umbriel breaks the vial of "sorrows" over Belinda.

2.1.5 Summary and Analysis

Although everyone else is moved by Belinda's speech, the Baron is not, as "fate and Jove" have prevented him from truly listening to her. Belinda is overcome with emotion. Clarissa grows fed up with the situation and steps forward to give her thoughts. She argues that the emphasis society puts on women to be merely beautiful is absurd, and that men should only praise women who are both beautiful and virtuous. Clarissa's name literally means "clarity," and this speech demonstrates her intellectual and moral authority. This both explicitly and implicitly counters the idea that, as a woman, she is the intellectual and moral inferior of men, and that the best thing she can be in life is beautiful – an idea which

- Clarissa's character demonstrates Intellectual and Moral authority

the court's obsession with female beauty encourages. However, it's worth remembering that she helped the Baron snip off the lock by offering him her scissors, so it is possible to read her speech as a means of excusing her own behavior by suggesting that the lock is never really that important.

But Clarissa then points out that this is not the case. A decline in one's attractiveness is inevitable. All hair eventually turns grey, every face ages, regardless of the make-up covering it, and anyone who is unmarried must die an old maid. She then says that the most sensible thing to do is to cultivate good humour in the face of aging, which often proves more effective. She sums up her argument by stating that, while exterior beauty may attract the eyes, virtue attracts the soul. Here Clarissa argues that beauty is without true worth because, unlike virtue, it is ultimately fleeting. Decay awaits all bodies, no matter how beautiful, and so any beauty is itself transient and therefore worthless. And while this does make good sense, Pope later challenges this idea in the final lines of the poem.

- Clarissa argues that beauty is without true worth

No one is very impressed with this speech. Thalestris calls Clarissa a "prude" and Belinda calls "To arms, to arms!" This begins a kind of courtly battle. The narrative voice explains that this is exactly like how the gods of Homer fight, and it resembles a battle between "Pallas, Mars; Latona, Hermes" and Jove and Neptune. Umbriel is delighted with what's going on and watches gleefully, while the other "sprites" either watch or join the fray. Here Pope continues the mock epic style of narration, drawing upon epic battle scenes and comparing the characters' struggles with those of the gods ("Pallas, Mars; Latona, Hermes", "Jove" and "Neptune"). The humor here comes from the fact that this courtly fight is clearly not nearly as impressive or dramatic as an epic battle, here the most frightening sounds are the "clap" of "Fans" and the "rustle" of "Silks."

- A courtly battle begins between Clarissa and Belinda

Belinda approaches the Baron, ready to attack him. She pinches his nose and then releases, but only after throwing some snuff powder at him, which the gnomes push in the right direction. The Baron inhales the snuff powder, causing him to sneeze loudly. She then pulls out a bodkin, but this is no ordinary bodkin. The metal once belonged

to her great-great-grandfather in the form of three seal rings, which was then melted down into a buckle for his widow, then passed down to her grandmother as a child in the form of a whistle, and then was turned into a bodkin for her mother, and then finally passed down to Belinda herself. The Baron had previously promised that he would never surrender the lock while his nostrils breathed air, so this sneeze comically fulfills that promise. The description of the bodkin meanwhile parodies the tradition in epic poetry of tracing the history of a particular weapon, once again comically comparing the high stakes world of epic with the triviality of the court.

▶ Belinda attacks the Baron

As Belinda prepares to stab the Baron with her bodkin, he shouts out that one day she, too, will be brought this low, but that he fears nothing in death, other than being separated from her. He then begs to be allowed to live, tortured as he already is by the flames of Cupid. She screams at him to return the lock, as angrily as the character Othello screams for the handkerchief in the play by Shakespeare. Belinda's comparison of herself to the tragic figure of Othello as he searches for the handkerchief once again creates a humorous juxtaposition between an incredibly tense and dramatic situation and her own relatively trivial one. But mysteriously, the lock is nowhere to be found. The narrative voice muses that the lock was perhaps too "blest" for any mortal to possess and then informs the reader that many present assumed it had passed into the realm of the moon, where things lost on earth can supposedly be found, everything from "broken vows" to "lovers' hearts". But the narrative voice says that the "Muse" alone watched the lock ascend into the sky. Then it shot along like a shooting star, more brightly than Berenice's locks, and the sylphs watched on contentedly.

▶ The lock of hair shot to the sky like a shooting star

The lock's ascension to the heavens in the style of the mythical locks of Berenice is the high point of Pope's increasingly silly classical references. Instead of drawing a comparison with an epic scenario to point out how different the courtly scenario is, now the courtly scenario and the mythological scenario appear to merge. The narrative voice continues, affirming that the "beau monde," or the fashionable world, will gaze on the lock in the skies from "the Mall," and that lovers will often mistake it for the planet Venus and will send up prayers of love

from "Rosamonda's lake." It also states that "Partridge" will be able to spot this through "Galileo's eyes" and with it predicts the fates of "Louis" and "the fall of Rome." The "Mall" is a promenade in St. James' Park in London and "Rosamonda's lake" refers to a pond there favored by those unlucky in love. "Partridge" was a contemporary astronomer and "Galileo's eyes" refer to a telescope. This slew of modern references further adds to the absolute absurdity of the lock's ascension to heaven, Pope claims that it will be visible to the public, humorously tying together the mythological and the everyday.

- The lock's ascension- classical reference

Finally, the narrative voice addresses Belinda herself, telling her not to be sad over the loss of her lock, since its position in the sky means that it will be all the more admired and will outlive her, never turning grey. It concludes by stating that it will inspire the "Muse," who will then write her name among the stars. Here, Pope finally seems to make a judgement on what the value of beauty truly is. He agrees with Clarissa's point that beauty is indeed transient, but his reference to the "Muse," a goddess of art and poetry, seems to suggest that beauty can be valuable and achieve a degree of immortality by inspiring poets like himself to write works which do indeed live on.

- The narrative voice addresses Belinda telling her not to be sad

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?

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Angellics's Lament

Aphra Behn

Background

Aphra Behn was an English playwright, poet, prose writer and translator from the Restoration era. She began, in the 1670s and 1680s, to produce poems and translations. She broke cultural barriers and served as a literary role model for later generations of women authors. Germaine Greer calls her a palimpsest; she has scratched herself out›. Her works are said to be the sparks of the Restoration writings by women. The body of literature carved by Behn is the primeval mould of feminism. Aphra Behn wrote about love and sex in an era when revelation of sexual feelings by women in the pages of literature was strictly prohibited. In a time when women were supposed to remain quiet about their sexual desires, Behn asserted that women, equal to men, were sexual beings. She palpably portrays women who are capable of lust and desire.

Keywords

Gender roles, Restoration woman, Feminism

Discussion

Most of Aphra Behn's poems were published in two collections that included longer narrative works of prose and poetry as well as shorter verses. *Poems upon Several Occasions*: *with A Voyage to the Island of Love* (1684) and *Lycidas*: *Or The Lover in Fashion* (1688) reflect Behn's customary use of classical, pastoral, courtly, and traditionally English lyric modes. Behn's verse style is particular and identifiable, with a very distinctive voice. The speaker is usually identified as a character or as "Astrea," Behn's poetic self, and there is usually a specific audience. There may be dialogue within a poem, but, unlike the dialogue in her plays, in the poetry the voices are joined in lyrical rather than dramatic expression. In fact, the musicality of Behn's verse is another identifying

characteristic. Behn's poems are more classical, in the tradition of Ben Jonson rather than John Donne. She shares with John Dryden a preference for the couplet, but she also uses a modified ballad stanza and more varied verse forms if the content permits. The decorum of her verse is based in a very traditional relationship between structure and meaning, so that her discourse has a sense of immediacy and directness despite the conventionality of her literary forms.

- Prefers couplet

During the Restoration, poems circulated in a variety of forms, from copied manuscript to printed anthology. This meant that a single poem might exist in several different versions, and that poems could often be misattributed. Her poem 'The Disappointment' first appeared in a pirated volume of poems by the Earl of Rochester, and was for some while believed to be by him. Behn wrote Pindaric panegyrics on state occasions, lowbrow political satires and ballads, bawdy libertine verses, and pastorals. The range of Behn's poetic output over all these publications suggests something of the necessary diversity of Restoration poetry. This was a period before Romanticism, and before poetry was viewed as a medium for the expression of personal feelings.

- Pindaric panegyrics

Angellica's Lament

Had I remained in innocent security,
I should have thought all men were born my slaves,
And worn my power like lightning in my eyes,
To have destroyed pleasure when offended.
But when love held the mirror, the undeceiving glass
Reflected all the weakness of my soul, and made me know
My richest treasure being lost, my honor,
All the remaining spoil could not be worth
The conqueror's care or value.
Oh how I feel like a long worshiped idol
Discovering all the cheating.

2.2.1 Summary

In the poem titled "Angellica's Lament", the narrator talks about her youth and how she believed as a young woman that every man was born to be slaves to women. Thus, as a young woman, she believed women were the

ones who ruled everything from a distance and men would do anything in their power to make women feel safe and protected. But the poem represents the gender roles of male dominance and female submission. As time passed, she was forced to recognize that was not the truth. The narrator found women were slaves, controlled by the men in their lives and with no say in their lives. It shows just how women were deceived and fooled into believing that they were more valuable and had much more influence than they actually had in reality.

- The narrator talks about her youthhood

Aphra Behn was a woman who lived in the 17th century in Great Britain and being a woman from a good family, she was shielded from many truths women had to face in everyday life. For example, Aphra Behn believed men were put on this earth to be slaves to women but as time passed, she found the opposite to be true. She had to find this through the hard way, by losing the biggest treasure a woman could have, namely her honor. This is mentioned in the poem entitled "Angellica's Lament" where the narrator admits she lost her biggest treasure. In those times, a woman's honor could be either her virginity or her good reputation. If a woman from a good family lost those, it could mean ruin for her since it could mean she could no longer find a suitable suitor for her. Behn uses traditional poetic language and form to capture the modern hope of equality for women. Her best-known works are *Oroonoko*: or, *The Royal Slave*, sometimes described as an early novel, and the play *The Rover.*

- The narrator admits she lost her biggest treasure

2.2.2 Analysis

The poem is taken from her play, *The Rover*. Behn's speakers are always women, and they narrate from the female perspectives. Angellica Bianca, a prostitute despondently believes herself to be truly fallen sexually and socially. In this story, Angellica falls in love with the double-crossing Wilmore and seeks to get married despite having no virginity to offer. But Wilmore is convinced and the evil plan was to make her have sex with him first, causing her to fall in love, finally rejecting her. Angellica appears broken by the loss of Wilmore. In conventional patriarchal fashion Wilmore accuses Angellica of having been spoiled by her previous lover, who Wilmore says made her vain and domineering on the surface. Angelica appears to accept his criticism. The

- Angellica, a prostitute cheated by Wilmore

eleven lines that follow are ostensibly a groan of defeat by Angellica at the loss of her lover.

However, this poem in its core actually depicts a woman who after examining her own behaviour finds herself releasing from previously held beliefs and grieving the loss of her honour. Angellica acknowledges her natural dominance over men, saying had she remained in innocent security she should have thought all men were born her slaves thus she paints herself as the natural possessor of power in the male-female power dynamics. The irony is that Behn wrote around the turn of the 18th century at a time when women had limited freedom and rights. By painting men as Angellica's slaves, the writer turns this social construct on its head. Angellica is a woman who is well aware of her natural power over men. Angellica's interaction with the mirror and her own reflection brings about a change in her attitude towards life. Angellica says but when love held the mirror, the glass reflected all the weakness of her soul and made her know the richest treasure being lost- her honor. Thus, it is a largely ironic poem, because it deals with the way in which men tend to pursue a woman, and do so obsessively, until the woman in question succumbs to their advances, gives herself to him, and falls hopelessly in love - at which point the man loses attraction for her rapidly. Her love grows when his love dies.

- Angellica is a woman who is well aware of her worth

The circumstances that caused Angellica to lament also caused her to become a woman of greater depth. Her circumstances are patriarchal in nature as at that time she is outwardly hobbled by male-dominated code that devalues women who fall outside the virgin archetype and blocks her from getting what she wants. Wilmore causes Angellica to examine herself; this is where the narrative turns away from the man's standards and pivots to the woman's view as Angellica examines her own moral character under the harsh light of love. She discovers that she is unhappy with what she sees and clarifies for herself what is most important to her. Thus, Angellica reaches a whole new level of empowerment.

- Male-dominated society

The poem paints a picture of a female narrator who is strong, courageous and unflinching, who speaks from a place of empowerment even in the face of personal loss. She accepts the patriarchy driven judgment of her

time that accuses her of having lost her honour but at least the gaze she allows to examine her and the men that condemns her are her own. In this poem there is evidence that supports a view of Behn as a feminist influence, one whose message is at times communicated subtly and at times even through the embracing of sexist tropes. But noting that such concessions were perhaps necessary when Behn was writing and by seeking out subtle subversive presentations of female strength in her work, we can see the pattern being used to help promote a more feminist view of women's value in a time when women were not seen as equals to men. She succeeds in conveying her message by safely representing gender roles in an acceptable format allowing the work to have more wide appeal bringing her ideal to a larger audience. In this way Behn excels herself as the hero of feminist scholarship she has proven herself to be.

- Strong female narrator

Summarised Overview

The narrator of the poem "Angellica's Lament" recalls her adolescence, when she thought that every male was created to be a slave to women. As a result, when she was a young girl, she thought that women controlled everything from a distance and that males would do anything to protect and provide for women. She was compelled to admit that wasn't the case as time went on. The narrator discovered that women were actually the slaves in their lifes, being ruled by the men in them and having no control over them.

Assignments

1. Aphra Behn positions herself as a "woman's woman". How does this come out in her writings?
2. How does the poem question the existing social construct on gender roles?
3. Behn's customary use of classical, pastoral, courtly, and traditionally English lyric modes
4. Discuss the speakers of Behn's poetry?
5. Why does Angellica appear broken?
6. How does the poet dismantle the social construct?

Suggested Readings

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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

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

- Inspired by the local Scottish songs

'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.

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

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

- Spelling of 'Luv'

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 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.

▶ Bids farewell to the beloved

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.

▶ Neither time nor distance will keep him from his love

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.

▶ Imagery is one of the literary devices used

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 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.

▶ Metaphor, repetition, alliteration.

Ae Fond Kiss- Poem

Ae Fond Kiss, and then we sever;
Ae fareweel, and then forever!
Deep in heart-wrung tears I'll pledge thee,
Warring sighs and groans I'll wage thee.
Who shall say that Fortune grieves him,
While the star of hope she leaves him?
Me, nae cheerfu' twinkle lights me;
Dark despair around benights me.

I'll ne'er blame my partial fancy,
Naething could resist my Nancy;
But to see her was to love her;
Love but her, and love forever.
Had we never lov'd sae kindly,
Had we never lov'd sae blindly,
Never met—or never parted—
We had ne'er been broken-hearted.
Fare thee weel, thou first and fairest!
Fare thee weel, thou best and dearest!
Thine be ilka joy and treasure,
Peace. enjoyment, love, and pleasure!
"Ae Fond Kiss", and then we sever;
Ae fareweel, alas, forever!
Deep in heart-wrung tears I'll pledge thee,
Warring sighs and groans I'll wage thee!

Robert Burns wrote this poem, "Ae Fond Kiss and then we sever", popularly known as "Ae Fond Kiss" after he finished publishing his anthology titled "Kilamarnok volume". Succeeding the publication of this anthology, Burns was a frequent traveller to Edinburgh and started spending a considerable amount of time there. During his stay there, he established a platonic love affair with Mrs Agnes Maclehose, a resident of Edinburgh itself. They started addressing each other with the respective pseudonyms – 'Clarinda' and 'Sylvander' during their exchanges and conversations of various styles and kinds. He wrote this particular poem – "Ae Fond Kiss" after his final meeting with Agnes on December 27, 1791 just before she left Edinburgh for good and moved back with her estranged husband to Jamaica. The poem was a part

- He wrote this particular poem after his final meeting with Agnes

of a letter which is now a part of the Watson Autograph collection of manuscripts curated by the National Library of Scotland. This poem was originally a song, just like all the other poems by Burns.

When one reads the poem and feels the words, understands the imageries, he or she derives the fact that though Burns' lover was married and he knew that, his love was deep, pure and endless. Even though she is leaving her and moving back with her husband, there is no bitterness in the poem. Burns does not condescend or demean Agnes or speaks ill of her for her actions of leaving him and going back to her husband, unlike many other Romantic or Metaphysical poets. The fact that he flamboyantly stands out in this aspect is not only appreciative and endearing, but this makes his style and ideology clear and distinct, just like his form. The exclamation marks at the end of the adjectives associated with the poet's beloved convey how strongly Burns believes in whatever he feels, and how true it all is.

- There is no bitterness in the poem though she left him

Summary

"Ae Fond Kiss"', written by Robert Burns, is about the parting of two lovers. The speaker laments their parting and distance, feeling depressed about this as well as other aspects of their life. The introduction of the poem shows the speaker saying farewells to their lover but also being upset about their departure. The speaker begins by asking his beloved for one more loving kiss before they have to separate; this kiss will be their goodbye before they must leave each other forever. The speaker promises that he will honor his beloved's memory when he weeps with intense sorrow. Torn between wistful memories of their happy days past and anguish that these days will never come again, he will offer all these emotions as a tribute to her. It is a song that promises faithfulness, mourns the loss of their lover and the universal feeling of love. The speaker expresses disbelief that anyone could claim to be truly unhappy so long as they still have the slightest possibility of good fortune in the future. But the speaker is truly unhappy because he has no hope of any such future happiness to inspire him to keep going; the only thing he can feel, or imagine feeling, is hopeless sorrow.

- About the parting of two lovers
- The speaker begins by asking his beloved for one more loving kiss.
- Speaker is truly unhappy because he has no hope

Even though he is now suffering for it, the speaker doesn't criticize himself for having been too easily attracted to his beloved. No one could have seen her and not been deeply attracted to her. Just seeing her would be enough to make anyone fall in love with her; and once you were in love with her, you would love only her, and you would love her always. The speaker does reflect, though, on what would have happened if they had never loved each other with such deep affection, or with such intensity that it made them lose sight of everything else in their lives. If they had never met—or if they had fallen in love but never had to separate from each other–then they would never have had to suffer this devastating loss.

- The speaker doesn't criticise his love for the suffering

The speaker then fondly bids goodbye to his beloved, reminding her that she is the first woman he has truly loved and the most beautiful woman he has ever seen; she is also the person he admires and cherishes most. He wishes for her delight, prosperity, contentment, happiness, love, and bliss in her future life. He then asks, once more, for one more kiss before they have to separate and laments that this kiss really is their goodbye forever. Finally, he reminds her again that he will continue to remember her through the terrible sorrow he feels at losing her, and continue honoring her through his memories of past happiness with her and anguish at future grief without her.

- One more kiss before they have to separate
- He reminds her again that he will continue to remember her

Analysis

In the first stanza, 'Ae' means one and is an old variant of the word 'an'. The title and first line immediately signal Burns' Scottish heritage. The Antithesis of "fond" and "sever", as the speaker is in emotional turmoil about the parting with their lover. The speaker promises that they will continue to love them in the future and does not mind if they move on - even if it causes them pain. The use of alliteration emphasizes the finality of the parting with the lover. The use of "heart-wrung" portrays how deeply hurt the speaker is but is still able to pledge their love. The 'sighs and groans' are waging war inside him and this is reinforced by the onomatopoeia of 'sigh' (an open sound) and 'groan' (a closed sound); these contrasting sounds signify an internal battle representing his pain at parting. The speaker does not blame himself for falling in love with Nancy.

- Contrasting sounds signify an internal battle

In the second stanza, the poet talks about hope. He says that even though there is a star of hope, his beloved is leaving him and though there are discursive words and concepts like Fortune; Fortune will not feel sad about this unfortunate event that has befallen on the poet. It is solely and completely the poet's own pain and sorrow and he has to suffer and survive through it all by himself. A man is always alone in his struggles is what Burns is reasserting here. The twinkle in the star should essentially cheer up the poet but he denies that and says that only dark despair surrounds him.

- The poet talks about hope
- Man is always alone in his struggles

In the third stanza, he talks about what he really felt for Agnes. He says that he does not blame his fancy for his beloved, as anyone or anything that witnesses her, would fancy her. She is irresistible and Burns calls her Nancy here. It was Love at first sight for him and he says, the moment he saw her, he loved her. He knew from the start that it was the kind of binding love which would know no end.

- He does not blame his fancy for his beloved

The fourth stanza is about lamenting and wishing that things were the other way round. The poet says that if they had not loved each other so blindly and kindly, had they never met or known each other, they would not have been broken-hearted. Agnes was probably the poet's first love and he bids her goodbye and adorns her with all beautiful and affection filled words. He uses adjectives like 'fair', 'best', 'first' etc. He wishes her all the happiness and love in this world, proving that his love for her is genuine and pure. He wishes for her love, joy, treasure and all the other great things in this world. Burns rests the poem with the final and sixth stanza which is a repetition of the first stanza itself, stating that his position is still the same, of that old broken hearted lover left in pieces, as it was at the beginning of this poem.

- He wishes her all the happiness and love in this world

The poem consists of three stanzas with eight lines each. The poem is written in a trochaic tetrameter, which means that there are four stressed beat patterns per line The rhyme scheme of the poem is in AABBCCDD, as there are rhyming couplets in each eight line stanza, repeated throughout the poem. Rhyming couplets in this romantic poem are important because it reflects how two words are always in relation with each other. Placing them together parallels the speaker and their

- Trochaic trimeter
- Biographical influences

lover's relationship, reflecting their optimism in terms of their love. '"Ae Fond Kiss"' is quite different to some of the other poems in the anthology because it has some biographical influences. Thus, the speaker can be read as both a universal individual or written from Burns' own experience.

Summarised Overview

"A Red, Red Rose"

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.

"Ae Fond Kiss"

It is immediately apparent that the speaker is speaking to his sweetheart, who is significant to him. She is the poem's intended audience. Even if "Ae Fond Kiss" can be regarded as a love poem, it is not a happy poem. It was discussed and forwarded to the poet's former mistress. He had a reasonably dedicated relationship with Agnes McLehose for seven years before she moved back to Jamaica and resumed living with her husband. Burns sent her this letter that he had written specifically for her. When her husband passed away, the two had once imagined being free to get married, but Burns passed away before her.

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?
5. What is the meaning of "Ae Fond Kiss"?
6. What type of poem is "Ae Fond Kiss"?
7. Why did Robert Burns write "Ae Fond Kiss"?

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Why So Pale and Wan Fond Lover?

John Suckling

Background

The Cavalier or Caroline poets, called Royalists, was a school of aristocratic English poets of the 17th century, who supported King Charles I (1625–49), who was later executed as a result of an English civil war (1642–1651). Charles, a connoisseur of the fine arts, supported poets who created the art he craved. These poets in turn grouped themselves with the King and his service, thus becoming Cavalier Poets. Cavalier poetry is straightforward and centered around sensual, romantic love and also the idea of carpe diem, which means to ‹seize the day.› To the Cavalier poet, enjoying life was far more important than following moral codes. They lived for the moment. Cavalier poetry mirrored the attitudes of courtiers.

Keywords

Cavalier poetry, Unrequited love

Discussion

Both Ben Jonson and John Donne were their role models. These two foremost poets of the Jacobean era are regarded as the originators of two diverse poetic traditions—the Cavalier and the metaphysical styles. The best known of the cavalier poets are Edmund Waller, Robert Herrick, Richard Lovelace, Thomas Carew, and Sir John Suckling. They emulated Ben Jonson and hence they are properly called the 'Sons of Ben'. These poets opposed metaphysical poetry, such as that of John Donne, who wrote with a spiritual, scientific, and moral focus. Caroline poets often advocated a Carpe diem (seize the day) attitude. They produced works which had apparent and straightforward meanings and were most probably connected to the general public. The most common feature of the Cavalier poets was their concept of composing verse in a basic, short, and nuanced manner. They produced works where they rejoice exquisiteness, love, countryside, sensualism, beverages, virtuous companionship, honor, and social life.

- Advocated a Carpe diem attitude

Carew is known as the originator of Cavalier love poetry. The famous poem of Thomas Carew is "An Elegy upon the death of the Dean of St Paul's, John Donne"; an elegy written on the death of a metaphysical poet John Donne. Carew has written many short poems. "A Rapture" is his longest poem that contains 166 lines. Some other famous poems of Carew are; "Ask Me No More" and "Upon a Ribbon Tied about His Arm."

- Carew is known as the originator of Cavalier love poetry

Born in the 17th century, Richard Lovelace has served himself as a supporter of King Charles I. He is also known for his best work "To Althea, from Prison". A vital line taken from this work is; "Stone walls do not a prison make nor iron bars a cage". Lovelace was imprisoned two times throughout his lifetime. Firstly in 1642 when he wrote a poem named "To Althea, from Prison". In

this poem he talked about freedom and imprisonment in the broader sense. Secondly in 1648 where he wrote, "To Lucasta, on Going to the Wars". In "To Lucasta, on Going to the Wars", he wrote about a man who is bidding farewell to his darling Lucasta before going to the War. Lovelace passed on in destitution in the year 1657.

- Imprisoned two times

Robert Herrick has written nearly 2500 poems and most of these poems come under the work "Hesperides"; his magnum opus, in which he published 1200 lyrical poems. Herrick has shown the concept of 'Carpe Diem' in these poems. 'Carpe Diem' is a Latin word which means that life is very short to live and so we must utilize each moment of it. Other important poems of Herrick under this collection are, "To the Virgins to make much of Time", "Corinna's going a-maying", "To Daffodils."

- "Hesperides"; his magnum opus

John Suckling comes under the most brilliant, rich, and witty writer among all Cavalier poets. Suckling invented a card game called 'Cribbage'. "Ballad upon a wedding" is his masterpiece. His poetry was enjoyed at court but none of it was published until after his death. He also wrote plays that were performed on stage, a notable example being *Aglaura*, in 1638. Although the play was not a great success in itself it did include one of Suckling's most famous poems, "Why so pale and wan, fond lover?" and "Goblins", a comedy, first published in 1646 are the famous ones. Poems penned by Suckling are mostly influenced by John Donne. *Fragmenta Aurea: A Collection of All the Incomparable Pieces*, written by John Suckling, was published posthumously by his friend in 1658. "Ballad Upon a Wedding" is one of his best-known works.

- Witty writer among all Cavalier poets

Poem

Why so pale and wan, fond lover?
Prithee, why so pale?
Will, when looking well can't move her,
Looking ill prevail?
Prithee, why so pale?
Why so dull and mute, young sinner?
Prithee, why so mute?
Will, when speaking well can't win her,
Saying nothing do't?
Prithee, why so mute?

Quit, quit, for shame; this will not move,
This cannot take her.
If of herself she will not love,
Nothing can make her;
The devil take her!

2.5.1 Summary

This poem by John Suckling demonstrates a favourite theme of Elizabethans: unrequited love. In this poem, the speaker queries his friend, who displays the conventional Petrarchan symptoms of a love-sick man—paleness, weakness, muteness, dullness. It ends in an ironic twist declaring that if the lover's suffering will not change the woman's mind, then she should go to the devil. This is a light-hearted treatment of a love poem. The poetic voice is questioning the point of his friend's love sickness. This lover is making himself sick and going into his shell, which is causing all of his friends embarrassment and the poetic voice is pointing out the pointlessness of his misery and telling him, rather aggressively, to get over this girl and move on with his life.

▶ Unrequited love

The first stanza uses rhetorical questions to make the lover consider why he is making himself sick. 'Pale' and 'wan' both suggest a face without colour, so someone suffering from physical sickness. Lines 3-4 suggest that if this girl does not want him 'looking well' (healthy) then why would she want him when he looks sickly. In a similar manner the second stanza deals with the change in this lover's personality. If the poetic voice is friends with the lover you would think that he usually finds him interesting and engaging, but in the open lines he questions why the lover is 'dull' and 'mute' suggesting that he has stopped talking or being involved and is becoming a bit of a bore to all around him. Again the middle lines of the stanza, 8-9, emphasize how futile the lover's reaction to rejection is, as he is never going to win the girl round through his silent sobriety if she doesn't want him when he is 'speaking well'. Both these stanzas highlight the ridiculous nonsense that is love sickness.

▶ He questions why the lover is 'dull' and 'mute'.

The final stanza is a bit of a change and is possibly the first supportive comment from the poetic voice to the lover. The first line is a plea for the lover to snap out of it with the repetition of 'quit' emphasizing the voice's frustration with him and 'shame' tells the lover he is

embarrassing himself and his friends. However, it then becomes quite abusive towards the object of the lover's desire as the voice says that if she won't love him then 'the devil takes her'. He is slagging her off to make the lover feel a bit better about himself and hopeful to get him to move on.

▶ Asking the lover to quit his love

2.5.2 Analysis

The poem is a parody of the customs of courtly love, showing the poet's suspicion toward tradition. Suckling's poem censures a young man who adopts the code of courtly love, as he ponders over the coldness of his lady. The lover whom the poet addresses cannot act outside of custom, blind to the ridiculous and fake nature of their own actions. Without the true experience of love and sexuality, they are bound by worn out beliefs, thus the poet addressing the lover as a "young sinner" is ironic.

▶ Parody of the customs of courtly love.

The main techniques to comment on is the poet's use of rhetorical questions and repetition. The poet knows exactly why the lover is looking so 'pale and wan' and why he is 'so dull and mute', but asks the questions and then repeats the questions to show how absurd the lover is. It has the same effect as someone saying 'What's the point?' emphasizing pointlessness. The use of the word 'Prithee' on both repetitions is overly polite and sarcastic as the poetic voice clearly thinks his friend is being foolish. The rhetorical questions thus highlight the lover's ridiculous condition.

▶ Emphasizing the pointlessness of love

It might also be worth mentioning the change in language in the final stanza. The lady-love being cursed with the phrase 'the devil take her', is used as a way of telling his friend that she is no good and can go to hell and telling the lover to move on from her. The alliterative use of 'w' ('why', 'wan')and 'p' ('pale', 'prithee') sounds in the first stanza and 'm' in the second stanza again contributes to mood of aggression or deep sarcasm in a rebuking manner.

▶ Use of harsh language

The poem is structured like a logical argument. Firstly, the first two stanzas establish the problem and the futility of the current situation, while the final stanza delivers a logical solution: 'forget her!'. A poem about love-sickness is usually sympathetic, but this is really not sympathetic. It drips with sarcasm and is repetitive to the point where the

lover could only possibly be embarrassed, not consoled ('Quit, quit, for shame). The poetic voice is frustrated with his friend and wants him to snap out of it. However, the final stanza's frustration vanishes to sympathy for his friend and trying to make his friend hate himself out of his melancholy with the malice directed towards the non-reciprocating woman.

- The poem is structured like a logical argument

Summarised Overview

For his play *Aglaura*, renowned Cavalier poet Sir John Suckling penned "Why so pale and wan beloved lover?". The speaker of this poem advises his bereaved buddy to stop whining about an unrequited love. The young man is questioned in the opening line by his companion about why he appears so ill and pale. The friend questions why the young lady would prefer him if he was not attractive when he was healthy. The friend queries the young man about why he is being so sour and reclusive in the second stanza. If his discussions with the young woman failed to pique her attention, he may be sure that chatting to her incessantly will not succeed either. The friend tells the young man in the third stanza to stop courting the girl if she won't give him back.

Assignments

1. How does the poet parody the Petrarchan love poems?
2. Do you think the poem shares a similar style with that of Shakespeare's sonnet 130?
3. Discuss the features of Cavalier poetry
4. Consider the poem as a parody of the customs of courtly love
5. What does the poem parody?
6. Examine the ironic statement towards the end of the poem?

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Disdain Returned

Thomas Carew

Background

Thomas Carew (1595 – 22 March 1640) was an English poet, among the Cavalier group of Caroline poets. Thomas Carew, a Cavalier poet, more effectively associated himself with the Metaphysical school with his use of paradox and argument, adding an intellectual quality to his poems that he so highly valued in Donne. Jonson and John Donne account for the main influences on Carew. Most of Carew's poems deal with the theme of love, the forsaken lover in particular, writers such as Petrarch and Spencer were often models better suited to his purpose.

Keywords

Cavalier poetry, disdained love

Discussion

Thomas Carew was the poetic arbiter of the court of Charles I of England. He gave one last witty spin to the tradition of Petrarchan lyric, polishing and resetting the traditional conceits of love poetry for an increasingly sophisticated and aristocratic audience. Carew penned the most notorious erotic poem of the 17th century, "A Rapture," as well as what is generally regarded as the most accomplished of the Caroline masques, Coelum Britannicum (1634). His two contributions to the minor genre of the country-house poem, "To Saxham" and "To my friend G. N. from Wrest". In the final decade of his life Carew largely eschewed lyrics for occasional and commendatory poems. Carew is, indeed, one of the great transitional figures of English poetry: although indebted to Donne and Jonson and deeply grounded in the literature of the high English Renaissance, he sketched out the lighter, more elegant style that has come to be

- His notorious erotic poem of the 17th century, "A Rapture"

known as Cavalier verse. His younger followers—Sir John Suckling, Richard Lovelace, Edmund Waller, Sir William Davenant, and in an entirely different mode, Andrew Marvell—dominated the literary scene at mid-century and in turn foreshadowed the radical changes ushered in by the Restoration in 1660.

Many of these poems are addressed to a mistress named Celia. Carew's lyrics rest squarely in the tradition of English Petrarchanism. The poet employs all the traditional conceits through vivid diction, he makes the clichés witty and new. "To Saxham," Carew's first essay in the genre of the country-house poem, undoubtedly was composed in the early 1620s. During the mid and late 1620s Carew's reputation as a poet grew rapidly. It is to this period in London that we should probably ascribe the composition of "A Rapture," the most accomplished and most infamous erotic poem of the century. The poet invites his mistress, Celia, to enjoy the delights of lovemaking; it rapidly modulates into a witty, sensuous, and to some readers shocking celebration of the female body. Carew depicts Celia as a landscape waiting to be explored and conquered while the poet invades her with a tempest. What raises "A Rapture" above the meaner beauties of Renaissance erotica is not only the lush precision of its imagery but also its conclusion, in which Carew seriously addresses the issue of the sexual double standard, asking why that one word "Honour" should mean such different and apparently contradictory things for men and women.

- Poems are addressed to a women named Celia

Disdain Returned - Poem

By Thomas Carew

He that loves a rosy cheek,
Or a coral lip admires,
Or from star-like eyes doth seek
Fuel to maintain his fires;
As old Time makes these decay,
So his flames must waste away.

But a smooth and steadfast mind,
Gentle thoughts and calm desires,
Hearts with equal love combin'd,
Kindle never-dying fires.

Where these are not, I despise
Lovely cheeks, or lips, or eyes.

No tears, Celia, now shall win
My resolv'd heart to return;
I have search'd thy soul within,
And find nought, but pride, and scorn;
I have learn'd thy arts, and now
Can disdain as much as thou.
Some power, in my revenge, convey
That love to her I cast away.
Disdaine Returned

Summary

One of Carew's best-known poems, "Disdain Returned," demonstrates two significant aspects of his art: the lyrical beauty that he inherited from Jonson and his smooth integration of several typical Elizabethan and Jacobean themes. The basic structure of the poem is simple. It has three six-line stanzas in tetrameter, rhyming ababcc. In the last stanza, however, the closing couplet varies slightly in its meter and thus draws the poem to a decisive close, suggesting that the poet has cured himself of his lovesickness. Unlike many of the other Celia poems in which Carew expounds the poet's frustrations in love with a typical Petrarchan lament, "Disdaine returned" shows the spirit and style that were characteristic of Donne.

- Lyrical beauty and Elizabethan theme

The poem opens with a carpe diem statement. Rather than using these lines to make the basic live-for-the-moment argument, however, Carew suggests a feeling of depressed reconciliation; his lady has lost the opportunity for a genuine love that would not fade with the passing of time or the loss of beauty. The second stanza justifies the claim as Carew defines in basically Platonic terms his ideas about love that his mistress has not been able to accept: "Hearts with equal love combined kindle never-dying fires."

- Lady has lost the opportunity for a genuine love

In the third stanza, the frustrated poet, whose love is genuine, is forced to return his lady's rejection. As the second stanza suggests, there must be equal commitment for the relationship to prosper. The poet says, however, that he has not found his love returned: "I have searched

- The poet experiences rejection

thy soul within/ And find naught but pride and scorn." He decides to re-turn these feelings of disdain, ending his pointless suffering.

Critical Analysis

Thomas Carew's "Disdain Returned" falls firmly into the Cavalier poet tradition. Its light, lyrical feel is intended, as Carew and his contemporaries at the court of Charles II focused, mainly on themes of love: love thwarted, love accepted, love disdained, love engendered, love proposed and love rejected. Heightened emotion became their goal, and they achieved it through a musical cadence that allowed many of their poems to be set to music, as was true of much lyric verse. The poetry often featured romantic games played by an idealised female and the male voice that explained the give and take actions between a couple. Carew formats his three stanzas with varying length, the first two composed of six lines and the third of eight. The rhyme scheme also varies, with the first two stanzas adhering to an ababcc format and the third formatted ababccdd. The rhyme variance allows sound to support sense, as Carew's poem features a shift in feeling from admiration to disdain.

- Romantic games played by an idealised female

The speaker of "Disdaine Returned" begins with the familiar conceit of a catalog of female body parts, the beauty of each revealed through figurative language or comparison. The cheek is compared to a rose, the lip to coral, and the eyes to stars. The speaker cautions that those who seek such attractions must remain aware that it all might waste away.

- Physical attractions will wear away with time

In the second stanza, Carew departs from the traditional carpe diem theme for which Cavalier poets gained fame, preaching the preference of fleeting beauty. While the coral may fade from lips and the rosy glow from cheeks, "Hearts, with equal love combined / Kindle never dying fires." The speaker urges equality between lovers, favoring its longevity. Where these elements prove absent, the speaker declares, "I despise / Lovely cheeks, or lips, or eyes."

- Departs from the traditional carpe diem theme

In the final stanza, the speaker boldly addresses Celia making clear that her tears will prove useless in convincing his "resolv'd heart to returne." Celia has apparently rejected the speaker as a lover. He has

"searcht" her soul and found "nought, but pride, and scorne," in addition having learned her "arts." Those discoveries afford him strength to "disdaine" Celia in the same way she has disdained him. He concludes by admitting that having conveyed, as part of his revenge, his love to her, he does lose a bit of his power. However, the poem claims victory for the speaker. His lack of regret over the loss of Celia proves his resolve to find a greater worth in constancy than beauty.

- Speaker boldly addresses Celia

The poet employs the voice of the rejected lover. Speaking to himself in a soliloquy framework, the persona recalls his tempestuous relationship with Celia, and as a result of that recollection he resolves never to return to his former state. Although he vividly remembers the woman's attractiveness, he finally concludes that a person's surface beauties are never as important as the inner realities. As in many of his other lyrics, Carew also employs the theme of the ravages of time upon external beauty. Rather than making the theme on this occasion a part of the seduction process, however, Carew uses it to show the insignificance of a lovely exterior. Using an idea also found in Donne's "Valediction: Forbidding Mourning," the speaker asserts that without the "smooth and steadfast mind," the "gentle thoughts and calme desires," and "hearts, with equall love combind," the cheeks, lips, and eyes of a woman are of no consequence. Only hearts equally united in love are able to produce fires that will never be extinguished. Thus, from this persona's point of view, the real significance of a person is found in the mind, not merely in physical characteristics. Unfortunately, in Celia's mind the lover finds only pride and scorn.

- The real significance of a person is found in the mind

Summarised Overview

"Disdaine Returned" by Thomas Carew is profoundly rooted in the Cavalier poet tradition. In the poem, the speaker introduces a list of beautiful female body parts, illustrating each one's beauty through comparison or figurative language. The lip is compared to coral, the eyes to stars, and the face to a rose. Carew departs from the well-known Cavalier poets' conventional carpe diem topic in the second verse, advocating for a "smooth, and steadfast mind, / Gentle thoughts, and calme wants" over that of ephemeral beauty. Even though the rose glow on the cheeks and the coral colour on the lips may fade, "Hearts, with equall love combind / Kindle never withering fires". The speaker promotes equality between lovers and its continued existence. The speaker assertively addresses Celia, Carew's favourite female character, in the last verse, making it apparent that her tears will be ineffective in persuading his "resolv'd hart to returne." It appears that Celia has turned down the speaker as a lover. Along with learning her "skills," he has "searched" her soul and found "nothing but pride and disdain." These revelations give him the courage to "disdain" Celia in the same way that she had despised him. He ends by acknowledging that he does lose some of his power after telling her about his love for her as part of his retaliation. The poem, however, declares the speaker to have won. His determination to place more value in consistency than beauty is demonstrated by the lack of regret he feels after the loss of Celia.

Assignments

1. Does the poet justify the voice of a dejected lover?
2. Elucidate on the metaphysical elements in the poem.
3. What do you mean by the phrase "disdaine returned"?
4. To whom is the poem addressed ?
5. How does the poem conclude?
6. How is love expressed in the poem?
7. Which poem influenced Thomas Carew to write this poem?

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Ode on the Spring

Thomas Gray

Background

The second half of the eighteenth century is known as a transitional period. It was an era of change from Pseudo-classicism to Romanticism. The decline of party spirit and the democratic upsurge exercised great influence both on life and literature. The rivalry between the Whigs and Tories still continued but it had lost its previous bitterness. This naturally led to a considerable decline of the activity in political pamphleteering. The poets and satirists ceased to be statesmen. The institution of literary patronage gradually crumbled during this period. Men of letters learnt to depend entirely on their public. During the

second half of the eighteenth-century new ideas were germinating and new forces were gathering strength. The French Revolution of 1789 was only the climax of a long and deeply diffused unrest. Revolutionary ideas gave birth to democratic and humanitarian feelings it influenced literature greatly.

Keywords

Ode, Transition age, Romantic revival, Melancholy, Muse, Lyrics

Discussion

This period is characterized by a kind of mild revival of learning. In literature, it revealed itself in the study and editing of old authors like Chaucer, Shakespeare and Milton. The writers revived the old form of ballad. The publications of *Bishop Percy's Reliques* (1765), containing the oldest and finest specimens of ballad literature, is a landmark in the history of the Romantic Movement. The latter half of the eighteenth century witnessed the swift rise of historical literature. The birth of a new spirit of inquiry was at the root of realism which is expressed in the novels of this period and is noticeable in the poetry of this century. This period is characterized by the rapid growth of democracy. Stress was laid on the individual. People became familiar with the notions of equality, liberty and brotherhood. The philosophy of Rousseau and the French Revolution popularised the democratic and humanitarian ideals, which immensely influenced the literature of this period.

▶ Revival of ballad

The transitional poetry marks the beginning of a reaction against the rational, intellectual, formal, artificial and unromantic poetry of the age of Pope and Johnson. It was marked by a strong reaction against stereotyped rules. The transitional poets derived inspiration from Spenser, Shakespeare and Milton. Unlike the Augustan poetry, it is poetry of countryside, of common and ordinary people, and not of the fashionable, aristocratic society and town life. Love of nature and human life

characterise this poetry. The transitional poets revolted against the conventional poetic style and diction of Augustan poetry. They aimed at achieving simplicity of expression. This poem appeals to emotions and imagination, and is marked by the development of naturalism. The transitional poets are the forerunners of the splendid outburst of the romantic poetry of the nineteenth century.

- Transitional poetry opposes Pope and Johnson

James Thomson (1700-48) was the first to bring the new note in poetry both in his "Seasons" and "The Castle of Indolence". The Seasons is a blank verse poem and consists of a long series of descriptive passages dealing with natural scenes. Though its style is clumsy, the treatment is refreshing, full of acute observation and joy in nature. *The Castle of Indolence* is written in Spenserian Stanza and is remarkable for suggestiveness, dreamy melancholy and harmonious versification.

- James Thomson's "Seasons", "The Castle of Indolence"

William Collins (1721-59) wrote his first work "Oriental Eclogues" in prevailing mechanical couplets but it is romantic in spirit and feeling. His "Ode To Evening" is instinct with a sweet tenderness, a subdued pathos, love of nature and a magical enchantment of phrase. His "Ode To Popular Superstitions" of the Highlands introduced a new world of witches, fairies and medieval kings. His poems strike a new and interesting note in romantic revival.

William Cowper (1731-1800) is an immediate forerunner of the romantics. His first volume of poems, containing "The Progress of Error", "Truth", "Table Talk" etc. shows the influence of the neoclassical rules. "The Tasks" is Cowper's longest and finest poem. His descriptions of homely scenes of woods and brooks, of plowmen and teamsters and the letter carriers indicate the dawn of a new era in poetry. Cowper was a pioneer who preached the gospel —return to nature. He foreshadowed Wordsworth and Byron. In his love of nature, emotional response to it, and in sympathetic handling of rural life he certainly anticipates Wordsworth. His minor poems "On the Receipt of My Mother's Picture" and "Alexander Selkirk" show the rise of romanticism in English poetry.

- Descriptions of homely scenes of woods and brooks

George Crabbe (1754-1832) is a pioneer of the naturalistic reaction against the Augustan tradition. His main poetical works are written in the heroic couplet but

thematically they deal with the life of simple country folk and show his sincerity, sympathy and acute observation of human life. His descriptions of nature are neither sentimental nor picturesque nor sentimental. They are characterized by sincerity and minute observation. As a pioneer of the naturalistic reaction against the Augustan tradition, Crabbe's place is certainly very high. Other poets of the transitional period are Christopher Smart, Bishop Percy, Thomas Chatterton and James Macpherson.

- Dealing with the life of simple country folk

Thomas Gray (1716-1771) is considered a transitional poet because he introduced in his poetry some of the new themes that were to characterise the Early Romantic Age. Two of the most relevant are: the simple country life and humble village people. Thus, he clearly rejected the typical contents of Classic poetry, but at the same time he combined these new trends with a writing style that underlined his belief that everyday language was not appropriate for poetry. He is the author of the "Elegy Written in a Country Churchyard," (1751), which soon became very popular; but he also wrote other poems collected in "Odes" (1757), "The Bard" and "The Progress" of Poesy (1757) inspired by Celtic and Icelandic mythology along with English literary history. Gray has a deep faith in romanticism, and he is a great transitional poet who displays romantic qualities like interest in naturally inspired music and poetry, common man, high imagination, strong emotions and the supernatural. Besides, he shows classical qualities also. In "The Bard" he challenges Royal authority and stands with Welsh bards. His sympathies are always for the common, the poor, the sufferer and the helpless. He accounts for the miseries of common people. In "The Progress of Poesy", he writes that unfortunate mankind suffers from hard labor, miserable poverty and intolerable pains. In "Elegy" also he pleads for unfortunate farmers who suffered on account of poverty and want of proper opportunity in spite of their great talent.

- The simple country life and humble village people

In "The Progress of Poesy" it is the poet's own invention of imagination that Milton became blind for he tried to violate human limits. Milton dared to see the almighty and it was his destiny to be blind forever. Romantics take a deep interest in what is uncommon or strange, and therefore they take interest in the supernatural. Gray's interest in the supernatural is exposed in "The Bard".

when the ghosts of dead bards appear before the old bard. Being a transitional poet, Gray shows his faith in classicism also. Gray is a great transitional poet who displays romantic qualities. Besides, he shows classical qualities like use of poetic diction, sensuous art, myth-making and symbolism. He takes interest in the complex structure of odes. He has a strong faith in classical traditions. Romantics believe in simple language really spoken by common people but Gray has no faith in it. Gray uses dignified language, archaic words and indirect expressions. Gray's style becomes artificial when he employs artistic devices of myth making and symbolism. Gray is a great transitional poet who displays romantic qualities like interest in nature inspired music and poetry, common man, high imagination and strong emotions. Besides, he takes interest in classical qualities like use of poetic diction, sensuous art, myth-making, symbolism, complex structure of odes and classical traditions.

- Uses dignified language, archaic words and indirect expressions

Ode on the Spring

Lo! where the rosy-bosom'd Hours,
Fair Venus' train appear,
Disclose the long-expecting flowers,
And wake the purple year!
The Attic warbler pours her throat,
Responsive to the cuckoo's note,
The untaught harmony of spring:
While whisp'ring pleasure as they fly,
Cool zephyrs thro' the clear blue sky
Their gather'd fragrance fling.

Where'er the oak's thick branches stretch
A broader, browner shade;
Where'er the rude and moss-grown beech
O'er-canopies the glade,
Beside some water's rushy brink
With me the Muse shall sit, and think
(At ease reclin'd in rustic state)
How vain the ardour of the crowd,
How low, how little are the proud,
How indigent the great!

Still is the toiling hand of Care:
The panting herds repose:
Yet hark, how thro' the peopled air
The busy murmur glows!
The insect youth are on the wing,
Eager to taste the honied spring,
And float amid the liquid noon:
Some lightly o'er the current skim,
Some show their gaily-gilded trim
Quick-glancing to the sun.

To Contemplation's sober eye
Such is the race of man:
And they that creep, and they that fly,
Shall end where they began.
Alike the busy and the gay
But flutter thro' life's little day,
In fortune's varying colours drest:
Brush'd by the hand of rough Mischance,
Or chill'd by age, their airy dance
They leave, in dust to rest.

Methinks I hear in accents low
The sportive kind reply:
Poor moralist! and what art thou?
A solitary fly!
Thy joys no glitt'ring female meets,
No hive hast thou of hoarded sweets,
No painted plumage to display:
On hasty wings thy youth is flown;
Thy sun is set, thy spring is gone—
We frolic, while 'tis May.

Summary and Analysis

Stanza One

"Ode on the Spring" belongs to the first period of Gray's poetic career. It was written in 1742. Gray derived the inspiration for writing this ode from James Thomson's poem called "Seasons". "Ode on the Spring" is characterized by several romantic qualities in the form of personifications. Behold! The Hours, which have

a rosy complexion and which attend upon the beautiful goddess called Venus (the goddess of beauty and love), have appeared on the scene and are bringing into view the buds which have long been expecting to open into flowers. These 'Hours' represent the pretty colours of that time of the year when the year seems to have awakened from its sleep. It is the season of spring which has arrived. The nightingale, which has a long history going back to ancient times in Greece, is singing in a rich voice; and it is singing in response to the singing of the cuckoo. Both these birds sing spontaneously, and their singing is part of the music of this season. While the birds are singing, cool winds blow through the blue sky which is free from clouds in this season; and these winds seem to be producing joyous sounds as they blow. The winds are also scattering the sweetness which they have gathered from the blooming flowers.

- The season of spring

This stanza is marked by both neoclassical characteristics and the romantic temper of the poet. The time of spring is personified as the "rosy-bosom'd Hours" which are regarded as the attendants of Venus. The winds and the breezes have been personified as Zephyrs (that is, the followers of Zephyrus, the god of winds). The nightingale is described as "the Attic warbler", and this is an example of poetic diction. The romantic temper of the writer is seen as Nature emerged as a new theme in the poetry of Gray.

- Marked by both neoclassical characteristics and the romantic temper

Stanza Two

An oak tree spreads its thick branches, casting on the ground below a shade which is larger and browner in colour than the branches themselves. At other places the beech tree, which has a rough and uneven trunk with the green moss growing upon it, seems to serve as an overhead covering for the open space in the valley. Amid this scene, the speaker would sit down on the bank of a river or a brook by the side of which grows a kind of grass called "rush"; and by his side would sit the goddess who presides over the writing of poetry. Together the speaker and the Muse would sit comfortably and they would meditate upon the futility of all the noisy endeavors of the city crowds. They would also meditate upon the smallness and insignificance of the people in the city who feel proud of themselves, and upon the extreme poverty

- Meditating on the futile city life and poverty

of those persons who think themselves to be very rich and exalted.

Here again, we see the poet's interest in Nature, and also his minute observation of natural scenery. The phrase "the rude and moss-grown beech" is an example of the poet's minute observation, like the picture of the oak's thick branches casting a shadow that makes the ground appear brown in colour. The romantic temper of the poet appears also in the manner in which he introduces himself into the poem. A romantic poet tends to express his personal feelings whereas a wholly neo-classical poet is strictly objective in writing a poem. The neo-classical influence appears in the poet's moralizing. The poet expresses a preference for quietness and tranquility in contrast to the busy activities of the people of the cities.

▶ Contrasting city and village life

Stanza Three

The shepherd, who busily and anxiously looks after the welfare of his sheep and who has to work very hard, is resting at this time and is therefore making no movements or noise. The sheep, which had been running about breathlessly during the day, are also now at rest. And yet the silence is not absolute or complete. Certain sounds are audible. In fact, the air seems to be thick with sounds which indicate some kind of activity, though these sounds are low. The sounds are coming from the insects which are passing through the prime of their existence, and which are fluttering their wings as they fly about through the air. These insects are eager to taste the sweetness of the flowers which bloom during this season. They fly in a leisurely manner on the surface of some brook at noon-time. Some of these insects fly lightly over the flowing water of the brook and they almost touch the surface in the course of their flight, while others are making a display of their bright colours and their neat wings. The insects cast quick glances upwards to look at the sun.

▶ Soundscape of the place

Like the first two stanzas, this one also contains a number of vivid pictures. The shepherd, the sheep, and the insects flying through the air above have vividly been presented to our eyes, while the busy murmuring of the insects is made audible to our ears. Thus we have audio visual imagery in this stanza. Care has been personified

to refer to the careful shepherd who looks after his sheep. The neo-classical stamp is seen in the personification and in the diction, particularly in the line: "*The insect-youth are on the wing*" ", and in the phrase "*gayly-gilded trim.*"

▶ Audio Visual imagery

Stanza Four

To the eyes of a serious-minded and contemplative on-looker, such also is the fast journey of a human being through life. The insects, both those which crawl on the ground and those which fly through the air, shall end their existence in the same way as they began. The insects of either kind, whether they are busy or carefree, spend their short existence merely fluttering their wings, regardless of every other consideration. They are all dressed in the different colours with which Fate has endowed them. Some of these insects shall get killed by an accidental blow from someone, and some of them shall die a natural death in due course. These flying insects would ultimately cease their movements through the air and would end their existence to rest on the ground below where they would mingle with the dust.

▶ Short existence on earth

This stanza is full of moralizing like a sermon. Here the poet dwells upon the short duration of the life of the insects and compares the short life of human beings to the brief stay of the insects in the world. Thus, here the poet reduces human beings to the humble and helpless position of the insects. There is a subdued feeling of melancholy also in this stanza. Then we have the usual personifications, such as the contemplation to convey the idea of a contemplative or reflective person; and "Mischance" with a capital M, which is an example of a needless personification. We have capital letters even when there is no personification, as in the case of the words "Busy" and "Gay."

▶ Melancholic stanza

Stanza Five

In these lines, the poet says that the insects, about which he has spoken in the preceding lines, have something to say to him in reply to his description of their lives. The insects address him as an unfortunate preacher of lessons. His own life is much worser than theirs, say the insects. They compare him to a fly that moves about all alone who has no brightly and attractively dressed

woman to keep him company and serve as a source of pleasure to him. They further say that he does not have any collection of pleasures from which he can draw any happiness whenever he may want to enjoy it. He has neither gaudy equipment to boast of, and nor showy and colourful possessions to display. If their lives are short, the poet's youth is also short-lived. The poet's years of youth have almost ended, and the most enjoyable period of his life is therefore over. Finally, the insects say that they are more fortunate than the poet because, while the poet's years of youth are over, they are still enjoying the warmth of spring and are flying about merrily.

- Insects reflecting upon the life of poets

There is evidently a feeling of melancholy in this stanza and reveals to us the innate disposition of Gray as a sort of recluse and as an unworldly kind of man. The biographical facts of Gray's life confirm the view which Gray has expressed about himself in this stanza. He was a solitary kind of man in his real life, though he did have a couple of devoted friends.

- Gray as an un-worldly kind of man

The poem, "Ode on the Spring" by Thomas Gray, has a lyrical quality but it does not conform to any ancient classical pattern or form of the ode. Each stanza in this poem consists of ten lines and the rhyme-scheme in all the stanzas is the same. There is an undercurrent of melancholy in this poem, and this is a romantic feature. The personal element appears in the lines where Gray imagines himself as sitting in the company of the Muse by the riverside, but here again, we have the neo-classical tendency to moralize upon a situation or to draw a moral from what is being observed. The personal element is more particularly to be found in the final stanza where Gray speaks of himself as a solitary man having no worldly possessions to display, with his youth already "Flown". It is Gray's interest in, and close observation of, natural objects, natural scenery, natural phenomena, and natural processes that are the most prominent romantic features of this poem.

- Personal elements in the poem

Summarised Overview

Spring has officially come. This is the time of year when the buds bloom beautifully and the year awakens from its slumber. The nightingale and the cuckoo sing songs that are symbolic of the season's music and harmony. These birds sing on their own accord, without any outside instruction, and their songs flow naturally to them. The clouds that cover the sky during the winter are removed, revealing the blue colour of the sky. Cool breezes and gusts blow, dispersing the floral scent. Growing here and there are trees like the oak and the beech, whose heavy branches cast shadows on the ground and act as a sort of roof over the open areas. The poet visualises himself conversing with the Muse while contemplating the pointlessness of the clamour and commotion that city crowds create as they go about their daily business. The poet and the Muse also reflect on the insignificance and smallness of those who live in cities and are extremely proud of their wealth and status. Sheep are dozing off. The insects display their clean appearance while some hover over the surface of water of a stream or river, while others cast quick glances at the sun above. These insects have a limited lifespan, regardless of how busy or carefree they appear to be as their wings flap in the air. The poet imagines that after hearing his comments about insects, they respond to him. They make the poet think of his own miserable situation. They inform him that he is no more significant than an isolated insect.

Assignments

1. Consider "Ode on the Spring" as a Pre-Romantic poem.
2. Discuss the setting and season discussed in the poem.
3. What is the central idea that the poet discusses in the poem?
4. How is personification used in the poem?

Suggested Readings

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The Tyger and The Lamb

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

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

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 sublime quality

- Questions the beauty and its creator

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 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.

- The poet talks about the eyes of the tiger

Analysis

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."

- Fiery eyes of the tiger

Stanza 3

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.

- Praising the power and amazing art of God

- Discusses the physical characteristics of the almighty creator

Analysis

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

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.

- Image of a blacksmith

Analysis

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.

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

Stanza 5

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.

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

Analysis

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.

- Satan's rebellion against God

Stanza 6

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.

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

Analysis

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.

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

The Lamb - Poem

William Blake

Little Lamb who made thee
Dost thou know who made thee
Gave thee life & bid thee feed.
By the stream & 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 directness of the natural world

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.

- Speaker praises the power of the creator

Stanza 2

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.

- The purity, the innocence, the tenderness of childhood

Analysis

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.

- Second stanza concentrates on abstract spiritual matters

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 Readings

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The Nightingale and the Glow-Worm

William Cowper

Background

William Cowper was an English poet and hymn writer who lived in the 18th century. He is best known for his work "The Task," which was published in 1785. He is a predecessor of the romantic poets who belong to the transitional group of poetry. "Task" is Cowper's longest and finest poem.His descriptions of homely scenes of woods and streams, of farmers working the land, indicate the dawn of a new era in poetry. His poetry is filled with tenderness and passion, but his outlook is often melancholic. His style is classical, however. It is pompous and showy; it is designed to impress. It is also pedantic, teaching instead of entertaining.He uses heroic couplets as his only form of verse. Cowper was one of the earliest and most influential advocates of the return to nature movement. He was a very influential writer who foreshadowed Wordsworth and Byron. In his love of nature, love for animals, ardent passion for liberty, and hatred of tyranny and oppression, his emotional response to it and in his sympathetic handling of rural life, William Cowper certainly anticipates Wordsworth.

Keywords

Transitional Poet, Didacticism, Return to Nature

Discussion

William Cowper's "The Nightingale and the Glow-worm" is said to have been published in the Penny Magazine on March 31, 1832. This poem's first and second stanzas are set in a village in the English countryside. That village is surrounded by nature, and many hawthorn trees can be found there. The song of a nightingale lifts the spirits of the villagers. A glow-worm can also be found in the area. Although the Nightingale initially wants to eat the glow-worm, it eventually realises that earth creatures should not harm one another. The poem's third and fourth

- The country side setting

stanzas are about the entire human world. There are rival factions in this world. The poet, on the other hand, wants those factions to mutually respect and live in peace.

First stanza:

A Nightingale that all day long
Had cheered the village with his song,
Nor yet at eve his note suspended,
Nor yet when eventide was ended,
Began to feel, as well he might,
The keen demands of appetite;
When looking eagerly around,
He spied, far off upon the ground,
A something shining in the dark,
And knew the glow-worm by his spark;
So stooping down from hawthorn top,
He thought to put him in his crop;
The worm, aware of his intent,
Harangued him thus right eloquent:

Summary

'The Nightingale and the Glow-worm' is essentially a verse-based fable. In the same way that animals in fables act like humans and deliver a powerful message, a nightingale and a glow-worm encounter each other with human characteristics in this poem. The readers learn the powerful message of living in peace and harmony as a result of their encounter. The poet describes how a nightingale had been singing all day and had cheered up everyone in a nearby village in the process in this stanza. Even as evening approached, the nightingale continued to sing. The nightingale, on the other hand, began to feel hunger pangs around the time while evening faded into night. As a result, the Nightingale began looking for something to feast on. Suddenly his eye fell upon a spark on the ground. The nightingale realised right away that had spotted a glow-worm. It decided to gobble up the glow-worm all at once as it looked down from the top of the hawthorn tree where it was perched. The glow-worm had become aware of the nightingale's presence by this time, and it sensed that the nightingale was about to eat it. The glow-worm began lecturing the nightingale in an attempt to save its own life.

- Spotted a glow worm

Second Stanza:

'Did you admire my lamp,' quoth he,
'As much as I your minstrelsy,
You would abhor to do me wrong,
As much as I to spoil your song,
For 'twas the self-same power divine
Taught you to sing, and me to shine,
That you with music, I with light,
Might beautify and cheer the night.'
The songster heard his short oration,
And warbling out his approbation,
Released him, as my story tells,
And found a supper somewhere else.

The poet describes the nightingale's reaction to the glow-worm's speech in this stanza. The glow-worm asked the nightingale if she liked how the glow-worm's body sparkled. In addition, the nightingale's singing was praised by the glow-worm. The glow-worm then told the nightingale that it would hate to end the nightingale's song, and that the nightingale, in turn, should not harm his glowing body. The glow-worm and the nightingale were both created by the same God and endowed with their own special abilities, which explains their mutual respect. The same God who taught the nightingale how to sing also taught the glow-worm how to shine. This same God had endowed each of them with unique abilities, allowing them to spread joy and beauty throughout the world. After hearing the glow-worm's speech the nightingale agreed with the glow-points. As a result, it let the glow-worm go and moved on to another meal.

▶ Nightingale let the glow worm go

Third Stanza

Hence jarring sectaries may learn,
Their real interest to discern:
That brother should not war with brother,
And worry and devour each other,
But sing and shine by sweet consent,
Till life's poor transient night is spent,
Respecting in each other's case
The gifts of nature and of grace.

The poet says in this stanza that the tale of the nightingale and the glow-worm should teach warring factions a lesson. They should realise that they are all God's children, and thus brothers. As a result, they should avoid fighting with one another. In fact, they should avoid causing each other any problems. Instead, they should coexist peacefully in order to make the most of this life. They should not waste their time on hatred and war because life is short. They should value each other's abilities that God has bestowed upon them. A loving relationship should be built on mutual respect.

- Life is short and everyone should respect each other.

Fourth Stanza

Those Christians best deserve the name,
Who studiously make peace their aim;
Peace, both the duty and the prize
Of him that creeps and him that flies.

The poet claims that only those who value peace should be called Christians in this stanza. For the nightingale and the glow-worm, peace is both a responsibility and a reward for their efforts. According to the poet, it should be the same between fellow men. As a result, the poem's central theme is the virtue of universal brotherhood. The nightingale initially sees the glow-worm as prey, eager to eat it and satisfy its hunger. The bird, on the other hand, frees the worm because they both derive their life from the same divine source, and thus are brothers. Despite their differences, William Cowper wants humans to follow the same truth that fellow humans are brothers despite their differences. Humans should respect each other's unique gifts rather than fighting for dominion because they all came from the same creator.

- Universal brotherhood

Analysis

The poet tells a story that has a moral to it. To teach us about mutual respect, he tells us about the nightingale and the glow-worm. Furthermore, he claims that it is the warring factions who should learn this lesson. The nightingale and the glow-worm are thus symbols for various political and religious leaders and followers. Such organizations only serve to divide humanity into artificially created categories. They teach their followers to discriminate against those who, in our opinion, are

- The nightingale and the glow-worm are thus symbols

different from us. This, however, is not the proper attitude to have toward one's fellow man.

We should be able to respect differences, according to the poet. Every man is one-of-a-kind, and he possesses unique abilities. These skills and abilities should not be used as a reason to oppose others. His uniqueness, on the other hand, should be valued by his peers. In our efforts to make the world a better place, we should all work together. We should all strive for communal harmony because if we all put forth the same amount of effort, we will all reap the same benefits. We should not waste time on hatred and discrimination because life is short. Instead we must love one another and make the most of our lives. This poem has a slightly didactic tone to it but not at all preachy. The poet does not believe he should indoctrinate his audience in the same way that political or religious leaders do. That is why he delivers his message through the medium of a childish story before telling us how to apply the lesson.

- Respect differences

Themes

Respecting Differences

Because it is in his nature, the nightingale preys on the glow-worm. He believes that because the glow-worm is not the same as him, he can eat it. The glow-worm, on the other hand, teaches him that their differences should be the basis of mutual respect rather than mutual enmity or conflict. Similarly, opposing groups should respect each other's religious beliefs. There will be no reason for them to fight if they respect their differences, and they will be able to live in peace and harmony.

- Respect each other's system of belief

Recognizing the Unity of Man

The nightingale learns from the glow-worm that all of the earth's creatures were created by the same God. Similarly, all men are sons and daughters of the same God. As a result, they are like brothers to one another. That is why the poet implores his readers not to hate or wage war against their fellow man. Finally, because all men are essentially the same, they should defend one another.

- All men are essentially the same

Summarised Overview

A nightingale and a cunning glow worm are the subjects of William Cowper's poem "The Nightingale and the Glow Worm." The nightingale sings continuously throughout the day, enhancing its surroundings with its lovely song. The nightingale hunts after the glow worm at night because he became hungry from singing. He eventually loses his prey, though. Being quick-witted, the glow-worm starts praising and lauding the songbird. The nightingale proudly hears the worm speak and is touched by its kind remarks. The glow-worm goes on to say that just like the nightingale cheers up and brightens the day, the glow worm also uses its light to adorn the night. He claims that since they are both God's creations and serve different purposes, they should coexist peacefully. The glow worm saves himself with his persuasive speech.

Assignments

1. The speaker seems to show two contrasting sides to the nightingale's character in the course of the poem. Elucidate.
2. Discuss the relevance of the poem in the 21 st century.

Suggested Readings

1. Faulkner, Peter. *William Cowper and the Poetry of Empire*. Durham University, 1991.
2. Macdonald, D. L., 'Pre-Romantic and Romantic Abolitionism: Cowper and Blake', *European Romantic Review*, 4:2 (1994).
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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.

1.

Unit 4

Drama

(Non-Detailed)

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

The Way of the World

William Congreve

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

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

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, 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.

- Mirabell wins Lady Wishfort's approval

Critical Analysis

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.

- Flawless construction

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.

- Comedy of Manners

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.

- The ways of the world

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

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 Readings

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1. Rump, Edward, ed. *The Comedies of William Congreve.* Penguin, 1985.
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Love's Last Shift

Colley Cibber

Background

Colley Cibber is listed as the author of 26 dramatic texts. If all his contributions are taken into consideration– plays, adaptations, translations etc.,– he could be considered as "the most-performed playwright of the eighteenth century"(McGirr). At the beginning and the end of the eighteenth century, his plays, particularly his comedies, were well-liked in formal and informal theatres in London and the provinces. Additionally, many copies of his plays were republished and reviewed in anthologies like *Bell's British Theatre* (1776) and *The New English Theatre* (1777).

Keywords

Restoration Drama, Sentimental Comedy, Comedy Of Manners, Licentiousness

Discussion

A Sentimental Comedy, a dramatic category of the 18th century, in which middle-class heroes prevail over a number of moral tests. Instead of making them laugh, such comedies were meant to make people cry. Sentimental comedies mirror the modern philosophical idea that people are good by nature but can become corrupted owing to poor situations. Some of the major playwrights of the Sentimental Comedy were Colley Cibber and George Farquhar, and Sir Richard Steele, who wrote *Love's Last Shift*, *The Constant Couple*, and *The Conscious Lovers* respectively. Cibber's debut play and first comedy, *Love's Last Shift*, was performed in 1696. *Love's Last Shift*, is often considered as the first English Sentimental Comedy.

- Sentimental comedy

Cibber, who was self-assured, was the object of numerous political and personal attacks. Alexander Pope, in his satirical poem *The Dunciad* (1743), represented

Cibber with a negative shade. In *Art of Sinking in Poetry*, Pope brings an analogy of a parrot in order to refer to writers like Cibber who merely "repeat (others) words, in such a hoarse, odd voice, that makes them seem their own". He considers Cibber as a writer who became a cause for a decay in art. In retaliation, Cibber published three letters critical of Pope that, according to Dr. Johnson, caused the later poet to groan in agony.

- Exchanges between Pope and Cibber

In his controversial essay "A Short View of the Immorality, and Profaneness of the English Stage", Collier criticised Restoration play for its immorality. The majority of restoration scholars believe that when Cibber began writing *Love's Last Shift*, he bore the audience's contemporary circumstances in mind. In fact, since the 1680s, when the number of plays decreased, theatres have been in financial trouble. As it is clear from the prologues and epilogues of the time that the theatre-goers of the 1680s started seeking more moral plays.

- Immorality of Restoration plays

Plot Summary

In the dramatisation of *Love's Last Shift,* Amanda, a good wife, tries to win back her husband Loveless after his ten-year absence. After losing all of his money, Loveless, who left Amanda soon after six months of their marriage, returns to town with his servant Snap. When Loveless runs into Young Worthy, a former buddy, he is falsely informed that Amanda has passed away. Then, Young Worthy exhorts Amanda to exact revenge on Loveless by tricking him into having a sexual encounter with her. Amanda, however, views the action as a potential strategy for winning back her husband.

- Amanda's trick on Loveless

Amanda discloses to Loveless that she was his faithful wife after deceitfully sleeping with her estranged husband, and he declares that he has changed. In the subplot of the play, Young Worthy and Elder Worthy are seeking to mislead their father and uncle Sir Wisewoud in order to marry Narcissa and Hillaria. Sir Novelty Fashion, who occasionally interferes with the brothers' schemes, is a fop who flirts with all the women but ultimately only cares about himself, and his envious mistress Flareit, who has a terrible temper. By the end of the story, Loveless and Amanda are back together, the Worthy brothers have their wives and their dowries, Sir Novelty is free of Flareit, and the spectator is left with the idea that a good

- Loveless and Amanda are back together

love offers an immense pleasure.

Structure of the Play

Love's Last Shift adheres to the conventional five-act structure. The main action of the first act is introduced right away, and a step is taken to address Loveless issue. As already seen, the main plot of the play revolves around the characters of Loveless and Amanda. Loveless is shown from the very beginning as a rake who engages in sexual misconduct, wild living, and overspending. The character of Loveless as represented in the play is "of a debaucht life, grew weary of his wife in six months, left her, and the town, for debts he did not care to pay".

▶ Five-act structure

In the intervening acts and scenes, the subplots are developed but there are frequent references to the main plot, which is finally resolved in the fifth act. The only act in which the main event is not taken into consideration is Act II, which is devoted exclusively to the Worthy brothers, their lovers, and Sir Novelty Fashion. In the first two parallel sub-actions, the cousins Hillaria and Narcissa are courted and won by the two Worthy brothers, but not without some struggles on their part. In the third and fourth sub-actions, the affair between Sir Novelty Fashion and his mistress, Flareit is dealt with. In the fourth, Hillaria, who had angered the two Worthies by encouraging the fop, devises a scheme to make him feel ashamed.

▶ Sub-plots

Critical Analysis

It is generally agreed that *Love's Last Shift; or, The Fool in Fashion* set the precedent for Sentimental Comedies, a kind of theatre that dominated the English stage for almost a century. *An Apology for the Life of Mr. Colley Cibber* (1740), his autobiography, is a remarkable study of the art of acting which offers the best account of the theatre of his time.

▶ Precedent for Sentimental Comedies

Frederick Wood made his observation "many of the early so-called sentimental comedies were nothing more than comedies of manners warped in the fifth act." The approach of Cibber is quite different as he was offering his audience a traditional Restoration comedy, to which he added an explicitly stated moral principle, with a licentious hero, cynical servingman, attractive coquettish women, a sprinkle of indecent dialogue, some profane, cynical wit, and a fop without sense.

▶ Comedy of Manners

In the main plot of the play, after several years of carefree living on the Continent, the wandering husband Loveless has returned to London and the play's main action centres on his reformation. Young Worthy hatches a scheme to deceive Loveless into thinking that his wife is his new mistress. Later, Amanda discloses who she is and has a moral discussion with her husband. He is made to recognise his mistakes and makes a serious commitment to changing his ways. Some incidents in the play show his initial attitude and approach.

- Returning of Loveless

His exchange with his steward Snap is a clear testimony of his initial licentious and cynical attitude. When questioned about why he gave a costly pearl necklace to a Venetian courtesan, he responds: "I knew I could not have her without it, and I had a night's enjoyment of her that was worth a Pope's revenue for't." Similarly, when he was informed of the supposed demise of his wife, with a streak of insensitivity, he simply responds, she was "a good-natured fool," and doesn't seem really moved. He rejects the idea of love as he believes "constancy in love is all a cheat". Thus he appears to have no conscience at all.

- Insensitivity of Loveless

In the play, the Restoration trend licentiouness is replaced by admirable characters like Young Worthy. It is clear from the beginning of the play that virtue will prevail. It is very evident that we are intended to react to Amanda's struggle because she is introduced to us as "a woman of strict virtue" in the opening scene of the first act.

- Amanda is a "a woman of strict virtue"

Thus, it is clear that Cibber took the decision to produce a play that was distinct from earlier plays. As Womersly observes, *Love's Last Shift* "… is often associated with the moral backlash against what was perceived as licentiousness of comedies of the preceding twenty years… it is clear that in the main Loveless-Amanda plot of *Love's Last Shift* Cibber is experimenting with how such material might receive dramatic embodiment."

- Moral backlash against licentiousness

Act V includes the final episode, which features Amanda's maid Mrs. Anne and Loveless' serving-man Snap. One incident in the play is that the maid Mrs. Anne, to safeguard herself from Snap's advances, makes him fall through a trap-door into the cellar underneath. She

- Final episode

rejoices at his defeat, but her joy is fleeting because Snap is able to drag her into the cellar, where they spend the night together. After his transformation, Loveless directs his servant Snap to marry the maid with whom Snap had spent the night.

Summarised Overview

Love's Last Shift tells the story of the last "shift" or trick that Amanda, a devout wife, must perform in order to transform and keep her rakish, out-of-control husband Loveless. Loveless has been abroad for ten years, spending that time in brothels and drinking, and when he returns to London, his wife is no longer there to greet him. Inviting Loveless into her opulent home while posing as a high-class prostitute, Amanda gives him the night of his dreams before revealing her real identity the next morning. Loveless is so moved by her loyalty that he quickly undergoes character change.

Assignments

1. Discuss the features of Restoration Comedy
2. What is meant by Comedy of Manners
3. What is the significance of the title *Love's Last Shift*?

Suggested Readings

1. Cibber, Colley. *An Apology for the Life of Colley Cibber*. London, 1740.
2. Hume, Robert D. *The Development of English Drama in the Late Seventeenth Century.* Clarendon. 1976.
3. Thomas H. Fujimura. *The Restoration Comedy of Wit*. Princeton U P, 1952.

References

1. Douglas Canfield. *Tricksters and Estates: On the Ideology of Restoration Comedy*. Kentucky, 1997.
2. Lynch, Kathleen M. *The Social Mode of Restoration Comedy*. Tannen, 1926.
3. Norman N. Holland. *The First Modern Comedies: The Significance of Etherege, Wycherley and Congreve*. Harvard UP, 1959.

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.

Prose and Fiction

BLOCK-03

Block Content

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

Unit 1

Prose

(Detailed study)

Learning Outcomes

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

- understand the stylistic and thematic concerns of Addison, Dr. Johnson and Swift
- be familiarised with key features of periodical essays
- detail the features of prose writing in the eighteenth century

The Spectator Club

Richard Steele

Background

Sir Richard Steele was born in Dublin in 1672, the same year as Addison. They were together at school and college. Steele's friendship with Addison was very important in his career. In 1709, with the support of Addison, he started *The Tatler*. It was followed in 1711 by the more celebrated *The Spectator,* to which Addison was the chief contributor. Steele's literary reputation chiefly rests on the essays he wrote for these periodicals. His essays are noted for unlimited originality, good humor, warm feeling and understanding.

Steele is remembered for the charming character creations known as the Spectator Club, and often grouped together as the Coverely Papers. Addison wrote more of these papers than Steele. The essays are mostly in the form of anecdotes or sketches. In fact the idea of the modern novel first took shape from their disjointed series of character sketches. Thackeray has said that the great charm of Steele's papers lies in their naturalness. Addison excels in wit and scholarship, whereas Steele is renowned for human sympathy and knowledge of the world.

The plan of *The Spectator* is Addison's. Its guiding spirit, the Spectator, remains anonymous. His portrait is drawn by Addison in the first Number

of the paper. Just as behind *The Tatler* was The Trumpet Club, behind *The Spectator* was The Spectator Club. They consisted of Sir Roger de Coverley, a country gentleman; Sir Andrew Freeport, a merchant; Captain Sentry, now retired from the army; Will Honeycomb; a wit and dandy; two others, a lawyer and clergyman who too, like the Spectator, are not given names. We may see that different professions are represented in the Club.

Keywords

Periodical essay, Coffee-houses, Social realism

Discussion

The conception of the Spectator Club made a happy advance over the machinery of *The Tatler*. While he was engaged in the writing of *The Tatler* it was given out by Steele that all the matter published in that paper was based upon the discussions ranging in the four prominent coffee-houses of London. By substituting the coffee-house with the Club, Steele and Addison went a long way in humanizing their machinery. Now instead of going to four different places (that is coffee-houses, each frequented by a definite class or profession) Mr. Spectator could himself at one and the same place (that is, the premises of the Club) because the representative of most classes and professions were there. The conception of the Club also added a sense of actuality or at least verisimilitude to Mr. Spectator's observations.

- Discussions ranging from coffee-houses

Summary

The essay, written by Steele, describes the members of the Spectator Club.

Para 1. *The Spectator* starts his account with Sir Roger, a baronet of Worcestershire. The old-fashioned country dance which bears his name was invented by his great grandfather. He has singular points in his behavior; but these features rise from his view of this world. According

to him the world is all wrong. But as he is far from being obstinate, his views do not make him an enemy to people. He usually puts up in Soho Square, when he is in town. He is a bachelor, and the story goes that he has been disappointed in love with a beautiful widow. Before this repulsion, Sir Roger was a fine gentleman, and was quite particular about his dress. But since that misfortune, he seems to have lost all interest in gallantry and the virtues of a beau-ideal. His dress, accordingly, is most unconventional and out-of-fashion. He is fifty-six, and has a very gay temperament. There is quite a cheery atmosphere all around him. His servants are satisfied and the young men are glad of his company. Sir Roger 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.

- Sir Roger' views do not make him an enemy to people

Para 2. The next important gentleman is another bachelor. He is a member of the Inner Temple. He is a very learned person. Unfortunately, however, he had to choose this profession to please his father, who wanted him to study the Laws of the land. But the gentleman is more interested in the stage than in the tiresome laws. Aristotle and Longinus are his special subjects. The letters relating to leases and tenures, sent by his father, disposed of him with the help of his attorney. Instead of deciding arguments among men, he studies the passions which are responsible for these debates. He places more importance on the arguments of Demosthenes and Tully, than on those of the law courts. This sort of mood makes him both disinterested and agreeable. But his fascination for the classics colours his attitude towards anything modern. He is, however, a regular theater-goer. Before visiting the theater he usually drops in at Will's to gossip with his friends. He is particularly concerned over his dress when he goes to the theater.

- The next gentleman had a strong fascination for classics

Glossary

The Inner-Temple: Baldwin II, King of Jerusalem, founded about 1118, the military order of 'Soldiers of the Temple', to protect pilgrims. The Templars came to England before 1185. When the Order was suppressed, their dwelling, the Temple, was purchased by the professors of the common laws, who converted them into inns, in about 1311. These were afterwards called the Inner and Middle Temple. Essex House, also a part of the house of

the Templars, was called the Outer Temple; being situated without Temple Bar.

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

Para 3. The next important person is Sir Andrew Freeport. He is a merchant of wide experience. He is an industrious man also. His views of trade are expressed in his sly jest, according to experience, the sea is the British common. As he has vast experience, he is well acquainted with commerce in all parts of the British dominion. So he can speak with some authority. According to him a power can extend her dominion by trade, instead of by arms. He thinks that if some parts of British trade were well cultivated, the Britishers could have gained from some other nations. He can also prove that laziness has been responsible for

the ruin of many nations. So he lays great importance on trade and commerce, and thinks that England can become richer, if she only follows his (ie, Andrew Freeport's) own methods.

Glossary

British common: a 'common' is a property owned not by any individual, but by the community as a whole. The author means to say that the sea was thought as much a British possession as the common, the possession of an English village.

Para 4. Captain Sentry is the next important character. He is a very brave person, but he is too modest. His talents deserve credit, but he is unable to assert his claims. He was some years a captain and served the army with great gallantry. But as he could not be a courtier and a soldier both at the same time he failed and had to quit the service. He thinks that when such is the case, impudence usually gets the better of modesty. So a man who would like to make a figure in military life, must come forward and make himself quite prominent. The aggressive tendency which accompanies a soldier in the battle-field, must also be an essential qualification in his private life too. Thus Captain Sentry is very frank in his confession. He has gained wide experience about military life and frequently satisfies the curiosity of his comrades in this respect. Moreover, he is never over bearing though accustomed to command of men below him.

- Captain Sentry could not be a courtier and a soldier at the same time

Para 5. The club of the Spectator was not, however, an association of morose eccentric people, unacquainted with love and other human pleasures. The gallant Will Honeycomb was a unique exception. If his age is considered, he ought to look older. But since he is very careful about his appearances, he managed to keep up a younger face. He has been helped in this respect by his easy fortune. He is of a good height and is well turned. But the most attractive feature of Will Honeycomb is his pleasant conversation. He is a well-experienced person in the matter of habits and dresses. So he can trace the origin of any particular mode of fashion and can accurately inform people from which of the French king the fashion has been adopted. This information usually concerns the women-folk. While any other person of his age would have discussed what a

- Will Honeycomb is a man of fashion and pleasant conversation

certain minister had said upon a certain occasion, .Will Honeycomb will tell you about the love-affairs of dukes and lords supplying you with details of time and place. He is also fond of telling people how and when he received a kind glance from any celebrated beauty or the mother of any lord. This sort of conversation acts as a sort of relief to the graver discussion of the other members, humorists, eccentric or whimsical people.

Glossary

Duke of Monmouth: refers to James Crofts, a natural son of Charles II, by Lucy Waters. He was remarkable for his personal beauty and graceful manners. He was banished from England in 1683 for taking part in the Rye-house plot. He then invaded England in 1685 and was proclaimed king at Taunton. But he was defeated at Sedgemoor and was at last beheaded on Tower-hill, on the 15th July 1685.

The Park: Hyde Park, the largest of the royal parks in London.

Para 6. 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. 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.

- Clergyman puts every man into a better mood

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 much attend to legal studies. 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.

Critical Analysis

Steele and Addison were painters of their contemporary society, and by conceiving a club with members drawn from diverse walks of life, they could vivify and broad-base their picture of life. Every member of the Club represents a profession, and among themselves through their representative characteristics they build up a pretty authentic picture of the age of Queen Anne. The Club is a miniature version of contemporary society. While envisaging the Club and its members Steele was attempting something new but not altogether new, for there had been some notable predecessors. Boccaccio (1313-1375) and Chaucer (1340-1400), for example, had also tried to paint their respective societies through the device of bringing together and describing characters drawn from diverse professions. (Boccaccio in his *Decameron* sketched ten persons, including seven ladies, and Chaucer in his *Canterbury Tales* sketched some twenty-nine with a good sprinkling of women among them). This is what exactly Steele (and Addison) did.

- The Club is a miniature version of contemporary society

Steele and the 'Character-writers'

Steele in his brief portrayal of the six characters in this essay may also have been indebted to the seventeenth century character-writers-notably Hall, Stephen, Earle and Overbury. These writers chose some real characters from life and painted them briefly through words. Mostly they concentrated on representative rather than individual traits

of their "modes". On the whole, their performance falls below excellence. Their characters are generally wooden and lack flexibility and liveliness. It is so probably because they modelled their performance rather too slavishly on the precedent set by Theophrastus, the first Greek character writer. On the other hand, on account of his disregard of slavish imitation and his observation, experience, insight, humanity and uncanny mastery of detail, Steele's characters are very life-like. They are not gowns or walking sticks, but men, alive and kicking. Thus, in spite of his indebtedness to some predecessors, Steele's achievement is in a good measure his own.

- Seventeenth century is remarkable for its character writing

Sir Roger de Coverley

What speaks volumes for the catholicity of Steele is the respectful treatment he extends to Sir Roger and Sir Andrew. Hitherto, it had been almost something like tradition to present country gentlemen and merchants in a ridiculous light. The post Restoration dramatists were particularly hard on these characters, especially the country gentry. In many comedies they wrote, poor country gentle-men are made to provide the maximum of fun through their simplicity and lack of understanding of urban manners. The merchants, when included in comedies, were invariably shown as dishonest and greedy. Steele is the first important writer to deal with these stock butts of ridicule with sympathy and understanding. Sir Andrew is presented as rich and somewhat boring, but he is not greedy or dishonest. Similarly, Sir Roger is a respectable country baronet even when he is somewhat ridiculous and eccentric. This paper is important for it introduces us for the first time to Sir Roger, one of the immortals of literature. Addison, later in his Coverley Papers, somewhat modified the conception of this gentleman as held by Steele. But though their conceptions of Sir Roger are slightly different they should be taken as mutually complementary.

- Steele is noted for the respectful treatment of characters like Sir Roger

Steele's Humour, Irony and Satire

Some critics are of the opinion that Steele's humor in this essay is almost Addisonian, for it is mild, subdued, subtle and closely allied with sympathy. There are some felicitous digs on three characters-Sir Roger, Sir Freeport and Will Honeycomb; whereas the other three characters are completely spared-the Templar, the Clergyman and Captain Sentry. It is interesting to note that those characters

appeal to us more as they are subjected to irony and sarcasm. On the other hand, the rest are too "good" to be interesting. They lack colour and liveliness so apparent in Sir Freeport and Honeycomb and Sir Roger. Sympathetic humor can work wonders towards enhancing the appeal of a character. Incidentally, in this essay , Steele also takes the occasion to attack the pursuits of such gentlemen as Honeycomb who survived from the Caroline period but looked anomalous in the new set up. He also seems to be disapproving of the modes of promotion in army service.

- Steele's characters appeal more to readers for his irony and sarcasm

Steele's Style

Lastly, Steele is less of a conscious artist than Addison and we miss in his prose the elegance and easy flow so conspicuous in Addison's. Of course, there are a few instances in this paper where Steele employs some sophisticated stylistic devices such as balance and antithesis; however, he is not as meticulous as Addison in chiselling and polishing his periods.

- Steele is a less conscious artist in contrast to Addison

Summarised Overview

The goal of *The Spectator* was to represent the efforts of a select group of gentlemen from various backgrounds. This article introduces us to the individuals who make up this organisation, also known as "The Spectator Club", including Sir Roger de Coverley, a reclusive country gentleman lawyer. Will Honeycomb, a townie, Captain Sentry, a former member of the military, Sir Andrew Freeport, a businessman who represents the corporate sector, and the priest, who is depicted as an unidentified one.

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 Readings

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.

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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.

The Vindication of Isaac Bickerstaff

Jonathan Swift

Background

Jonathan Swift, pseudonym Isaac Bickerstaff, was born in Dublin, Ireland, on November 30, 1667. He grew up there in the care of his uncle and was educated in Trinity College. He graduated in the year 1688 In that year, he became the secretary of Sir William Temple who was an English politician and member of the Whig party. In 1694, he took religious orders in the Church of Ireland and then spent a year as a country parson. He then spent further time in the service of Temple before returning to Ireland to become the chaplain of the Earl of Berkeley.

His first work, *A Tale of a Tub*, was written in support of the Anglican Church. *The Battle of the Books is* an argument about the supremacy of the classics against modern thought and literature. In 1710 he shifted his loyalty to the Tory party. Unfortunately, the Tory government fell out of power in 1714 and Swift fell out of favour. Swift returned to Dublin, where he became the dean of St. Patrick's. After his return to Ireland, Swift became a staunch supporter of the Irish against English attempts to weaken their economy and politics. In a pamphlet entitled *A Modest Proposa*l, he suggested that the Irish problems of famine and overpopulation could be easily solved by having the babies of poor Irish subjects sold as delicacies to feed the rich. *Gulliver's Travels* was written during this time and proved to be a great success. Late in life, Swift seemed to become even more caustic and bitter. Three years before his death, guardians were appointed to take care of him. He died in the year 1745.

Swift published as Bickerstaff one last time in 1709 with a letter titled "A Vindication of Isaac Bickerstaff." Through the fictitious Isaac Bickerstaff, Jonathan Swift ridicules John Partridge, the famous almanac-maker of his time, in his work "A Vindication" (1709). In it, he outlined a series of elegant arguments to prove that Partridge was indeed dead.

Keywords

Almanac Writing, Prediction, Political Satire

Discussion

Jonathan Swift was the greatest name in the literature of political satire in the Augustan Age. His prose works afford the best example of stinging irony and sharp satire. Not only political matters but other aspects of the social life of England came under the lash of Swift's pen. He was on one occasion pitted against the quack astrologer Dr. Partridge who wrote predictions in the almanac for the benefit of gullible people. Determined to play a hoax on this quack, Swift wrote 'Predictions for the year 1708' and published it in February 1708 under the name Isaac Bickerstaff. The chief of the predictions concerned the death of the astrologer, Dr. Partridge which would happen on 29th March of that year. On the 30th of March, Swift published another letter, 'Letter to a Lord'. Here he pretended to be a government official in the revenue department. The official was supposed to be making a report of the inquiry ordered by the Lord. In this he said that Dr. Partridge has indeed died on the previous night ie. the night of the 29th March but at 7 p.m. and not at 11 p.m. as predicted by Bickerstaff. This hoax excited the sense of fun of Swift's countrymen but provoked an angry protest from Dr. Partridge himself. This was published in his almanac for 1709. In it he asserted that he was alive and in good health, in spite of the prediction of Bickerstaff, the sham astrologer. When Swift read this, he wrote his Vindication of Isaac Bickerstaff.

▶ Prediction of Bickerstaff

Critical Summary

Swift keeps up the hoax here by continuing his pretense that he is Bickerstaff, and by proving through clever arguments that Dr. Partridge is indeed dead. The vindication is also charged with heavy sarcasm and irony which is withering. Swift begins by insisting that he was surprised and pained by what Mr. Partridge had written about him in his *Almanac*. He says that all learned men are committed to truth and that to call him a liar and villain was not worthy of a man of education like Mr. Partridge. Again and again he uses this idea that philosophers and scholars should express and tolerate their differences. All this directed against an uneducated quack is highly sarcastic. When Swift includes Partridge in the republic of learning, he is in fact telling the man what an uneducated fool and quack he is. Swift continues in this vein to talk of the letters

he as Bickerstaff has received from other men of learning in foreign countries, praise him for his predictions. He says that his predictions offended only Mr. Partridge and the Spanish Inquisition. Praising came from eminent men of science like Leibnitz. Even when these great men differed from Bickerstaff's predictions in a few minor points, they expressed the difference in a polite and modest manner.

▶ Almanac writing

Mr. Bickerstaff then says that Mr. Partridge's method was so different because he failed to follow the illustrious examples. In fact Mr. Partridge instead of encouraging others who practise his own art, seems to be afraid of rivalry. This is a very unscientific attitude. The objection he raises is only to one prediction of Bickerstaff, the one pertaining to Partridge himself. This is unscientific partiality. And in this matter he is indeed the only one who raised any objection. This itself should take off considerable weight from his protest. The only other protest registered against Bickerstaff's predictions was by a Frenchman who wrote that a Cardinal who was predicted to die, was still alive. Bickerstaff leaves this with the remark that the impartial reader will decide whom to believe, a French man and a Papist or an English Protestant. Now Bickerstaff turns all his attention to the objection of Partridge, namely that "he is not only alive now but was likewise alive upon that very 29th of March" when he was predicted to die. He says that all the learned men of the world will be watching this controversy between two learned men.

▶ Controversy between learned men

With heavy sarcasm Swift proves that Partridge is indeed dead. While doing this through clever arguments, he also calls his opponent a fool and uninformed carcase etc. The first argument is that at least a thousand gentlemen reading Partridge's new almanac would assert that no man alive wrote such nonsense, forcing the quack to acknowledge that either he wrote nonsense or he was not a man alive'. The next argument is that Partridge's wife has been going about saying that her husband had neither life nor soul in him. Therefore Partridge was only an uninformed carcass. A carcass or dead body has no right to protest against anyone reporting its death. Thirdly, Mr. Partridge's ability to tell fortunes and recover stolen goods was the result of his association with evil spirits. Such association is possible only for a dead man. Above all, Mr. Partridge himself had given in his almanac the proof that the prophecy came true because he has asserted that he is now alive and was alive

on the very 29th of March. Bickerstaff argues that though Partridge was alive on that day, it does not disprove the prediction of his being dead in the night. The fifth and the final argument is that Mr. Bickerstaff would not have begun his predictions with a falsehood, knowing fully well that a man of Partridge's learning and intelligence would demolish him with that one or any more error that could be traced in it. He then refers to the 'Letter to a Lord' that another person wrote pointing out the four hours' disparity between the death of Partridge and the hours predicted for it. But Bickerstaff argues that the error was only by half an hour and that it does not invalidate his prophecy.

- Association with evil spirits

The fact that Mr. Partridge still writes almanacs is sometimes urged to establish that he did not die. But this is common in the case of almanac writers. Many of them continue to have almanacs published in their names, years after their death. The reason for this. Swift points out with scorn, that while authors of literature live after their death, writers of the trivial almanacs have to be given a lease in reverse' and allowed to continue their works after their death.

- Writing almanacs and death

Bickerstaff urges his motive for trying thus to vindicate himself. He says that many people have been using his name and writing predictions for all and sundry, whereas he wrote for the attention of the 'gravest persons'. When Mr. Partridge's second almanac came out denying his death. Bickerstaff feels compelled to prove his death. He feels a bit like the general who was compelled to kill a second time his enemies whom a necromancer had brought back to life. He then wishes long life to Mr. Partridge, if he too has brought himself back to life using black magic. However, that does not disprove the truth of his prediction or the accuracy of it which the author of the 'Letter to a Lord' was trying to question.

- Bickerstaff vindicates himself

Under the name of Bickerstaff, Swift has indeed made mincemeat of Partridge. What falls repeatedly is the heavy hammer blows of Swift's sarcasm. All the time he speaks of Partridge as a learned man. This only emphasizes his ignorance. The arguments establishing that he is indeed dead, are charged with irony and ridicule. He is called 'no man alive', an 'uninformed carcase' and so on. The sharpness of the invective is meant to silence Partridge forever and to prove to him the uselessness of his work.

- Mincemeat of Partridge

Only a mind as sharp and quick as Swift's could have reasoned as he has done. His language is admirably suited for his purpose. It is incisive and vigorous, modern in its simplicity, clarity and directness.

Swift played a hoax on a quack astrologer Mr. Partridge who was very popular at the time for his almanacs and his predictions. In February 1708 Swift published an almanac under the name of Isaac Bickerstaff and in that, among other predictions he said that Dr. Partridge would die on 29th March of the same year. On the 30th March Swift published a letter, this time in a different name, asserting that Dr. Partridge had indeed died the night before. That letter was written in the form of the report of an inquiry ordered by one in authority and so it was published as a 'Letter to a Lord' When Mr. Partridge published his almanac for the next year he protested against Bickerstaff's prediction about himself. He said that the prediction was false and that he was still alive as indeed he was on 29th March when he was supposed to have died. Swift felt that he was treated in a rough manner and this was what provoked him to write his vindication of Isaac Bickerstaff.

- Bickerstaff's prediction about himself

An almanac is a book which typically contains a calendar of the year along with a record of various astronomical phenomena such as data on phases of the moon and schedules of high and low tides; other miscellaneous information such as weather predictions and seasonal suggestions for farmers is often provided. Such handbooks were incredibly popular and proved to be bestsellers from the earliest days of printing when much of their content was devoted to astrological matter and predictions of the future. While much of this kind of "sensational" data had disappeared by the eighteenth century, almanacs remained popular and may be described as having evolved into a kind of folk literature containing - alongside the traditional calendrical data - interesting facts and statistics, moral precepts and proverbs, medical advice, jokes and sometimes even verse. Thus almanacs could provide entertainment when reading matter was scarce, while also acting as compendiums of instructive and useful information for a wide range of needs. This variety of roles, provided cheaply and concisely, largely explains their success as one of the publishing phenomena of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries.

- Miscella-neous infor-mation

Summarised Overview

Swift's "A Vindication of Isaac Bickerstaff" was written in reaction to Partridge's 1709 edition of his almanac, which asserted that the author was still alive. Swift provides several examples, testimonies, and logical justifications throughout the essay to support his position and declare the fulfilment of his prophecy. Partridge's "rough attitude" and the derogatory words he employed in his response to Bickerstaff's almanack are mocked by Swift in the opening paragraph of his article. Swift also attacks the supporters of Patridge, "His Majesty of Portugal". He claims that while his prophecies were destroyed and burned in Portugal, they were received with "candour and charity" in other European nations. The "Vindication" is a masterful parody of the time's widespread practise of astrology, which cast incorrect predictions. Swift treats Partridge with humour and portrays him in a comedic way.

Assignments

1. What were the important predictions of Bickerstaff?
2. How did Bickerstaff prove that Partridge was dead?
3. How is the impression that Bickerstaff is a serious astrologer kept up?
4. Who wrote the 'Letter to a Lord' mentioned in the essay and what was the gist of that letter?

Suggested Readings

1. Nokes, David. *Jonathan Swift, a Hypocrite Reversed: A Critical Biography*. Oxford UP, 1985.
2. Orrery, John Boyle. *Remarks on the Life and Writings of Dr. Jonathan Swift*. Millar, 1752.

References

1. Delany, Patrick. *Observations Upon Lord Orrery's Remarks on the Life and Writings of Jonathan Swift*. W. Reeve, 1754.
2. Ehrenpreis, Irvin. *The Personality of Jonathan Swift*. Methuen, 1958.
3. Fox, Christopher, ed. *The Cambridge Companion to Jonathan Swift*. Cambridge U P, 2003.

On Procrastination

Dr. Samuel Johnson

Background

Dr. Samuel Johnson (1709-84), whose life spanned the major part of the eighteenth century, has left an indelible image of his personality on the subsequent history of English literature. Johnson was born in the family of an impoverished bookseller. Early in his life Johnson contracted scrofula from the wet nurse he was put to, a disease which resulted in deafness in one ear and partial blindness in an eye. The physical difficulties and ailments he had to suffer from throughout his life left an indelible imprint on his personality. He entered Lichfield Grammar school in 1717 and soon showed remarkable progress, his prodigious memory and voracious reading turned him into a figure who was respected by both his peers and instructors. A small legacy left to his mother enabled him to go up to Oxford in 1728. He entered Pembroke College, but the hopes of a conventional university education were shattered soon when in 1729, barely thirteen months after he entered it, Johnson had to leave Oxford on account of poverty.

Facing major financial difficulties Johnson decided to come to London in the company of David Garrick, his former pupil and the most celebrated actor of the period. Johnson tried to make a living by what has been called 'inspired hackwork', — writing for various journals and periodicals. He worked for a time for *The Gentleman's Magazine*. In 1746 he signed a contract with a group of London publishers, then called booksellers, for a comprehensive dictionary of the English language, which was eventually published in 1755. In 1749 his greatest and best known poem *The Vanity of Human Wishes* was published; the year also saw the performance of his tragedy *Irene*, the incomplete manuscript of which he had brought with him while coming from Lichfield. Two series of periodical essays *The Rambler* (began in 1750) and *The Idler* (1758) and *The Dictionary of the English Language* made Johnson's reputation as the foremost lexicographer and literary critic of the age. In 1759 was published his philosophical novel *Rasselas, or the Prince of Abyssinia*. A meeting with James Boswell in 1763 resulted in a friendship which lasted till Johnson's death and the fruit of which was the justly celebrated *Life of Johnson* (1791), probably the best known biography in the history of English literature.

1765 saw the publication of Johnson's edition of Shakespeare's plays, a

thoroughly researched scholarly work, the 'Preface' to which is one of the most valuable pieces of literary criticism on Shakespeare's genius in the eighteenth century. His last major literary works were the ten volumes of *Lives of the Poets* (the first four volumes were published in 1779 and the rest in 1781). The balance achieved in this work between biography and literary criticism proved to be a model for literary biographies of the later ages.

Johnson suffered a stroke in 1783, his slow recovery was cut short by a combination of dropsy and other ailments which claimed his life on 13 December 1784. The following week, he was buried in Westminster Abbey.

Undoubtedly the most remarkable and authoritarian literary figure of the eighteenth century, Dr Samuel Johnson had mastered the fields of literary criticism, literary biography, lexicography, periodical essays and poetry. He was also a brilliant conversationalist. Justly credited with giving the English language its first methodical and comprehensive dictionary, he was a pioneer in more than one sense of the term. Like Alexander Pope, Johnson also struggled with life-long ailments, and like Pope again, he managed, after initial years of hardship, to earn a respectable living from writing. Dr Johnson had been an institution in himself and it is no wonder that he has been recognised as one of the very first professional 'man of letters' in the history of English literature and culture.

Keywords

Periodical essay, Procrastination, Writing style, Themes, Relevance

Discussion

Johnson's *The Idler* and *The Rambler*

In the second half of the eighteenth century the periodical essay showed a tendency to get incorporated into the newspaper. The series of about a hundred papers of Dr. Johnson, called *The Idler*, was contributed to a newspaper, *The Universal Chronicler*. These papers are lighter and shorter than those published in the periodical paper *The Rambler*. The Rambler appeared twice a week between March 20, 1750 and March 14, 1752 and ran 208

numbers. The essays in *The Rambler* deal with a great variety of subjects but the treatment is always serious. In these essays Dr. Johnson comes before us as a moralist and as a sage, and every essay is an exercise in earnestness. The style of these journals is Latinised and antithetical. The purpose of these journals was to reform society.

▶ Periodical essay get incorporated into the news-paper

In 1750, still living in poverty, and already at work on his dictionary, Johnson began anonymously to write the essays which appeared in *The Rambler*, a two penny sheet which appeared twice weekly for two years, whether Johnson was well or ill, idle or busy. The essays are remarkable for their quality, their clarity, and their weight. Written in Johnson's rather abstract and Latinate style, they are concerned with practical rather than with theoretical morality. They attempt to show the reader how to cultivate a proper state of mind, how to employ his energies and time efficiently. The essays embody Johnson's belief that the author as moralist has a duty to improve the world. They have little to do with contemporary political, social, or literary events, but the Rambler's comments on his society and on the human condition are characteristically ponderous, shrewd, ironic, compassionate, wise, and enormously perceptive.

▶ As a moralist has the duty to improve the world

Johnson's essays in *The Rambler* embody his comments on his own experience of universal human anxieties and frustrations. No. 134, "On Procrastination", for example, is a brilliant study of the tendencies toward idleness and procrastination which Johnson struggled against all of his life, tendencies which all of us, to one degree or another, share with him.

▶ Idleness and procrastina-tion

Critical summary

Dr. Johnson begins the essay with a statement of his inability the previous day to decide on the topic on which he would write. He was struggling to focus his thoughts on the subject when he was reminded by the press of a piece of writing that was due to be provided. A writer of wide-ranging and thorough knowledge can easily accommodate himself with the task of writing on every scene of life or view of nature. Yet the author scolds himself for the unnecessary delay he has caused. He is relieved that he can make up for the lost time with a little bit of diligence. He feels superior to those who cannot recover the lost opportunities with any amount of resolution or diligence and their purpose thus culminating in calamity and fruitless sorrow.

▶ Struggling to focus his thoughts on the subject

Though warned by moralists and reproached by reason, all of us tend to delay actions inevitably to be done. Even those who fight the instinct successfully find that it is not completely rid of their system; though defeated, not destroyed. Johnson says in a humorous tone that we have a special affinity for the present moment. The present moment can impress us the most by its proximity. So we tend to postpone deeds of pain (discomfort) in the hope that a later date will fetch the support or advantage that we lack now. We thus fall prey to the notion that the moment of necessity (deadline, in modern terms which we wish would never arrive, is at least far removed from us (i.e. the present).

▶ Affinity for the present moment

Life is thus wasted in the gloom of anxiety and spent in resolutions that vanish the next morning. We set goals that we never fulfil and in reconcile/justify our cowardice with absurd excuses. Our firmness of purpose is damaged by too much thinking and we submit to our fear which only worsens the situation. We waste a lot of time within which we could have easily executed the task. Though procrastination does not add to the toughness of the task, our inherent fear makes it tougher. The evil of delay cannot be avoided; but we can lessen its duration. If we flee from problems, problems will overtake us. If we meet them and try to tackle them, the task would be easy since it will be devoid of the force added to it by our mental conflicts of doubts and anguish of anticipation (in other words, our unfounded fear of it).

▶ The evil of delay

It is easier to act than worrying about it. But we see the progress of life retarded merely by our reluctance to make a move; we find people lamenting their plight which is caused by their idleness. The pity that Tantalus deserves cannot be lavished on idle people, since Tantalus's plight was a result of the punishment meted out to him by Zeus.

▶ Easier to act than worrying about it

This inactive generation is characterized by its complaints of uneasiness which is the result of lack of interest and diffidence. If they have a will to it, they can remove these imagined distresses. Their endeavours are obstructed by their fear of failure or by frequent failures consequent on irresolute struggles. Their constant tendency to avoid labour induces false terror in the mind. Once fear, natural or acquired, has full possession of our minds, it invariably generates visions of calamity. Unless such fear is removed

- Lazy people are tormented by nonexistent troubles

from our minds by fruitful utilization of our faculties, it will make life miserable. Every earthly being is subject to misery of some sort. But lazy people will be tormented even by nonexistent troubles which can be recognized and dispelled only by realizing their origin in cowardice.

The ones who fail most to make achievements are the idle ones. Those who neglect their duties merely to avoid the labour involved are destined to sink under the laziness. The idle can never achieve tranquility. On the other hand, they will be constantly troubled by their conscience, but it won't be able to drive them to action; it will result in loss of sleep. They will be haunted by remorse and vexation by being reminded of their inability to devote themselves to their goals.

- Troubled by their conscience

Procrastination grips even active and keen minds. One who pursues many goals often hesitates between different options leading to delays. In certain cases the course already advanced shall be given up in favour of a new one. Those who find different courses of action to achieve the same goal shall waste time considering the comparative advantage of each course resuming in a delayed start. One who is very keen shall consider very remote consequences and tends to look for new methods. He is not easily persuaded to start his enterprise. Such an attitude results in complications and confusions. One who tries to achieve every possible convenience shall never be satisfied with his effort. He shall go on amassing materials, consulting books and experts and will study all related parts of learning without ever feeling confident to start work. One who seeks total perfection fails to achieve total perfection and will lapse every chance of doing well.

- One who pursues many goals hesitates between different options

We have to remind ourselves that life is not going to be as long as we wish it to be. So we have to try to fulfil our aspirations without wasting time. It is true that no diligence can ensure success and one might be snatched away by death at any stage of our lives and our missions. A person who has tried but failed to bring his effort to success due to death hasn't tried in vain. He has the honour of falling in his rank and having fought the battle, though he missed the victory/the fruition of his efforts.

Summarised Overview

Samuel Johnson proposed temporal closeness as a source of procrastination in his article, stating that it is natural "to be most solicitous for that which is by its nearness enabled to form the strongest impressions." This affinity for the present has lately been revived as a possible explanation for procrastination.

Assignments

1. How does Samuel Johnson find correlation between idleness and procrastination
2. How does the writer describe the evilness of delay?
3. How pursuing many goals leads to procrastination?
4. What are the major arguments that Samuel Johnson introduced in his "*On Procrastination"*?

Suggested Readings

1. Bate, W. Jackson. *Samuel Johnson. A Biography, Berkeley*: Conterpoint, 1998.
2. Gopnik, Adam. "The Critics: A Critic at Large: Man of Fetters: Dr. Johnson and Mrs. Thrale", *The New Yorker*, vol. 84, no. 40, pp. 90–96, retrieved 9 July 2011.
3. Johnson, Samuel. *Major Works.* Oxford U.P, 2000.

References

1. Johnson, Samuel. "Selected Essays from the Rambler, Adventurer, and Idler". Yale UP, 1968.
2. Leavis, F. R. (1944), "Johnson as Critic", *Scrutiny*, 12: 187–204.

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

Prose

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

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

Discussion

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

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.

▶ Invitation from Sir Roger

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

▶ Realistic portrait of the character

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

▶ Minute detailing

to his past services, though he has been useless for several years".

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

5. He is beloved by all about him

▶ Style of Addison

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. Discuss Addison's writing style and his use of humour in the essay "Sir Roger at Home."
2. Explore Addison's realistic portrayal of characters in the essay "Sir Roger at Home."
3. Write a note on Addison's description of country state and its people in the essay "Sir Roger at Home."

Suggested Reading

1. John J. Miller, "On Life, Liberty, and Other Quotable Matters," *Wall Street Journal*, 2 July 2011.
2. Carter, Philip. *Men and the Emergence of Polite Society, Britain 1660-1800.* Pearson, 2001.

Reference

1. Steele, Sir Richard; Addison, Joseph. "No. 147 Saturday, March 18, 1710", *The Tatler*, Vol 2, Oxford U.P, pp. 331–335, 18 March 1710.

The Battle of the Books

Jonathan Swift

Background

Swift wrote *The Battle of the Books* to support his patron, Sir William Temple, who was engaged in the famous ancient-modern controversy then raging in England, with his "Essay on Ancient and Modern Learning". In 1697-98, Swift was working as a confidential secretary to Sir. William Temple. Temple's essay was ridiculed by William Wotton, who was later joined by Richard Bentley, the librarian of the King's Library. Some other intellectuals like Charles Boyle supported Temple. The resulting battle of words and pamphlets added oil to the burning issue. It was at this juncture that Swift came forward to defend his patron with his famous *The Battle of the Books.*

Macaulay in his essay on Sir William Temple wrote about the ancient-modern controversy as "the most idle and contemptible one... touching the comparative merit of ancient and modern writers." Though the controversy had been there since the Renaissance, it was formally inaugurated in England with Temple's essay. It was followed by William Wotton's *Reflections upon Ancient and Modern Learning*, which was published in 1694.

Keywords

Allegory, Modern, Ancient

Discussion

- The book-seller gives an account of controversy

The bookseller tells the readers that the discourse that they are going to read is an account of a controversy. The controversy arose with the publication of an essay by Sir William Temple upon the comparative merits of the modern and ancient writers. Temple took the side of the ancients to which William Wotton published a reply. Dr. Bentley attached an appendix to Wotton's reply. They had tried to discredit Aesop and Phalaris, two ancients whom Temple had celebrated. In that reply Dr. Bentley had also questioned an edition of Phalaris which Charles Boyle had published. Boyle attacked Bentley's argument and the doctor too gave his reply.

The people of the town were disturbed by the manner

in which Temple's reputation was being tossed between these two men. There appeared to be no end to their quarrel and hence the books of St. James' library decided to settle this matter since they were the subject of argument. There was a battle of the books but the volume in which it is recorded is imperfect and nobody knows which side won. The bookseller tells us that when a particular author is mentioned then it means the book and not the person.

▶ Battle of Books

The Preface of the Author

Swift compares Satire to a glass in which people see others' faces except their own. This is one of the reasons why a satirical work is received well in the world. But Swift wonders as to what would happen if everyone started looking at the satire as a personal attack and saw one's own face. Of course the results would be different and more readers would get angry. Swift tells us that anger adds strength to the body but it does not do any good to the mind. Such readers usually turn out to be feeble and impotent. The brains of such persons cannot bear much criticism. Swift asks such people to guard their brain and use it economically. Swift warns them that when the brain of such people comes under the lashing of better brains it will never come up with anything new. This happens because wit without knowledge is like cream. The cream gathers to the top in the night and will be gathered by a skillful hand. Once the cream is removed the remaining contents can only be thrown to the hogs, meaning it is useless. Swift thus assures us that he is not bothered by the anger of certain people who read his satire since they are dull witted by nature. With these remarks the account of the battle begins.

▶ Satire as a glass

Cause of War: Political and Intellectual

Analysing the causes of war, Swift maintains that the main natural grounds for it are avarice and lust. Lust and avarice are related to pride and are the issues of want, i.e., they rise from the lack of something. Burlesquing the style of political writers, he talks of the causes of war in the state of dogs and applies it to the intellectual state of man. In this case, too, the cause is poverty, poverty of true and deep knowledge. Minds poor in wit and knowledge are not aware of their ignorance and, becoming too proud, boast and attack better minds. Swift sees the conflict between the Ancients and the Moderns as a conflict between poor intellects and good intellects i.e., powerful intellect.

▶ conflict between the Ancients and the Moderns

Dispute over the Peaks of Parnassus

The battle originated in the dispute over the occupation of the higher peak of Parnassus which was held by the Ancients who had lived there for a very long time. The lower peak was occupied by the Moderns who were not satisfied with their position. They claimed that because the Ancients' dwelling was on a higher peak, it spoiled their view, especially of the east which was the source of light. They sent ambassadors to complain about this to the Ancients and gave them two alternative suggestions. Either the Ancients should give up their peak to the Moderns or they should allow the Moderns to come up with mattocks and shovels to bring the peak to the level of the lower peak. The Ancients naturally rejected both proposals and said that they would not leave their aboriginal home. In any case, they made up for the lost view by providing them shade. They would also help them to raise their peak to the level of the Ancients. The scheme to level down the higher peak was also ill conceived as that side of the mountain was made of hard and solid rock which would merely break the tools of the Moderns. But the Moderns refused to listen and consequently began a long and stubborn war between the two parties.

▶ The Moderns were not satisfied with their position

Swift implies that the Moderns were not only inferior to the Ancients in their literary works as evidenced by the difference of heights in their peaks, but they were presumptuous enough to demand that the higher position be given to them regardless of their worth. The solid and unshakeable worth of the Ancients is established through allegory, as is the stubborn and self-willed ignorance of the Moderns.

▶ Mountain of Parnassus

The Scene at St. James's Library

Swift makes a smooth transition from the mountain of Parnassus to the St. James' Library. The quarrel which started on Parnassus developed into a confrontation between the champions or supporters of the Ancients and the Moderns. The very books, instilled as they were by the spirits of the authors, prepared for a battle in the library. The Keeper of the library was partial to the Moderns and had vowed to knock down with his own hands two Ancient chiefs who guarded a small pass on Parnassus. He showed partiality in the allotment of space in the library to the modern books. There was great disorder in the library as a result of the

Keeper having lost his head through eating the worms he picked from the books of the school men. He misplaced books with the result that De Cartes was placed next to Aristotle and poor Plato was shoved in between Hobbes and the Seven Wise Masters. This misplacement was due to the fact that the Keeper walked in the dark - both literally as well as figuratively to mean mental darkness.

- St. James' Library

The battle preparations were set in motion by the Moderns, one of whom set out on a tour of the library to examine the strength and arrange the affairs of the Moderns. This messenger brought the information that their force had a strength of fifty thousand warriors, made up chiefly of light cavalry (poets), heavy armed foot (historians), and mercenaries (hack writers and pamphleteers). All of them were badly equipped and poorly armed and clad. This implies the poor quality of the literary out-put of the Moderns.

- Poor literary quality of moderns

In this portion Swift creates an impression that he is going to be an impartial recorder of the events as they took place. He does, however, with great skill implicate Bentley who was the Keeper of the library. A casual reference to Bentley's promise to knock down the two Ancients (i.e., Aesop and Phalaris) brings the narrative into the context of the controversy regarding the ancient-modern merits raging in England.

- Impartial recording of the event

The Spider-bee Episode

While this dispute between the books was brewing and developing into a battle there took place a material accident. A bee entered the library through a broken pane in the window. A spider had made its web in one of the highest corners of the room and there it sat, swollen up through eating innumerable flies. The bee suddenly alighted on this web. The impact made the web disintegrate and fall into ruins. The spider thought that doomsday had come, or Beelzebub, the lord of flies, had come to avenge the death of so many flies. The bee slowly and carefully extracted itself from the web and by this time the spider ventured out to find out who the web-truder was. When he saw his web in ruins and that the bee was the cause of it, he started abusing the bee. He further boasted of his self sufficiency, mathematical skill and ability to invent. He called the bee a vagabond who plundered nature and had nothing to call her own except her wings and drone pipe. To this the bee

- spider thought that doomsday had come

replied that the spider produced only poisonous flybane and dirt to make the web.

The bee, on the other hand, was quite content to possess only a pair of wings and a drone pipe which enabled it to wander about and gather honey and wax. This needed deep study, hard work and a keen sense of judgement. The bee went away after asking who was better, one who stayed within a circumscribed area turning out nothing but poison and being proud, or one who ranged over fields and gardens and brought back honey and wax. Aesop had been a keen listener to this dispute and after the bee flew away he brought out the correspondence between the spider and bee dispute and their own, the ancient-modern controversy. The spider and bee had exhausted every argument that the Ancients and Moderns could use against each other. Like the spider, the Moderns too spin their work out of filth and produce poison and are proud of their skill and method and self-sufficiency. Their creation, like the cobweb, was flimsy and they, like the spider, fed upon the vermin of the age to produce their work. The bee, said Aesop, could very well be the advocate of the Ancients who went through deep study and search over a wide range of nature, worked hard and as a result fill their hives with honey with wax. They, like the bee, are content with the flight of imagination and their language. The Ancients, too, furnish mankind with sweetness and light.

▶ Scene of spider and bee

The spider-bee episode is central to the book. This is the allegorical presentation of the dispute between the Moderns and the Ancients and we are made aware of Swift's own views upon the relative merits of the two sides. Swift has used allegory as an effective instrument of satire here.

▶ Allegorical dispute

The Armies are Set up

After Aesop's comments on the similarity between the bee spider dispute and the Ancient-Modern quarrel, there was increased commotion in the library and hostilities also heightened. It was decided to hold a battle. Both sides withdrew to the farthest sides of the library to hold consultations and to choose leaders. The Moderns, who were of a large number, were noisy and violent and argued about the choice of leaders, especially for the cavalry (epic poetry) for which post there were contenders from Tasso and Milton to Dryden and Withers. Their light horse (lyrical poetry) was led by Cowley and Despreaux. Their bowmen

- similarity between the quarrels of bee-spider and the Ancient-Modern

(philosophers) were under Descrates, Gassendi and Hobbes. Paracelsus led the stink pot flingers (scientists) and the dragoons (medical writers) were commanded by Harvey. The heavily armed foot (historians) were led by Davila, Buchanan, Camden and others. The camp followers were led by L'Estrange, a pamphleteer. These were most poorly clad.

The army of the Ancients was smaller in size but it was more disciplined. Their cavalry was led by Homer, light cavalry by Pindar, the bowmen by Plato and Aristotle, the dragoons by Hippocrates. The tail end was brought up by the Modern allies, led by Vossius and Temple. Once again allegory is used. Swift conveys the lack of discipline among the Moderns and the sense of order reigning among the Ancients. He implies that the Moderns were merely vain and had no deep knowledge or merit. Their number is large but their ability is poor.

- Ancients are more disciplined

The Gods Assemble

In the style of classical epics, Swift makes the gods assemble to consult and discuss the earthly battle between the books. In this assembly Momus, the champion of the Moderns, spoke in support of the Moderns. This was ably answered by Pallas, proteress of the Ancients. The assembly of gods were divided in their support, some favouring the Ancients and some the Moderns. Jupiter looked into the book of fate but did not disclose what he saw there. Jupiter sent some of the lower gods, who were nimble, with some secret orders to the scene of battle. They entered the library unseen and disposed of the sides according to the orders.

- Similar to classical epics

The goddess of Criticism is met by Momus Meanwhile, Momus fearing the worst for his devotees went to the goddess of Criticism who lived at the top of the snowy mountain in Nova Zembla. Beside her stood Ignorance, Pride, her mother, and Opinion, her sister. Around her played her children, Noise, Impudence, Positiveness, Ill-manners, Vanity and Pedantry. She had claws like a cat and a head like an ass. When Momus told her to hurry to the British Isles to help her devotees who were in danger of being beaten by the Ancients, she rose and gave a soliloquy in which she bragged about her hold over idiots and infants and immature minds. Then she flew to the library of St. James and saw the positions of the two armies. When she saw Wotton, her son, she was filled with motherly feelings.

She transformed herself into a printed page and went and asked her son to make the generals attack immediately. She commanded two of her children, Dullness and Ill-manners to guard Wotton. Then in the manner of epic goddesses, she vanished in a mist.

▶ Motherly feeling

Swift here indulges in a description of a most repulsive kind to evoke dislike and disgust for the modern critics. Allegory is again used to bring out the qualities of modern literary criticism. By linking Wotton with the ugly and sickening goddess of Criticism, we know where Swift's sympathies lie. The style is an effective burlesque of the classical epic.

▶ Modern literary criticism

Invocation

Again in the style of the classical epic, Swift prays to the goddess, (though it is to the goddess of history that he prays to) to grant him the ability and the strength to accomplish the task of reporting the battle. In true epic manner he declares that the task is so momentous that a hundred mouths, tongues, hands and pens would not be enough to tackle it. He appeals to the goddess of history and not the Muse of poetry because he claims to be reporting factually and not indulging in a flight of fancy.

▶ Prayer to goddess

Single combats

Single combats took place between the respective leaders from each army. Philosophers fought with rival philosophers; Ancient philosopher Aristotle fought with the modern thinker, Bacon. Aristotle's arrow missed Bacon but hit Descartes instead and killed him. Epic poet Homer fought with modern Gondibert and threw horse and rider to the ground, to be trampled to dust. Homer also killed Denham, Perrault and Wesley and Fontannelle. Lucan, the ancient lyric poet, fought with Blackmore but this encounter ended in an honorable exchange of suitable gifts.

▶ Aristotle fights with Bacon

The most delightful of the single encounters described in the book is the one between Virgil and Dryden. Dryden was seated on an enormous horse and clad in an impressive armour and Virgil thought that he was a worthy rival to fight against. But Dryden desired a parley with Virgil instead. When he removed the visor of his helmet, disappointment overcame Virgil for the helmet was too big for the ridiculously small head inside it. Dryden appeared like a mouse under an imposing canopy or like

the shrunken head of a dandy after the periwig had been removed. His voice matched his figure in weakness. He pacified Virgil with a long and wordy speech about how they were closely related. He succeeded in making Virgil exchange armour with him but the shiny armour did not suit his weak frame and he could not control Virgil's horse. Swift has skilfully chosen his combatants and the end they meet. He has settled his score with Dryden whom he never forgave for telling him that he would never be a poet. The description of the battle is most lively and humorous as well as dramatic.

▶ Virgil and Dryden

In another single combat, Pindar killed Cowley whom he slew with his sword, cutting his body in half. One half of the body fell to the ground and was trampled by the horses. The other half was taken by his frightened horse to the goddess Venus who changed it into a dove and harnessed it to her chariot. This again is an appropriate allegory for what Swift implies is that Cowley would be immortal for his love poetry Mistress, but forgotten for his Pindaric imitations.

▶ Pindar kills Cowley

The Fate of Bentley and Wotton

The Ancients were having a decided upper hand in the battle and towards the evening the Moderns were almost inclined towards a retreat. Then a captain named Bentley came forth. He was deformed and ugly, with a talent for railing. He raged at his own leaders and called them names and boasted that if he had been the commander of the Modern army, the Ancients would have been beaten like dogs. With a master stroke of irony, Swift makes Scaliger whom Bentley supported, call him a miscreant prater! Scaliger took him to task for being so presumptuous and predicted that far from the Ancients being killed, Bentley himself would be a carcass by the evening.

▶ Ancients have upper hand

Bentley and his dear friend Wotton decided to find some adventure by which they could achieve fame and reputation. Being cowardly, they decided to employ strategy and tricks to attack some neglected quarter of the Ancients' army. As they were prowling abort, they came across two shiny armours hanging from a tree and their owners sleeping nearby. They drew lots to decide who was to take further steps. It fell to Bentley to proceed. The two sleepers were Aesop and Phalaris. Bentley wanted to kill them both in their sleep. But the goddess of Affright prevented him

- attack some neglected quarters

from doing so and he contented himself with stealing the armours and set out in search of his friend Wotton.

Wotton's Adventure

Wotton, in the meanwhile, had wandered about in search of adventure and had come to the fountain of Helicon, sacred to the Muses. He tried to quench his thirst with the clear waters of this fountain, but Apollo placed his shield between Wotton and the water so that he could only draw the mud and slime from the bottom of the pool. At the head of the fountain, he saw Temple drinking huge draughts from the fountain and resolved to kill him. With quaking knees, he prayed to the goddess of Criticism to lend him the strength to throw his lance. He brandished his lance thrice over his head to give it a magical effect and with his mother's strength added to his own, he threw the lance at Temple. The lance merely touched Temple without harming him and fell into the fountain. Apollo was enraged that a lance thrown with the aid of the hateful goddess of Criticism, should pollute a pool sacred to him. He appeared before Boyle in the shape of Atterbury and exhorted him to take action against the Modern who threw the lance.

- Adventure of Wotton

Boyle's Revenge

Boyle, clad in an armour given to him by many gods, pursued Wotton. Wotton was soon met by his friend Bentley who was returning with the stolen armour. Boyle, seeing that he had stolen the armour, decided to be revenged on both Wotton and Bentley at the same time. Wotton and Bentley fled in different directions and Boyle chased first one and then the other. When the two friends realised that flight was impossible, they decided to face it out and joined in a phalanx. Bentley, with all the force he could manage, threw a lance at Boyle but the goddess Pallas substituted the point with a lead one and as a result it struck Boyle's shield and fell harmlessly. Boyle took a spear of great length and, seeing the two friends standing so close to each other, threw his spear in such a way that it pierced them both together and fastened them together. They looked like a pair of woodcocks trussed by a skilful cook and held together with an iron pin for roasting. They were joined in death as they were in life, so close together that when they reached the underworld Charon the boatman would be mistaken and take them for one and thus charge only half the fare to ferry them across the river Styx.

- Impossible fight

The whole passage is highly allegorical. Each event has a correspondence to some stage of the controversy in the literary world regarding the relative merits of ancient and modern literature. Boyle's lance refers to his Examination which attempted to answer the criticism of both Bentley and Wotton against the Epistles of Phalaris and Aesop's fables. There is a great skill in the way Swift employs the diction and style of the classical epic to describe this battle.

- Allegorical passage

Glossary

A. Classical And Literary Allusions

(I) Classical

1. **Parnassus**: A mountain in Greece, sacred to the Muses.
2. **Beelzebub**: Patron god of flies.
3. **Evander** : Reference to a character in Virgil's *Aeneid*.
4. **Jupiter:** Chief Roman god. Known also as Jove.
5. **Momus:** Greek god of ridicule and fault finding.
6. **Pallas:** Pallas Athene, Greek goddess of wisdom.
7. **Mercury:** Roman god of eloquence, skill, etc., and messenger of gods.
8. **Apollo:** Greek sun-god; god of music and poetry.
9. **Esculapius:** Patron of physicians.
10. **Ambrosia:** A food or drink of the gods.
11. **Helicon:** Originally a mountain sacred to the muses and hence the inspiration of poetry. Later it came to be referred to as a fountain of poetic inspiration.
12. **Echo:** A nymph or goddess according to Greek mythology.
13. **Philomela:** The nightingale. Philomela was a Greek princess who was transformed into a nightingale.
14. **Charon:** A ferryman conveying the souls of the dead across the river Styx to Hades or the lower world according to Greek mythology.
15. **Styx:** The river of darkness surrounding Hades, the lower world according to Greek mythology.

(ii) Literary

1. *On Ancient and Modern Learning*: Sir William wrote this essay in 1690. It formed the origin of the controversy about the relative merits of ancient and modern literature.

2. *Reflections Upon Ancient and Modern Learning*: Written by William Wotton in 1694. It criticised the views of Temple.

3. *Dissertations Upon the Epistles of Phalaris and the Fables of Aesop*: This was an appendix written by Bentley and attached to the second edition of Wotton's book mentioned above. Bentley refutes the views of Temple.

4. *Aesop's Fables*: A collection of stories about animals with a moral, probably written by several unknown people but credited to a semi legendary writer Aesop who is supposed to have lived in the 6th century AD.

5. *Epistles of Phalaris*: These were edited by Charles Boyle in 1695.

6. *The Seven Wise Masters:* An anthology of moralistic stories derived from the ancient period. It was a popular text book of the times.

7. *Gondibert*: A heroic poem by Sir William Davenant.

8. *Shield*: Stands for the love poems of Cowley, The Mistress. Being love poems they are connected to Venus and stood for a shield given by her.

9. *The Weapon*: Examination, written by Charles Boyle in which he defended Temple against the charges of Bentley.

B. People And Places

(i) People

1. **Sir William Temple (1628-99):** He was Switt's patron, a scholar and a statesman

2. **William Wotton (1666-1726):** A classical scholar. His criticism of Temple gained him Swift's enmity

3. **Charles Boyle (1676-1703):** A wit

4. **Scotus:** Johannes Duns Scotus, theologian, and philosopher of the Middle Ages

5. **Aristotle:** Ancient Greek philosopher held as leader by schoolmen of the Middle Ages

6. **Plato:** Greek philosopher, student of Socrates and teacher of Aristotle. He wrote the Dialogues

7. **Descartes (1596-1650):** French philosopher and scientist

8. **Hobbes (1588-1679):** Famous English political thinker who wrote the Leviathan

9. **Dryden (1631-1700):** John Dryden. Famous English poet, A distant cousin of Swift, he made a permanent enemy of Swift by saying that he would never become a poet

10. **Withers (1588-1667):** George Wither a minor English author. 11. Bentley: Dr. Richard Bentley (1662-1742). A classical scholar and keeper of St. James's Library

12. **Cowley (1618-1667):** English poet of the seventeenth century

13. **Tasso (1544-1595):** Famous poet of Italy

14. **Despreaux (1636-1711):** Better known as Boileau, A French poet and critic

15. **Gassendi (1592-1655):** A theologian and philosopher of France

16. **Paracelsus (1493-1541):** , a Swiss scientist

17. **Harvey (1578-1657):**, English scientist, famous for his discovery of the circulation of blood

18. **Guicciardini (1482-1540):** Florentine historian

19. **Davila (1576-1631):** Historian from Italy

20. **Polydore Virgil (1470-1555):** An English historian of Italian origin. Not to be confused with the ancient Roman epic writer

21. **Buchanan (1506-1582):**. Writer of a history of Scotland in Latin

22. **Mariana (1537-1624):** Juan de Mariana, Spanish historian

23. **Cambden (1551-1624):** William Cambden English antiquary and historian

24. **Regiomontanus (1436-1476):** the Latin term for the birth place of Johan Muller a mathematician and astronomer

25. **Wilkins (1614-1677):** John Wilkins He was one of the founders of the Royal Society

26. **Aquinas (1225-1274):** A theologian and philosopher of the Middle Ages

27. **Bellarmine (1542-1621):** Robert Bellarmino Supported Roman Catholicism

28. **L'Estrange (1616-1704):** He was a journalist and pamphleteer

29. **Homer:** Ancient Greek epic poet, wrote Iliad and Odyssey

30. **Pindar:** Ancient Greek lyric poet

31. **Euclid:** Famous mathematician of ancient Greece

32. **Herodotus:** Ancient Greek historian known as father of history

33. **Livy:** Roman historian

34. **Hippocrates:** Great ancient Greek physician, known as the father of medicine

35. **Vossius:** A classical scholar of the 17th century

36. **Galen:** Famous ancient writer on medicine

37. **Denham:** Sir John Denham, a minor poet of the 17th century

38. **Wesley:** Samuel Wesley an unknown minor poet of the 17th-century

39. **Perrault:** French writer supporting the Moderns

40. **Fontenelle:** Another French writer supporting the Moderns

41. **Blackmore (1650-1729):** Sir Richard Blackmore A physician with poetry as a hobby

42. **Lucan:** Ancient Roman poet

43. **Creech:** Thomas Creech. Seventeenth century

translator of classical works

44. Horace: Ancient Roman poet

45. Ogleby: John Ogleby. A seventeenth century writer who translated the works of Virgil, and Homer

46. Oldham: Minor English poet of the seventeenth century

47. Afra (1640-1689). Mrs. Aphra Behn wrote novels and plays

48. Scaliger: A minor writer of the sixteenth century

49. Aldrovandus (1522-1595): Ulisse Aldrovandus A detailed and tedious writer of natural history

50. Virgil: Ancient Roman epic poet

51 Phalaris: Tyrannical ruler of Sicily of the 6th century B.C.

52. Aesop: A semi legendary writer of stories about animals. He was supposed to have lived in the 6th century A.D.

(ii) Places

1. St. James's Library, King's Library: The Royal Library where the battle is supposed to have taken place

2. Rhaetia: A place in the Alps, now a part of Austria.

3. Gresham: Gresham College. It was the headquarters of the Royal Society

4. Covent Garden: Place in London which had a famous coffee house

Critical Appreciation of *The Battle of the Books*

(1) First incident: The first incident describes the quarrel on Mr. Pranassus arising out of the claim of the moderns. It analyzes the causes of war and describes the manner of writers upon politics. It is based on the republic of dogs. The causes of war are unequal wealth and lust based on 'Poverty of Want'. The negotiations between the ancients and moderns show they claimed their superiority in literature. Ricardo Quintana says, "Described as a full and true account, begins as a historical narrative and ends as though it were an epic in prose".

- Cause of the war

- controversy between the moderns and ancients

(2) Second incident: In this incident the natural transition comes from Mt. Parnassus to the Royal Library of St. James. Swift has created a sensational impression. As an impartial historian he has given a factual account. The controversy between the moderns and ancients has been described very effectively. The description of Aesop and Phalaris is full of thrill and suspense.

- spider-bee incident

(3) Third Incident: The spider-bee incident is most interesting. The views of Swift about the comparative merits of ancient and modern literature and learning has been described vividly. The moderns were proud of their learning in Science and Maths. The spider represents the moderns in the geometrical design of its web. The moderns are like the spider in their arrogance and superiority complex. Both are represented in a grand way. The ancients and the bee impart sweetness and light to mankind. The God given gifts of wings and voice have been utilized fully by the bee and the ancients.

- bee as the symbol of the ancients

Herbert Davis says, "The fable of the spider and the bee and the interpretation of it are Swift's real contribution to the debate between the Ancient and the Moderns and it is not surprising that a hundred and fifty years later, when the debate had taken another form, Swift's phrase "sweetness and light" was carried as a banner by a young apostle of culture as he advanced against the hosts of the Philistiness. It was also a triumphant vindication of the art of Aesop. It was a nice compliment to use the bee as the symbol of the ancients, for some of Swift's readers would remember Temple's, *Essay on Poetry*, where he compares the poet's art with the activities of the bees, which Swift in the last sentence condensed with great precision." Thus the dispute between the spider and the bee has a perfect correspondence to that between the modern and the ancient.

(4) Fourth Incident: The conflict between the ancient and modern is quite evident in this section. The two sides argued with each other to establish their superiority. The ancients were proud of their antiquity and the moderns claimed the merit of their scientific outlook. This incident comprises the description of the armies of ancient and modern. The controversy between the moderns on the question of selection of leaders is peculiar. The combats and the fate of important literary persons is well considered.

- Both sides try to establish their superiority

Leslie Stephen says, "Still as in "The Battle of the Books' controversy, the general opinion seems to be that the critic should have before him the great classical models and regard the English literature of the seventeenth century as a collection of all possible errors of taste."

(5) **Fifth Incident**: The fifth incident describes the intervention of gods and goddesses on the side of the contending parties. The goddess Fame, Jupiter, Momus, Pollas, malignant deity criticism and her relatives from the supernatural element in this incident. Swift calls Wotton, the author of the 'Reflections on Ancient and Modern Learning', the son of the goddess criticism and an unknown father of mortal race. Swift has invented a mythology to make *The Battle of the Book's* a mock epic. The malignant deity criticism was the supporter of the moderns. Her soliloquy is a parody of similar situations in epics. James Sutherland says, "The dispute over the relative merits of the ancient and modern writers was inflated in mock, heroic terms to a battle between contending warriors, with gods and goddesses occasionally emerging from the background to take part, but it was at the same time diminished to a ludicrous brawl between contending parties about the St. James".

- Intervention of gods and goddesses on either sides

(6) **Sixth Incident**: This incident describes the fate of Wotton and Bentley. Bentley had an extraordinary talent for railing. His condition to fight the enemy and retain his arms was peculiar. He seized the armour of sleeping Phalaris and Aesop. Apollo prevented Wotton from polluting the sacred fountain, Helicon. He commands Boyle to punish Wotton for his impudence. This section describes the tragedy of Wotton and Bently. This section is highly algebraical. Each incident refers to some incident in the controversy. The polishing of Phalaris's armour refers to the Boyle edition of the *'Epistles of Phalaris'* G. A Aitken says. "The Controversy has lost its interest" and Temples all judged that the defence of the genuineness of the '*Epistles of Phalaris*' does not concern us.``

- Fate of Wotton and Bentley

Mock Epic, Allegorical and Supernatural Machinery in *The Battle of the Books*

During the seventeenth and early eighteenth century mock epic was a popular form of literature. The mock heroic adopts the manner convention, and style of the serious epic. It began in antiquity like the Homeric epics.

▶ Mock heroic

The Battle of the Frogs and the *Mice* parodying Homeric epics. Swift wrote *The Battle of the Books* in the allegorical form. It is a good mock epic and follows epic traditions.

Heroic Traditions

▶ Epic to mock epic

An epic is an account of the adventures of a hero. His heroic action is expressed in a dignified manner. Some epic writers like Homer, established certain conventions which were followed by other poets and writers. Their extreme serious epic took the form of a mock epic which served the purpose of satire and fun.

▶ Mock heroic and resto-ration

The mock heroic became the favourite literary form of the Restoration period. The writers during this period could not write serious epics because they had no reverence and solemnity of treatment. The most famous mock heroic of the seventeenth century was Samuel Butler's *Hudibras*. Swift's *Battle of the Book* was also based on this heroic tradition. Swift designed his book on mock epic traditions. Like the epic, *'The Battle of the Book* has armies in battle formation confronting each other, an account of warriors and their equipment and simple combats. The episodes resemble those of Homer and Virgil.

▶ Quill is the weapon

Swift's *Battle of the Books* is a mock epic, Swift has imitated the style of other epic writers. The subject is trivial: an imaginary battle between Old and New books in St. James Library. The battle is conceived between the writers. The weapon used is a sort of Engine called a quill, used in place of a gun and a malignant liquor which is fired through it. Swift mentions Homer, "Homer appeared at the head of the cavalry, mounted on a furious horse, with difficulty managed by the rider himself, but with no other moral durst approach. He rode down among the enemy's ranks and bore down all before him."

▶ Battle of five incidents

The description of Virgil is also very interesting. Swift writes, "on the left wing of the horse, Virgil appeared in the shining armour, completely, fitted to his body; he was mounted on a dopple grey steed, the slowness of whose pace was an effect of the highest mettle and vigour". *The Battle of the Books* contains the essential elements of an epic. The battle is made up of five incidents. The grand style and the dignity of the language is very peculiar. The entire book is a parody in style and form of the ancient epic. The comparison of the human form of government to the republic of dogs is very interesting.

The Supernatural Element

The supernatural element also exists in the battle of the books. All the famous ancient epics contained supernatural elements. *The Battle of the Books* contains supernatural characters, events and objects. There are supernatural characters like Jupiter Momus, Pallas, Criticism and Fame. The events like Temple's miraculous escape from the lance of Wotton, the conversion of one half of Cowley's dead body into a swan, are supernatural. The supernatural locations and objects are Parnassus, the fountain Helicon sacred to the Muses. Here fame, criticism, ill manners, opinion and ignorance are presented as defined entities. All these make the book an epic. Fame informs Jupiter about what happened in the king's library. Jupiter calls a meeting of the gods in the Milky way. Momus, the patron of the moderns, makes a forceful speech to his followers. Pallas gives an answer to him. Momus weighs his wings and flies to the place of a diety called Criticism.

- Supernatural elements

Ricardo Quintana, says, "Described as a full and true account, it begins as a historical narrative and ends as though it were an epic in prose. Neither the progressivism of the moderns nor the cyclic theory of Temple exited in him any curiosity or interest."

The Allegorical Nature

The Battle of the Books is allegorical in nature. Here allegory has been employed as a medium of satire. There are traces of sarcasm, raillery, irony, mock heroes. The purpose of the allegory is to satirise the opponents of his patron. He tried to reassert indirectly the views of Sir William Temple. The episode of Bentley and Wotton was an allegorical mode of celebrating the victory of Boyle and Temple over Bentley and Wotton. The bee and the spider episode was also an allegorical mode of expression of the view that Ancients are superior to the moderns.The books have been represented as human beings. The difference between the symbol and the object to be symbolised is great. Swift does not give every book a human body. Instead of making the writers welding pens, Swift makes them wield swords, shields, lances and spears. The goddess' criticism takes the shape of a book before she enters the Library. The symbolic expression of Temple's view that the Ancients are superior to the moderns is well done by Swift in his *The Battle of the Book*s. The details of armies and

- Humans are represented through the non-human

combat are quite allegorical. The description of the fight of Virgil and Dryden is full of allegorical allusions. The style in the book is also allegorical.

The Spider-Bee Episode: The episode of the spider and the bee is an allegory within allegory. It is introduced to demonstrate the larger allegory by subtle allegory. The analogy of the spider and the bee is both beautifully placed and carried out. The fable and the interpretation of it by swift contribute to the debate between the ancient and the modern. The spider bee incident is important thematically. The Spider was a representative of the moderns in his perfection of mathematics and architecture. The bee stands for Swift's conception of the moderns. The issue of the battle is left undecided in the episode and the book itself.

- Allegory with-in allegory

To conclude *The Battle of the Books* displays clarity, vigour and strength as typical of Swiftian satires. As Dr. Johnson puts in *Lives of the Poets*, "the peruser of Swift wants little previous knowledge. It will be sufficient that he is acquainted with common words and common things. He is neither required to mount elevations nor to explore profundities. His passage is always on a level road." True, there are no imaginative flights or expressions of frenzy in Swift.

- Clarity of Swift

Summarised Overview

The Battle of the Books begins with a note from the bookseller to the reader, telling the reader that it refers to a "famous dispute … about ancient and modern learning." Sir William Temple had taken the side of the ancients against Charles Boyle, who had praised the ancient writer Phalaris, but Wotton and Bentley had taken Boyle's side. The controversy led to a battle between the books themselves, literally, in the King's library. The manuscript about the battle is incomplete, so we still do not know who won. The main tale begins with reflections about the causes of battles: mainly, pride and want. Like dogs, people fight over scarce resources but tend to be at peace during times of plenty.

Assignments

1. What is the major concern of *The Battle of the Books*?
2. Which are the incidents described in *The Battle of the Books*?
3. Describe the second incident of *The Battle of the Books*?
4. Discuss the allegories in *The Battle of the Books*?
5. Trace the mock epic features in *The Battle of the Books*?

Suggested Readings

1. Damrosch, Leo. *Jonathan Swift: His Life and His World. New Haven*: Yale UP, 2013.
2. Delany, Patrick. *Observations Upon Lord Orrery's Remarks on the Life and Writings of Dr. Jonathan Swift*. W. Reeve, 1754.

References

1. Fox, Christopher, ed. *The Cambridge Companion to Jonathan Swift*. Cambridge U.P, 2003.
2. Ehrenpreis, Irvin. *The Personality of Jonathan Swift*. Methuen, 1958.

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 3

Fiction

(Non-detailed study)

Learning Outcomes

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

- detail the origin of novel as a genre in the eighteenth century
- familiarise with various experimentation in the eighteenth century British novels
- examine the depiction of social realities by novelists like Defoe, Richardson, and Fielding

Oroonoko

Aphra Behn

Background

Aphra Behn is best known for her short novel *Oroonoko.* Much of Behn's life is a mystery. Some believe Behn herself obscured or destroyed records of her life. Some believe that she may have lived for a time in the European sugar colony of Suriname, South America (perhaps as a spy for King Charles II), and was married to a Mr. Johan Behn. Upon returning to England, Behn became very poor, and she wrote to earn a living and to stay out of debtor's prison. She wrote extensively for almost two decades, and her corpus includes several plays, translations, and pieces of prose fiction. She is considered one of the first English novelists, and a notable dramatist of the 1600s. While alive, she was an active part of London's theatre society, and was friends with other famous playwrights like John Dryden. She died in London, and is buried in Westminster Abbey.

Oroonoko Or The Royal Slave is a short novel written by Aphra Behn and published in 1688, hardly a year before her death. The novel is about the grandson of an African king, his life and death as a slave, and his ill-fated love for the young woman, Imoinda. When you read *Oroonoko*, you might find some aspects of the text different from contemporary novels. This is because the novel genre did not develop until sometime in the 17th century, and really did not become popular until the 18th century. Another interesting thing about this novel is that Behn casts herself as a participant

narrator (a narrator that is part of the story), yet sometimes she writes from the third person point of view. In other words, she tells part of the story in long passages as if she is only relating something she has heard or read. At other points she speaks as if she has met the main characters and is part of the story.

Keywords

Slave narrative, British colonialism

Discussion

Summary

Oroonoko begins with an extensive description of slave trade which was prevalent in the 17th century. Behn gives a detailed account of how slaves were brought from Africa to work on the sugar plantations of the colonized West Indies. The novel is set first in what is present-day Ghana, called Coramantien at that time, and then in Surinam in the West Indies. Coramantien is a brave and war-like nation that participated in the trans-Atlantic slave trade, selling prisoners of war to Western ships. Many people from Africa were captured and brought to the West Indies. In the West Indies, most of their work involved the vast sugar plantations owned by Europeans.

▶ Description of slave trade

Oroonoko is an African prince from Coramantien who is tricked into slavery and sold to British colonists in Surinam where the narrator, Aphra Behn, happens to meet him. The novel is the first person account of Oroonoko's life, love, rebellion, and brutal execution. Oroonoko has grown up away from the court, and has been trained to be a great military leader by Imoinda's father, King's top general. One day, during an intense battle, Imoinda's father takes a fatal arrow in the eye and saves Oroonoko's life. The seventeen-year-old Oroonoko becomes the new general, and returns to court as an elegant and intelligent young man. The narrator spends much time describing Oroonoko's noble characteristics, and is particularly interested in detailing his exceedingly fine physical beauty, which is a blend of

Roman and African traits. While at court, Oroonoko visits the daughter of his foster father, the beautiful and pure Imoinda. They fall in love at first sight. They participate in a marriage ceremony but Oroonoko still has to ask his grandfather, the King, for his blessing, in keeping with the patriarchal customs of the society.

- Account of Oroonoko's life

However, the king, a lecherous old man, hears about Imoinda's beauty. After seeing her at court, he decides he wants her to become one of his concubines. While Oroonoko is off hunting, the king sends her the royal veil, a sign of invitation for attractive women to come to court. Imoinda is duty-bound to obey. The beautiful Imoinda is 'stolen' from Oroonoko by his aging grandfather, then present king. The King sends for Imoinda the sacred veil, thus commanding her to become one of his wives in King's harem, even knowingly that she was already married to Oroonoko. The King sends Oroonoko a message of regret for what he did, and hopes that his grandson will not seek revenge. Imoinda unwillingly spends time in the King's harem. Due to the strict laws of the Otan, Oroonoko is prevented from seeing Imoinda until the King invites him.

- The king is enchanted by Imoinda's beauty

Oroonoko plans a secret meeting with the help of the sympathetic Onahal and Aboan to meet with Imoinda. They are eventually discovered. As punishment for her infidelity, the King sells Imoinda into slavery, an ignoble punishment, but he tells Oroonoko he has executed her because death was thought to be better than slavery. Upon hearing this, Oroonoko gives up his will to live and fight, and he abandons his troops, retiring to his tent. When they are about to lose, however, Oroonoko rouses himself from his lovesick stupor and leads his army to victory. An English sea captain comes to Coramantien, and Oroonoko receives him as a royal guest. The Captain double-crosses Oroonoko, however, inviting him on board his ship and then kidnapping him, along with a hundred of Oroonoko's attendants. The Captain betrays Oroonoko and brings him across the Atlantic to Suriname, where he sells him to an intelligent and kind-hearted slave-owner named Trefry. Trefry gives Oroonoko the name "Caesar," and promises to help free him one day. Trefry also unwittingly reunites Caesar with Imoinda, whom Trefry knows as "Clemene." To Oroonoko's great surprise, Imoinda is at the same plantation. The two lovers are reunited under the new Christian names of Caesar and Clemene.

- The Captain betrays Oroonoko

During Oroonoko's boat ride, the narrator describes Trefry, the young Cornish gentleman who has purchased Oroonoko. Trefry manages the plantation of an unnamed Lord. He is very good at mathematics and linguistics and, like Oroonoko, can speak several languages. Trefry immediately recognizes that Oroonoko is different from the average slave, due to his fancy garb and his regal attitude. Upon discovering that Oroonoko can speak English, Trefry guesses that Oroonoko is more exceptional than what he confesses to be. This assumption causes Trefry to admire Oroonoko, and to treat him with great civility. Trefry's behavior and their discovered common interests help Oroonoko relax on the boat ride. The two men engage in a mutually enjoyable conversation, and Oroonoko thinks that slavery under such an intelligent master might not be so bad. By the end of the ride upriver, Oroonoko has confided his story to Trefry and pledged his fortune and service to him. Trefry abhors the Captain's antics, and promises to help conduct Oroonoko back to his homeland. He also pledges to find out about the condition and location of Oroonoko's men, whom the prince is worried about. Because of his fresh experiences with betrayal, Oroonoko doesn't really believe that the promises of this "backearary," or white person, are necessarily creditable. But he also sees sincerity in Trefry's face, and is impressed enough by his wisdom to have some hope in his new master.

- Trefry treats Oroonoko with great civility

The narrator recounts various episodes of entertainment, including reading, hunting, visiting native villages and capturing an electric eel. Oroonoko and Imoinda live as husband and wife. As Imoinda's pregnancy develops, Caesar (Oroonoko) becomes increasingly restless and wants to take his new family back home. Though he esteems some white people, like Trefry and the narrator, he is also rightly suspicious of the lengthy delay regarding his release. He feels that he will once again be tricked and his family will remain in slavery. Indeed, this is exactly the plan of Deputy Governor Byam, who is part of the colonial government in Suriname and intends to keep Caesar a slave.

- Imoinda's pregnancy

Because he is a man of action, Caesar is determined to take matters into his own hands and convince the slaves to run away. Led by Caesar, they manage to escape, but their journey ends in disaster when the white colonists come after them. With the exception of Caesar's friend

- Slaves run away

Tuscan, most of the slaves flee the group, leaving Caesar and a heavily pregnant Imoinda to confront the plantation owners. They all fight bravely and Imoinda wounds Byam in the shoulder with a poisoned arrow.

With the help of Trefry, Byam convinces Caesar to surrender peacefully and promises to fulfill all his demands. They write a contract, but Byam almost immediately breaks it. He sequesters Imoinda and brutally whips Tuscan and Caesar. Now that he is fully awakened to Byam's treachery, Caesar vows revenge. He murders Imoinda and their child, with Imoinda's permission and blessing, to save them from prolonged suffering. Caesar then fails to enact his revenge against Byam, however, when he succumbs to a debilitating grief beside his wife's corpse.

- Caesar murders Imoinda

When the colonists come looking for Caesar (Oroonoko), he is rescued against his will by his friends. Sick and dying, he tells them of his plan to kill Byam. They try to encourage him to abandon this idea and focus on recovery. One day, the ruthless Irishman Banister kidnaps Caesar at Byam's behest. Caesar is again tied to the stake, where he is slowly dismembered, dying without making a sound.

- colonists come looking for Caesar

The novel is a blend of first and third person narratives. The narrator gives an account of actions in Africa and portrays herself as a witness of the actions that take place in Surinam. In the novel, the narrator presents herself as a lady who has come to Surinam with her unnamed father, a man intended to be a new lieutenant-general of the colony. He, however, dies on the voyage from England. The narrator and her family are put up in the finest house in the settlement, in accord with their station, and the narrator's experiences of meeting the indigenous people and slaves are intermixed with the main plot of the love of Oroonoko and Imoinda. At the conclusion of the love story, the narrator leaves Surinam for London.

- first and third person narratives

The plot of the novel is well-knit. There are three significant sections. The novel opens with a statement of authenticity, where Behn claims that she is not writing fiction or pedantic history. She claims to be an eyewitness who writes without any embellished details or theme. She writes on the basis of complete reality. The narrator gives a vivid description of Surinam itself and the South American Indians there. She regards the locals as simple and living in a golden age (the presence of gold in the land

being indicative of the epoch of the people themselves). It is only afterwards that the narrator provides the history of Oroonoko himself and the conspiracies of his grandfather and the slave captain, the captivity of Imoinda, and his own betrayal. The next section is in the narrator's presence; Oroonoko and Imoinda are reunited, and Oroonoko and Imoinda meet the narrator and Trefry. The third section contains Oroonoko's rebellion and its aftermath.

Themes of the Novel

Slavery

- Death as an escape from slavery

Oroonoko shows the cruelty of slavery. Although Oroonoko himself is treated well, the rest of the slaves, including Imionda until she and Oroonoko are reunited, are shown as being treated poorly. In addition to this, suicides of Aboan, Imoinda and Oroonko illustrate that death is preferred over slavery, and it is shown as the only escape.

Race and Royalty

- White slave

Oroonoko portrays the idea of whiteness as a predominant issue. Imoinda is the only mentioned white-slave throughout the play, and she is shown as strong and desirable, while the other slaves are shown as nothing more than slaves. In addition to this, she is the only female slave who fights during the escape. By making the prince and the white slave shown as powerful, and the rest of the slaves shown as weak, *Oroonoko* is showing the typical European view that power and light skin show superiority.

Gender

- black female slaves are shown as weak

For the most part, *Oroonoko* portrays women as weak or condescending, with the exception of Imionda. Widow Lackitt is shown as man-hungry, and is easily fooled with the promise of love. Charlotte and Lucy are shown as using trickery to find men, as a way to get money. Lastly, the black female slaves are shown as weak, by cowering behind Imionda and the men when faced by the Lieutenant Governor. The men of the play, on the other hand, are shown as strong, smart, and for the most part, powerful.

In conclusion, *Oroonoko* is truly a fantastic work of literature. Aphra Behn's writing is subtle and bitingly political at times. Her personal background makes her an intriguing figure, especially considering how limiting a woman's role was in that society. The protagonist Oroonoko,

an African prince, falls in love with the beautiful Imoinda and eventually the novel shows his downfall to being sold into slavery. Behn's description seems to be intended to make Oroonoko more appealing to her audience to show his nobility, to make his story of tragic downfall have a bigger impact, which leaves her contemporaries' perceptions of race open to speculation.

- tragic down-fall

Summarised Overview

Oroonoko: or, the Royal Slave, by Aphra Behn, is a fictionalised depiction of the life of the title character. It centres on the story of Oroonoko, an African prince who is deceived into becoming a slave and later leads a rebellion. Because of its chronological order and biographical content, *Oroonoko* is recognised as one of the earliest examples of the English novel. Strong and distinct from the other slaves, *Oroonoko* is characterised as deserving of his release. Behn portrays *Oroonoko* as a hero by emphasising his courage and bravery as a warrior. *Oroonoko*'s buyer was smitten with him and wanted him to be free, but he did little to make that happen, playing a bigger part in maintaining the institution of slavery. *Oroonoko* is portrayed as a heroic man, but his emphasis on honour causes him to fail. He keeps on believing dubious people rather than using reason.

Assignments

1. Write a critical analysis of *Oroonoko*.
2. Write the character analysis of Oroonoko.
3. Bring out the foil in the character sketch of *Oroonoko* and Imoinda.
4. Comment on the art of characterization in the novel *Oroonoko* by Aphra Behn.
5. Discuss the main themes of the novel *Oroonoko*.
6. Comment on the feminine perspective of the novel *Oroonoko.*

Suggested Readings

1. Goreau, Angeline. *Reconstructing Aphra: A Social Biography of Aphra Behn*. New York:Dial Press, 1980.
2. Todd, Janet. *Aphra Behn: A Secret Life*. Fentum Press, 1997.

References

1. Hughes, Derek. *The Theatre of Aphra Behn*. Palgrave Macmillan, 2001.
2. Hutner, Heidi. *Rereading Aphra Behn: History, Theory, and Criticism*. U P. 1993
3. Todd, Janet. *The Secret Life of Aphra Behn*. Rutgers UP, 1997.

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

Discussion

▶ Fictional autobiography

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

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.

▶ Inspiration of the novel is Alexander Selkirk

3.7.1 Summary

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.

▶ first person narrative

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. 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.

- Ambiguous religious experience

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

- Anachronisms in Crusoe's journal entries

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 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".

- Friday's father

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.

- Arrival of an English boat

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".

- Crusoe remains an isolated man

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,

- Crusoe treats human beings in economic terms

Polynesians and Asians who were at the receiving end of the colonial enterprise.

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 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.

▶ Companion-ship

b. **Religion**

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.

▶ Protestant puritan ethics

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

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.

▶ First person 'point of view'

The Popularity of Crusoe

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.

▶ Novels of sea adventure

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. What are Crusoe's attitudes towards women in the latter part of the novel?
3. Is *Robinson Crusoe* a "picaresque" novel?
4. 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?
5. How does Crusoe embody the idea of the "economic man"? Explain with reference to Crusoe's experiences before and after he is marooned.
6. Critically examine Crusoe as an ideal representative of the Christian faith.
7. 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.
8. Analyse Crusoe's fear of cannibalism. What does cannibalism symbolise in the text? In terms of Crusoe's acts of appropriation and violence, who do you think is the real cannibal in the story?
9. Comment on the plot and structure of *Robinson Crusoe*. How far is it true to describe it as an episodic tale of adventure?
10. What was the attitude of Crusoe's family to his voyage?
11. Who was the faithful servant of Crusoe?
12. Why was Crusoe overjoyed by the release of victims from cannibals?

Suggested Readings

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Pamela, or, Virtue Rewarded

Samuel Richardson

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 novel, Morality, Virtue

Discussion

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 now had the blessings of both the rich and the poor, and the love of her husband."

▶ A true story

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

Pamela Andrews is a pious, virtuous fifteen-year-old, the daughter of an impoverished labourer, working in a rich

- Virtuous fifteen-year-old daughter

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.

- Pamela under the control of Mr. B

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's habit of reading and writing so much that he allowed her to use his mother's books to improve herself.

- Maintain her virtue

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."

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

- Pamela attempts to escape

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.

- Mr. B molests Pamela

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.

Volume 2

- Pamela returns to home

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's father arrives for her marriage

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 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 to be followed in the most critical and affecting cases, by the virgin, the bride and the wife.

- Pamela takes some time to realize that she loves Mr. B.

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 Readings

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.

Tom Jones

Henry Fielding

Learning Outcomes

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

- identify the manner in which Fielding narrates this novel
- see how Fielding creates a pastiche of various styles of writing and redefines the novel
- recognise the mockery that Fielding makes of other writers who wrote political histories

Background

Henry Fielding was born in 1707 to Lieutenant George Fielding in Somerset. Fielding lost his mother in 1718. That same year Fielding began his education at Eton, where he was a lively student and read a lot of books. He was often punished for pursuing women. Fielding's pursuit of women did not, however, prevent him from learning Greek and Latin. He also pursued a career in drama and his first play, *Love in Several Masques*, was produced in February, 1728 at the Drury Lane Theatre. Fielding wrote more than twenty plays and farces. The most successful of them was *The Tragedy of Tragedies*, or, *The Life and Death of Tom Thumb the Great.* Fielding spent some time between 1728 and 1729 in Holland at the University of Leyden as a law student. His father was not able to support his studies, and he had to depend on the income from his writing to finance his education.

Fielding's work as a magistrate later began to take up more of his time and energy. He engaged in a campaign against robber gangs in London in 1753, and published an extensive Proposal for making effective provision for the poor. His health was going down because of repeated attacks of gout, asthma, jaundice and dropsy. Fielding's doctor advised him to avoid England's harsh winters, and Fielding decided to go to Portugal. Leaving behind the children from his second marriage, and accompanied only by his wife, his first daughter Harriet, and two servants, Fielding left England in the summer of 1754. He documented his final travels in what would be published posthumously as *The Journal of a Voyage to Lisbon,* and the account took him almost to the moment of his death. Henry Fielding died on October 8th of the same year, in Junqueira, near Lisbon.

Henry Fielding wrote *The History of Tom Jones, a Foundling* when the novel was still a newly emerging form of literature. The act of reading was shifting from a public to a private experience. This explains the fact why Fielding always refers to a single reader, not to a group of readers. In this unit, we are going to see the manner in which Fielding presents to us a young man named Tom. Tom is a handsome, brave and generous young man whose parents are unknown. Tom's qualities are revealed in this unit.

Keywords

Picaresque, Realism, Satire, Tragedy

Discussion

3.9.1 Summary

- Tom's Boy-hood

Squire Allworthy has been on a long visit to London. Back home he finds that a baby has been placed in his bed by somebody. Jenny Jones is pressured and admits to being the mother of the child, but she cannot be persuaded to reveal the name of the father of the child. The schoolmaster, Partridge, in whose house she has been living, is assumed to be the father of the bastard, and he is punished by being told to leave the estate. The child is greatly liked by the sister of the Squire, named Miss Bridget Allworthy. This young woman marries a schemer named Blifil, from whom she has a child. Even then she continues to favour Tom, the foundling, against her own son, Master Blifil. Understandably this makes the well-meaning Squire somewhat uneasy about the foundling.

Jones is discovered to be wild, imprudent and passionate, but fundamentally good-hearted, unlike Blifil who pretends to be virtuous, self-controlled and restrained. Tom has an affair with Molly. In fact the general outline of the first six books of *Tom Jones* is similar to the early parts of *Joseph Andrews. Tom Jones* has several adventures, most of which turn out to be only misadventures. He reveals his kindness by trying to help George the game-keeper, who has been dismissed through his fault, by selling the gifts he has received from the Squire. Quite naturally he rises in the

estimation of the Squire when the latter comes to know his real motive for selling the gifts. Tom has seduced, or rather been seduced by Molly, the daughter of George. At the same time he has fallen in love with Sophia, the daughter of a neighbouring landlord.

▶ Tom and Blifil

Tom Jones is immature and reckless but ever willing to assume full responsibility for his actions. Squire Allworthy falls dangerously ill and for a time seems to be on deathbed. He recovers miraculously and Tom is wild with joy. He gets drunk and in his drunkenness meets Molly while he is dreaming of his beloved and disappears with her into the bushes. Blifil and Thwackum, his schoolmasters, frustrate his attempted affair with Molly and he attacks them. This scene can be regarded as the climax to the first six books of the novel.

▶ Responsible for his action

Tom decides to join the army. Sophia is prosecuted by her father and flees her home. The cause of the annoyance of her father is that she prefers to marry Tom, the foundling, rather than Blifil, the heir. She goes to London in the hope of getting protection from one of her relatives. At the beginning of the journey Tom almost meets his death by violence, but in spite of the gloomy forecasts of the physician he recovers dramatically. This is followed by the series of events at Upton which may be regarded as the climax to this section of the story. Squire Western leaves home in search of his daughter. Partridge and Jenny Jones appear in disguise. Partridge soon reveals himself and decides to join Tom. Ensign Northerton injures Tom seriously in a duel. The ensign is the lover of Mrs. Waters, and it is Tom who saves her from the unwelcome attention of the ensign.

▶ The Journey

Mrs. Fitzpatrick gives her reminiscences, which are quite realistic. There is the interpolation of the story of *The Man of the Hill*. He is going from the town to the country to escape his father. Unlike Tom, he has accepted defeat before the tyranny of events and stances. The battle at Upton has been called the turning point of the novel. Until this time Tom has believed himself to be secure in the love of Sophia. Now Sophia discovers that he is spending the night in the bedroom of Mrs. Waters and leaves the inn in disgust. She leaves a muff behind her to let Tom know that she has knowledge of the shameful affair. As in the case of Molly, Tom has once again been seduced by a woman. It is Tom now who must pursue Sophia, but the misunderstanding

- Misunderstanding between Sophia and Tom worsens

between them steadily worsens. Partridge is responsible for this since he has a very loose tongue. Sophia can only conclude that Tom is not only unfaithful to her but is also given to boasting about his success with Sophia. She goes to London with Mrs. Fitzpatrick, who is her cousin, in the hope of receiving protection from her lover there-Lady Bellaston. Meanwhile Tom has also arrived in London.

Books XIII to XVIII form the last section of the novel. The setting for this part of the novel is London. As in the other novels Fielding seems to become guilt-ridden when he comes to describe London. The last section is generally regarded as the least successful in the book. Plot devices thrust themselves on the attention of the reader. However, purely from the viewpoint of technique this section is quite interesting. The main aim of this part of the novel seems to be that of extricating Tom out of the difficulties into which he has landed himself, in such a way as to demonstrate that he has learnt his lesson and has now become worthy of the love of Sophia. Mrs. Miller, a new character introduced at this stage of the story, is largely instrumental in bringing about this desired result. She turns out to be related to the highwayman whom Tom has come across earlier. Jones had set the unfortunate highwayman on the path of decent life. Mrs. Miller is greatly impressed with Tom's goodness of heart when he mediates between her daughter, Nancy, and a fellow-lodger at the inn, named Nightingale. The cause of the trouble is that Nightingale has made Nancy pregnant but refuses to marry her. Through the efforts of Tom, a reconciliation is brought about between the two and the lover agrees to marry the wench.

- London

Many incidents reveal that Tom is gradually becoming more responsible and mature. However, soon comes another temptation. This takes the form of the rich but lustful Lady Bellaston who must be said in defence of Tom that he had little choice except that of exposing both himself and his friend to starvation. The lady in fact employs Tom to gratify her aging appetites. One must remember that in eighteenth century England the life of indigence could be really cruel. Sophia's fashionable relation, in the hope of whose aid she had come all the way to London, turns out to be none other than the same lady. Lady Bellaston, in spite of the denials of Sophia soon finds out that she is her rival to the attentions of Tom and she devises several ways of getting rid of her. Lady Bellaston tries to persuade her

to marry the rich aristocrat Lord Fellamar, but Sophia puts up a determined resistance. Her next plan is the devilish one of advising the lord to rape Sophia and she promises to provide the necessary opportunity. However Sophia is saved by the timely arrival of Mr. Western.

▶ Sophia is saved

Nightingale tells Tom that he must not think of Lady Bellaston as a woman of honour, because she has kept many lovers. His advice is that there is only one way of getting rid of the undesirable attention of the lady, and that is to propose marriage to her. Tom follows the advice and writes a letter to her. This has the desired effect, because the lady writes back to say that she hates the very name of marriage. However, the letter of Tom is later shown to Sophia, who is now sure more than ever that Tom is utterly lacking in faith and constancy.

▶ Desperate Remedy

Sophia's father and aunt have now taken charge of her. They once again begin their attempts to force her to marry Blifil. When she continues to refuse they persecute her and at last imprison her in a room in an inn. Sophia also tells Lady Bellaston that she will never marry Lord Fellamar, who it seems has now really fallen in love with her. She also declares that she is fed up with the treachery of Tom and has no wish of having anything further to do with him. Fitzpatrick fights a duel with Tom, which is all the result of a misunderstanding. It is believed that Tom has killed his adversary and he is put behind bars. Partridge meets Jones in prison and conveys to him the horrible news that if he has slept with Mrs. Waters at the inn then he is guilty of incest because Mrs. Waters is none other than Jenny Jones in disguise and Jenny had confessed to being the mother of Tom. Poor Tom is convinced that Tom is really guilty of the heinous crime of incest.

▶ Persecution of Sophia

The plans and schemes of Bilfil now reach their climax. He has been plotting to make sure that Tom is hanged for the murder of Fitzpatrick whom he had wounded in a duel. However, Fitzpatrick has recovered from the injury. Blifil uses as his agent the lawyer Dowling, who has played a curious, shadowy part in the whole story, appearing briefly from time to time. Mrs. Miller defends Tom with great force and sincerity. She pleads vehemently with Squire Allworthy on behalf of Tom but is unable to make any impression on him.

▶ Plotting of Blifil

Blifil's schemes overreach themselves. Dowling had come to see Allworthy when he was ill, and brought him the news that his sister Mrs. Blifil had died at Salisbury. He had also brought with him a letter from her. In that letter the sister had confessed that she, and not Jenny Jones, was the real mother of Tom. This means not only that Tom's fears about having committed incest are un founded but also that he is none other than the nephew of Squire Allworthy. Mrs. Blifil's letter reveals that Tom's father was a curate who had been residing with the Squire for some time. His name was Summer. She gave birth to the child when the Squire was away to London. She had bribed Jenny to confess to being the mother of the foundling. The child had been placed in the bed of the Squire, not only because this would ensure that the kindly Squire would agree to bring him up like the son of a gentleman but also because in this way the child would always be near its mother.

▶ Mrs. Blifil's Secret

With this revelation, the fortunes of Tom are in the ascendant, and Squire Allworthy not only forgives him but also appoints him his heir. At first Sophia is implacable but the protestations of Tom about his utter unworthiness and the explanation that the letter to Lady Bellaston was written only to get rid of her at last pacifies her and she consents to marry Tom.

▶ The Happy Ending

3.9.2 Analysis of Characters

Tom Jones- Tom Jones is the character through whom Fielding expresses his 'Philosophy of Virtue'. Tom has affairs with many women including Molly Seagrim, Mrs. Waters, and Lady Bellaston. Fielding however does not call Tom bad. He admires Tom for returning the interests of women. Fielding excuses Tom's love affairs since all his affairs, including his relationship with Sophia, his true love, are initiated by the woman in question. Tom's loves include two middle-aged women which show that he has other motives. Tom treats women with the utmost respect. He refuses to abandon Molly for Sophia and is troubled by his obligations to Lady Bellaston. Towards the end Tom refuses Arabella Hunt's tempting marriage proposal which indicates that he has become good and is ready to become Sophia's husband.

▶ 'Philosophy of Virtue'

Sophia Western - Sophia Western represents the feminine ideal in the novel. The narrator does not give exact details about her appearance and character when

he introduces her at the beginning of the novel. Sophia shows courage by running away from her father, but actually does very little in the novel. As a woman and as an obedient daughter, Sophia is dominated by others. She falls in love with Tom Jones before he falls in love with her. She cannot, in all decency, say anything. Sophia becomes the spokeswoman for male chastity at the end of the novel. Ironically through her lecture to Tom, she provides the final obstacle to their marriage and thus to the fulfillment of the comic plot. She combines the best of the country and the city. She is kind like Tom, but also remains chaste, and is generous toward others. Through her generosity and genuine courtesy, Sophia becomes a representative, along with Tom and Allworthy of Fielding's vision of Virtue.

▶ Feminine ideal

Allworthy - Allworthy is a person whose character does not undergo any dramatic change, Allworthy is Fielding's moral yardstick. He is the ultimate giver of justice and mercy and almost takes on the role of a god. Allworthy does not understand the evil designs of his nephew Blifil or the harmful nature of Thwackum. However the story moves forward because of Allworthy's mistakes. He banishes Tom from the county which results in so many adventures.

▶ Fielding's moral yard-stick

Blifil - Blifil's bad nature stands opposite to the goodness of Allworthy, Blifil not only acts vilely, but is also a hypocrite. When Allworthy and Tom confront Blifil with his crimes, Blifil weeps not out of remorse, but rather out of terror. He does not reform his ways, but changes to Methodism in order to marry a rich woman. Fielding uses Blifil's lack of passion to forgive Tom's abundance of "animal spirits". Fielding claims that physical pleasure is a necessary part of true love and contrasts it with Blifil's bitter chastity. Thus Blifil is not an admirable character.

▶ A hypocrite

Squire Western - Squire Western is an affectionate man at heart who speaks in West Country dialect. He is however very violent towards his daughter Sophia. He abuses her verbally and physically. But we should not judge these actions too harshly since he is only a caricature. He believes in the traditions and manners of the countryside. Hence he insists that Sophia should marry Blifil.

▶ Belief in the tradition

Mrs. Western - Mrs. Western is a foil to her brother Squire Western. She is an artificial city lady who always acts without much thinking. She feels proud about her intellectual pursuits. Yet her ignorance reveals itself on

▶ Acts without much thinking

numerous occasions (she thinks that Socrates lectured to students instead of engaging in conversational debate). Mrs. Western's sole aim in the novel is to improve the family status by marrying Sophia to the richest, most prosperous man she can find.

▶ Loyal servant

Partridge - Partridge is the teacher whom Allworthy accuses of being Tom's father. He is pathetic, bumbling, and cowardly and remains a loyal servant to Jones. Although, Partridge creates problems for Tom and Sophia by boosting Tom's reputation and defiling Sophia to all and sundry. Tom cannot help but forgive Partridge, who always has the best of intentions. He deserves his reward at the end of the novel.

▶ Jenny is not Tom's mother

Jenny Jones - Jenny Jones (Mrs. Waters) is the student of Partridge whom Allworthy banishes for being Tom's mother. At the end of the novel we learn that Jenny is not Tom's mother. Jenny reappears as 'Mrs. Waters' at Upton, where Tom saves her from a robbery. She claims that she is a virtuous woman but her seduction of Tom in Upton suggests otherwise. She eventually marries Parson Supple, a friend of Western.

▶ Mother of Blifil and Tom

Bridget Allworthy - Bridget Allworthy is the mother of Blifil and Tom. Bridget marries Captain Blifil because he flatters her religious views. Although Bridget's affection wavers between Blifil and Tom as the boys mature, she becomes devoted to Tom before her death.

▶ Relative of Sophia

Lady Bellaston - Lady Bellaston is a London lady, and a relative of Sophia. She is a passionate, lusty personality who likes to have affairs. She thinks of no one but herself. Lady Bellaston carries out a vengeful battle against Tom and Sophia with a lot of delight.

▶ Sophia's cousin

Harriet Fitzpatrick - Harriet Fitzpatrick is Sophia's cousin and the wife of Mr. Fitzpatrick. She is a Pretty and charming lady. She is nevertheless selfish and plans against Sophia in order to improve her relationship with Squire Western and Mrs. Western.

▶ Rash Irishman

Mr. Fitzpatrick - Mr. Fitzpatrick is a rash Irishman. He searches for his wife when she leaves him. Fitzpatrick becomes admirable, however, when he admits to initiating the duel with Tom at the end of the novel.

Mr. Dowling - Mr. Dowling is a shrewd lawyer who

▶ Shrewd lawyer

becomes a friend of Blifil. When Dowling realises that Blifil will not be able to reward him for his efforts, he goes to the side of Tom and Allworthy.

▶ Faithful friend to Tom

Mrs. Miller-Mrs. Miller is a faithful friend to Tom and the most caring and concerned of mothers to Nancy and Betty. Mrs. Miller carries through on her promises and becomes the biggest advocate to Allworthy. She is trusting and loyal.

▶ City gentleman

Nightingale-Nightingale is a city gentleman who is convinced by Tom not to abandon Nancy. Nightingale is caught up in his image in London. Nightingale transforms and follows Tom's principles of Honour and fulfills verbal commitments.

▶ Suitor of Sophia

Lord Fellamar - Lord Fellamar, a suitor of Sophia, has a conscience, easily allows himself to be manipulated by Lady Bellaston.

▶ Philosopher

Square-Square is a philosopher who lives with Allworthy. He justifies his questionable behavior (such as making love to Molly Seagrim) by quoting philosophy to his advantage. Square is not as bad as Thwackum. Indeed, Square's virtuous transformation at the end of the novel allows Allworthy to forgive Tom.

▶ Tutor of Blifil

Thwackum-Thwackum is the tutor of Blifil and Tom who constantly beats Tom and praises Blifil. Thwackum, who claims to value Religion above all else, seeks only his own good.

▶ Unfeminine daughter of Black George

Seagrim-Molly Seagrim is the rugged, unfeminine daughter of Black George who seduces Tom. Feisty and aggressive, Molly enjoys the company of men, and fights fiercely for her rights. Black George Black George is the servant who is favored by Tom. His morality is very dubious but he is loyal and loves Tom.

▶ Daughter of Mrs. Miller

Nancy Miller is the daughter of Mrs. Miller who becomes Nightingale's wife.

Critical Analysis

▶ Comic epic in prose

Fielding has postulated the concept of comic epic in prose. Walter Allen says: "Fielding was writing, the comic epic form differing from comedy as the serious epic from tragedy. The characters are modeled from life, life everywhere furnished and accurate observers with the ridiculous."

An epic may be tragic or comic. A tragic epic has a comprehensive action embodying multitude of characters and varied incidents. An epic poet depicts the life and manners of his times. The plot is intricate having sub-stories and the episodes lying parallel to the central theme of the story. Fielding has tried to adopt all the essentials of a comic in *Tom Jones*. Fielding has produced *Tom Jones* in the form of comic epic in prose. The emotion and sentiments of *Tom Jones* are light and funny rather than lofty. The hero Tom Jones undergoes many adventures in life and Fielding does not praise him for his moral lapses.

▶ Features of tragic epic

In his preface to *Joseph Andrews,* Fielding calls his novel *Tom Jones* a comic epic in prose. He has dealt with trivial and frivolous subjects in *Tom Jones*. The hero is not an exalted person of the comic epic, but a common human being, having some moral lapses. The novel deals with his folly, and impudence and moral weaknesses. The novel has all the elements of an epic proper. It is a complicated work having numerous incest stories, episodes and digressions, which impart variety and is clearly related to the central theme.

▶ Frivolous subjects

The plot acquires epic sweep, variety and range, and presents a sweeping panorama of the whole society. The element of surprise is seen in numerous coincidences and chance events which abound in the novel. Fielding has not introduced the supernatural. Instead, he tried to mix credible with surprising events. Sophia drops her pocket book by chance and Tom Jones meets the beggar who takes it. It is a chance that Tom and Sophia meet and cross each other. Fielding has introduced the element of marvellousness and fighting scenes in the novel like the works of epic poets. He has also introduced the scenes of fighting like epic poets in *Tom Jones*. There is a battle of 'Parson Adama' with the dogs in *Joseph Andrews* and the duel of Mrs. Patridge, her husband, and Molly Seagrim's churchyard battle in *Tom Jones.* Homeric similies are employed in the novel and the use of exalted epic style makes it a mock heroic.

▶ Numerous co-incidences

The Picaresque Elements in *Tom Jones*

The Picaresque novel is a very striking class in English fiction. The novelist is not basically concerned with morals, but with a curiosity about life. It is anti-romantic in character and indirectly attacks the romance of chivalry. It

is a novel of character rather than a novel of play and plot. The setting of *Tom Jones* is after a picaresque model. Its hero Tom Jones is a wanderer. The novel depicts different characters belonging to various sections of society. The hero is not a rogue who is true to his thoughts and sincere to his conscience. The aim of the novelist is to show the real goodness of Tom Jones that comprises in its motives. Its plot is coherent and well knit and contrary to the traditions of picaresque.

▶ Picaresque setting

In *Tom Jones*, Fielding points accurately at town manners the country life organised round the squire, the vicar in less dignified position and states layers of folly and wisdom, from Paridge to Allworthy and from Bilfil to Tom Jones. Many of its characters are drawn from life. Thus Sophia and Amelia are taken from his own life. His picture of contemporary society is faithful and honest. He shows the age in its true face and reveals their conduct and manners. There is intellectual and psychological realism in his novels. He gave to his stories a local habitation and a name. The towns and inns along Tom's route from Glastonbury to London, the street and taverns are truly described and exposed. Saintsbury says: "There are real people who do real things in a real way now, as they did nearly two hundred years ago, however much dress and speech, and manners may have changed, we are told of their doing in a real way too."

▶ Realism of the novel

Summarised Overview

Tom Jones is built around a romantic plot, just like its predecessor *Joseph Andrews*. Squire Allworthy believes that the child he adopts and calls Tom Jones is Jenny Jones', and that the child is not his. As a young man, Tom develops feelings for Sophia Western, his lovely and upright neighbour. In the end, he wins Sophia's hand, but not before overcoming a number of challenges. Throughout the course of the action, multiple sets of people pursue one another across the nation, providing Fielding the chance to paint an incredibly vivid portrait of England in the middle of the 18th century.

Assignments

1. What are the virtues you find in the character of Tom Jones?
2. Discuss Fielding as a writer of the satire novel of manners.
3. "Fielding's realism was not based on hatred". Discuss.
4. Why does Tom refuse Arabella Hunt's tempting marriage proposal?
5. Discuss the Picaresque elements in *Tom Jones*?
6. Give the character sketch of Sophia Western?

Suggested Readings

1. Booth, Wayne. *The Rhetoric of Fiction*. U of Chicago Press, 1961.
2. Watt, Ian *The Rise of the Novel*. The Bodley Head, 2015.
3. Compton, Neil (ed.) *Henry Fielding: Tom Jones, A Casebook*. Macmillan, 1987.

References

1. McKeon, Michael. *The Origins of the English Novel, 1600–1740*. Johns Hopkins U P, 1987.
2. Paulson, Ronald. *Satire and the Novel in the Eighteenth Century*. Yale U P, 1967.
3. Smallwood, Angela J. *Fielding and the Woman Question*. St. Martin's, 1989.

Space for Learner Engagement for Objective Questions

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1.

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

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.

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".

▶ Sublime portrait of Satan

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 develops Satan as a hero

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.

▶ Milton's mastery of blank verse

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.

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

▶ Dryden's Satire

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

- Co-existence of the contradictory trends

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.

- Pre-Romanticism

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.

- Age of Reason to the Age of Imagination

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.

- The catalyst to the period

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 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

- The poet laments the desolation of rural places

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 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

- Depict country life and its simplicity

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.

- Rural and urban surroundings

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.

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 Readings

1. Quinn, Vincent. *Pre-Romantic Poetry*. Oxford U.P, 2012.
2. Winn, James Anderson. *Critical Essays on John Dryden*. G.K. Hall, 1997.

References

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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1.

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.

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.

- Defoe's works lacked complex characterization

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."

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."

- The individualistic concern

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

- Ian Watt- "the rise of the novel"

convincing case for the novel to be taken seriously from a moral perspective and was a work of high moral intensity.

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.

- The story through a string of letters

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.

- Epistolary novels- *Clarissa*

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.

- Flexible characterisation of Fielding

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

Tom Jones is a picaresque novel that tells the tale of a wandering hero. Tom is sensual and has many sex ual experiences. But he never taints innocence, and his relationships with Molly, Nancy, Mrs. Waters, and the gamekeeper highlight his compassion. Other characters follow the dictates of greed and sexual perversion, whereas Tom is impractical but never self-centered. Through Tom's characterisation, Fielding provides a new perspective on morality.

▶ New perspective on morality

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 Readings

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.

References

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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1.

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.

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.

- Shallowness and vulgarity of the period

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.

- Jeremy Collier's response to restoration drama

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.

- Revival of Comedy of Manners

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 Readings

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.

References

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.

Space for Learner Engagement for Objective Questions

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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.

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.

- Addressing various reader communities

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.

- Addison's contribution to *The Tatler*

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.

- It records the 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 Readings

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.

References

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.

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